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MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS: THE FUTURE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MILITARY OPERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Military-Media Relations: The Future Media Environment and Its Influence on Military Operations

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This paper initially reviews the evolving relationship between the military and the media from the Vietnam War to the present. Following this analysis, the paper analyzes the future media environment and its impact on the theater commander and military operations. Many times there has been conflict between the two groups because of their differing missions. The media's goal is to keep the public informed in a timely manner and to remain competitive with respect to the other media organizations. The military wants to maintain operational security for the success of the mission and the safety of the troops. Despite these conflicts in the past, the U.S. military needs to work closely and plan carefully for media involvement in any future contingency. There are two reasons for this. First, the media's power is increasing rapidly because of technological advances and they will be present in any future conflict or operation. This presence will have a great impact on the commander and their planners in future operations. Likewise, the media presence will rapidly shape American and allied public opinion of the conflict with their real time reporting. Second, the end of the "cold war" brought the rationale for a large standing military force into question. The U.S. military needs the media to tell the military story to retain public support.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lt. Col. Douglas J. Goebel is a native of Richfield, MN. He entered the Air Force as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at the University of Minnesota in 1977. Following undergraduate navigator training at Mather AFB, CA he flew the KC-135 air refueling tanker at Grand Forks AFB, ND.

He has been interested in the media since he was assigned to the Strategic Air Command briefing team in the early 1980's. During this time he traveled widely across the United States representing SAC to the American public and the media.

After the tour at HQ SAC, Lt. Col. Goebel was assigned to March AFB, CA as an operations planner and eventually Chief of Tactics in the 22 Air Refueling Wing. During that time he developed air refueling tactics for the F-117 stealth fighter and was the project officer for the winning effort as the best KC-10 unit in SAC. During Operation Just Cause he planned and executed the air refueling mission supporting the F-117's participation in the conflict.

Lt. Col. Goebel is a 1991 graduate of Air Command and Staff College and was a former squadron commander of the 23rd Student Squadron at the staff college. He is a 1995 graduate of the Air War College.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the involvement of the American military in wartime operations, the media has been an active participant in reporting the news to the American people. The media has eagerly covered the news wherever American military forces have been involved. Americans have relied on the media to aggressively pursue the story and report it back by print, radio, and television. This aggressive reporting of the story has often put the military and the media at odds. The military cites operational security reasons for preventing the early release of details of on-going operations. It wants to preserve the element of surprise and ensure the secrecy necessary to carry out sensitive operations. Additionally, the military believes the press wants to make headlines rather than just report the news. The media, on the other hand, believes the right of the public to know requires open and timely reporting. The press believes the military hides failures and deceives the American people. This attitude primarily arose during Vietnam, but it continues to some extent even today.

This paper will argue that the media has influenced past U.S. military campaigns, will exert an ever greater influence on future U.S. military operations, and must be effectively managed by future warfighting commanders. Specifically, this paper will review the relationship between the military and the media from the Vietnam conflict to the present to understand the evolving nature of the relationship between the two institutions. Next, this paper will explore the potential impact of the future media environment on military operations. This will include a discussion of technological advances in communications and increased competition within the media. Finally, this paper will examine the media's impact on commanders and military operations.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF EVOLVING MILITARY/MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

Vietnam

The Vietnam War was the longest war in American history and the U.S. news media were on the scene from the start. In Vietnam the military did not establish any official review committees and since there were no traditional "front lines," the press could basically travel wherever it wanted. Journalists did have to become accredited in theater but this was a quick, easy process. All that a reporter needed was a visa into the country and a letter of identification from his or her media organization. Reporters submitted this letter to Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), signed a sheet saying they would comply with 15 ground rules relating to military security, and agreed to follow rules regarding disclosure of military plans and operations. (20:13) Accredited reporters received a card stating that the military would accord full cooperation and assistance.

In the early years of Vietnam, the press coverage was essentially positive, portraying the events with a favorable, pro-interventionist tone. (20:14) However, as the war expanded and continued, the public who was initially critical of any negative reporting began to trust the press more and the government less. Until 1968, the President and the military commanders had been telling the media and the American people that their victory was right around the corner. (9:647) However, the Tet offensive in 1968 was a military press relations turning point. The offensive made a lie of government press releases and represented a strategic defeat for the United States. What the U.S. government was telling the media and the American people did not match reality. The bold assault on the U.S. embassy in Saigon was a media coup for the Viet Cong. (4:75) The Viet Cong wanted the American people to see, through the eyes of the media, that they could control any place in the country at will and that the war was not winding down as the American government and military leaders had said. (9:648)

After the Tet offensive, it was apparent to astute observers that clearly a watershed event with respect to the media had occurred. President Nixon in his memoirs wrote:

> More than ever before, television showed the terrible human suffering and sacrifice of war. Whatever the intention behind such relentless and literal reporting of the war, the result was a serious demoralization of the home front, raising the question whether America would ever again be able to fight an enemy abroad with unity and strength of purpose at home. As Newsweek columnist Kenneth Crawford wrote, this was the first war in our history when the media was more friendly to our enemies than to our allies. (16:350)

Another commentator, James Reston, believed that it "was no longer possible for a free country to fight even a limited war in a world of modern communications, with reporters and television cameras on the battlefield, against the feelings and wishes of the people." (7:17) Clearly, the influence of the press was increasing and it was going to have a big impact on any future conflict.

The Vietnam experience worsened the relationship between the military and the media. The military was trying to accomplish a difficult task and felt the press undermined them by using biased and sensationalized reporting. As more negative stories came out about the war, the Johnson administration had to find a way to maintain public support. In his book "Defense Beat," Loren Thompson writes about this dilemma:

> Lacking a system for suppressing negative war coverage, the Johnson administration mounted a massive public relations campaign to try to maintain public support for the war. In Saigon this meant an endless series of press releases, briefings, and background interviews for the media stressing purported progress in winning the war. In Washington senior members of the Johnson administration constantly reiterated the theme that the Viet Cong were gradually being defeated. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara frequently conducted detailed statistical briefings on enemy body counts, munitions expended, hamlets pacified, and so on to demonstrate that the Viet Cong were losing the capacity to sustain their aggression. (26:43)

Since this public relations campaign involved the military leadership, the military was discredited. when the optimistic projections did not come true. In particular this hurt General Westmoreland, since President Johnson had pressured him to actively sell the war to the public. (9:648) When the Tet offensive surprised the U.S. military, it appeared the military had mislead the media and the American people.

In the trauma of the Vietnam defeat, U.S. military officers searched for reasons for the defeat. Many officers concluded that the media's coverage of the war was a factor in the outcome of the war. (26:47) This was the first war where television played a major role. The military realized the extremely powerful impact of nightly displays of war casualties on the news. It also realized that, even if the conflict was militarily successful, the media shock could make people question whether the sacrifice was worth the cost in lives and resources.

Vietnam destroyed the credibility of the government and the military in the eyes of the media. For the next two decades, it would question everything with the assumption that the government was lying, or at least not telling the entire truth. After all, the media had gotten the story right. Vietnam was a lost cause with no end. The media recognized the war could not be won before the government did, and it told the American people the truth. The conclusions drawn from Vietnam by both the military and the media led to unprecedented mutual suspicion and antagonism and had a definite impact on military operations that followed.

Grenada- (Operation Urgent Fury)

In 1983, the United States initiated military operations to rescue American students in Grenada. The field grade officers of Vietnam were now senior officers, and they brought with them their memories of Vietnam. Urgent Fury was the first conflict where the media were not included at the start of military operations. (20:16) The decision to exclude the media was a calculated decision based upon operations security, personal safety considerations, and movement logistics. The Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, mentioned these considerations but also said that the final decision for the ban on the media rested with Joint Task Commander Vice Admiral Joseph W. Metcalf III. Admiral Metcalf essentially stated that he did not maliciously decide to eliminate the press but that he had only 39 hours to plan for Grenada. (14:169) However, excluding the press was a reaction based on the fears of the potential for Vietnam style reporting. (7:32)

The press complained passionately about the lack of cooperation and access to the fighting and assaults on Grenada. Besides not providing any means of transportation to the island, the military detained one journalist who had been on the island prior to the invasion and transported him to the Navy's flag ship. (20:17) Even more significantly, reporters accused Navy aircraft of attacking their boats as they tried to get to Grenada. (6:109) Reporters were angry that they could not cover the story in Grenada as they had in Vietnam. They complained that the public was not receiving vital information and that press restraints were designed to hide military embarrassments of poor intelligence and communications. (26:49) The media wanted to instantly report from the front lines with no censorship and with military transportation and logistical support. It claimed that the military violated its First Amendment rights.

Grenada also previewed the future burden of trying to accommodate a huge media group. Two days after the initial invasion date, there were 369 American and foreign journalists on the island of Barbados waiting for transportation to Grenada. (26:50) On the third day, the military allowed a pool of reporters to visit Grenada. (20:17) This was the first use of the pool system--a system that grouped reporters together and officially escorted them into a battle area. (20:17)

Press complaints about Grenada brought about the formation in November 1983 of a review board headed by Major General Winant Sidle, USA (Ret.), the former chief of public affairs for the combined U.S. services in Vietnam from 1967-1969. (26:50) The Sidle Commission consisted of journalists and government press relations officials. In 1984, the commission released its final report outlining eight recommendations for coverage of military operations by the media. (21:4-6) Essentially, the report concluded that the military should conduct media planning for war concurrently with the operational planning. This would include helping the media with communications and transportation support. Significantly, the commission recommended that press pools be formed for future conflicts when full media access was not feasible. Secretary Weinberger accepted the commission's findings and the Department of Defense (DoD) began to

implement the recommendations. It was not long until the military and the media tested this concept.

Panama (Operation Just Cause)

In December 1989, after years of aggression against American citizens and charges of drug trafficking, the U.S. decided to apprehend Panama's president, Manuel Noriega. This was to be more than a small operation. It would require thousands of military personnel and an enormous logistical movement to Panama. Operation Just Cause envisioned a large scale, lightning fast operation, hitting multiple targets in Panama at night. (30:168) This scenario was adopted for these reasons. First, U.S. forces would have a distinct advantage when fighting at night. Second, causalities would be lower with a massive, simultaneous assault. Third, the conflict would be over very quickly, before the media could even hint that the outcome was in doubt. (30:187)

The President took media reaction into account prior to and during the operation. In the final briefing to President Bush, the President's Press Secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, told the President that he thought the media reaction would be generally positive, but that some were going to criticize the invasion. (30:171) However, the timing of the operation was fortuitous since the administration would get the first word in with the midnight press conference and the President's early morning announcement the next day. In "The Commanders," Bob Woodward writes about the press impact on Operation Just Cause, "One advantage of the post-midnight H-Hour was that the administration would be able to take an early time slot on morning television and provide its own description of the operation before the news day began. Given the massive influx of U.S. troops, there was a virtual guarantee that some early successes could be reported." (30:187)

Even though the military made arrangements for supporting the media in Operation Just Cause, it turned out that cooperation between the media and the military still had a long way to go. As had been recommended by the Sidle Commission, DoD created a press pool to enter Panama with the combat troops. However, because of poor planning and the extremely tight

security the pool deployment proved to be a fiasco. The plane that transported the pool arrived in Panama five hours late. (7:36) When they arrived, the military kept the sixteen media pool members that away from the fighting because of safety concerns. In "Defense Beat" Loren Thompson writes, "The military's arrangements for facilitating coverage were so poorly conceived and executed that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs accused U.S. officers in Panama of incompetence." (26:52) Again, as in Grenada, the large number of the media not in the pool made the logistics involved in escorting them daunting. U.S. Southern Command had expected only 25 to 30 journalists to cover the Panamanian operation. Military public relations personnel were not prepared for the three hundred media that arrived in Panama. (26:52)

As in the aftermath of Grenada, the Defense Department formed a group to investigate the handling of the media in Panama. Fred Hoffman, a former Pentagon reporter for the Associated Press and a former Pentagon deputy press spokesperson, headed the study. The group based its study on interviews with civilian and military officials and with the media. (7:36) The group made seventeen recommendations that stressed reduced military oversight of the press and less secrecy.

In Operation Just Cause, communications and transportation problems prevented the media from reporting directly from the battlefield. There were two lessons the media took away from Panama: their equipment had to be lighter and more portable, and they had to get into the country any way possible.

Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm)

Just nine months after Panama, in August 1990, Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait and set in motion a US-led United Nations response to the aggression. Following approval by the Saudi government, the U.S. conducted a massive air and sealift of forces to the Gulf region. This operation was tailor made for media coverage, with many issues sure to grab the attention of the

American people. The strong personal attacks on Saddam Hussein by President Bush and the threat to hostages and the world's oil supply made this operation one of very high drama. (30:282)

According to Pete Williams, the Pentagon's public affairs officer, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia initially agreed to accept a pool of U.S. reporters if the U.S. military would escort them. The Department of Defense quickly deployed a media pool of 17 press members from Washington DC who represented radio, TV, and print. (29:2) From August to December of 1990, the number of media personnel grew to nearly 800. Except during the first two weeks of pool coverage, reporters independently filed their stories to their news organizations. (29:2) During these months prior to Desert Storm reporters saw all the services in action.

Interestingly, many of the stories by the national news media had a negative angle to them. The press described U.S. forces and equipment as not ready for desert warfare and stated that the morale of the troops was low. However, local hometown reporters arrived and began submitting stories about the local troops. When this happened hometown people became more involved in supporting the troops with yellow ribbons, bumper stickers and letter drives. (24-) Not surprisingly, the tone of the national media changed because it had come across as bad guys, not supporting the cause and loved ones in the desert. (24-) Media editors back home quickly realized that negativism, in this case, did not sell. During this time, the DoD guidelines did not prevent or inhibit the negative stories from being published.

Pete Williams, in a speech to the National Press Club, describes the rationale for guidelines for the press in covering the war. In formulating the guidelines, the military went back to World War II and looked at those issued by Gen. Eisenhower for the D-Day landing and those issued by MacArthur in the Korean War. Williams emphatically stated that the rules devised for the Gulf War did not prevent journalists from reporting on negative incidents. "Instead they were intended simply and solely for this reason: to prevent publication of details that could jeopardize a military operation or endanger the lives of U.S. troops." (29:3) The ground rules only required that the

"details of future operations, ...specific information about troop strengths or troop locations,... and information on operational weaknesses that could be used against U.S. forces" could not be reported. (29:3) HQ CENTCOM expanded on the initial ground rules when they set up their Operation Desert Shield Ground Rules/Guidelines for News Media, which correspondents had to follow. (25:225) These guidelines stated that a public affairs officer should escort because of security, safety, and mission requirements. They also established the requirement for pools prior to or during initial combat operations. Moreover, CENTCOM would not permit news media personnel who were not members of official media pools into forward areas. U.S. commanders maintained extremely tight security throughout the operational area and excluded from the area of operation all unauthorized individuals. (25:226) Lastly, the military established a copy review system to review stories prior to publication for sensitive information. (29:3)

The news media did not like the copy review system since it sounded to them like censorship. (29:3) Accordingly to Pete Williams, this was not censorship because, in the final analysis, this system did not prevent the publication or broadcast of material. It was, as Williams explained, "a procedure that allowed us to appeal to news organizations when we thought material in their stories might violate the ground rules. As an example, Williams cited 1,351 print pool stories and the Pentagon reviewed only five. (29:3) Moreover, Williams states only written pool stories were subject to review and not the "live" television or radio reports.

Williams admitted DoD made mistakes in Operation Desert Storm. He said they could have done a better job helping reporters get their stories from the field back to the press center. Many of the Army's stories went by vehicle back to the Joint Information Bureau, and that was too slow. The Marines, on the other hand, did a much better job by providing computer modems and tactical telephone fax machines to help the press. Williams also identified the need for better training for military public affairs officers on escort duties. (29:5)

In defending the use of pools, Williams noted that with the great numbers of reporters (nearly 1400) there was no other fair alternative to the pool system. To report on the ground war, the reporters joined a unit prior to the conflict. (29:3) Since a ground commander could only support a limited number of reporters and could not be expected to absorb those who arrived unexpectedly, the pool system was the only way to go. Consequently, the ground war began with 131 reporters and photographers accompanying the Army and Marines in the field. (29:3)

The media were not as favorable as the military about pools and the media's role in Operation Desert Storm. Jonathan Alter of Newsweek stated:

> As any radio talk show host can attest, Iraq isn't the only loser in the gulf war. Though a surprising 59 percent of Americans in the Newsweek Poll think better of the new media than before the war, the press corps also took some pounding. News organizations were routed by the military in the battle over access and assaulted by many viewers. The globalization of news (a new idea) ran smack into national allegiance during wartime (an old idea). (2:52)

When specifically discussing pools he noted "From beginning to end, this was one of the last places to find a good story."(2:52)

While the use of pools was a contentious issue in military-media relations, the safety of the media was even more contentious. News executives have stated that the security and safety of their people is their responsibility and not the U.S. government's. However, the military has a responsibility to protect all American citizens. Contrary to media assurances, when the Iraqis captured Bob Simon, Pete Williams was on the phone to CBS virtually every day discussing Simon's fate. In another example, Iraqi troops captured a group of U.S. journalists after the cease-fire. Williams stated that after this happened "four news industry executives wrote to the president saying that no U.S. forces should withdraw from Iraq until the issue of the journalists was resolved." (29:5) Thus, the idea that the government can totally ignore the safety of the roving journalist did not prove to be valid.

Along with the safety issue the media had another frustration of trying to cover the air war. For 38 days the air war continued before the coalition initiated the ground campaign. Pete

Williams explained "it was a hard thing to cover the air war, because you could cover the planes taking off and you could cover the planes landing, but you couldn't cover the most interesting part, which is the part in between because it was happening somewhere else. In fact, it was happening in Iraq or in occupied Kuwait." (29:7) Only CNN was able to cover the story in Iraq--and only a very small part of that.

On the other hand, the U.S. military learned during the Gulf War that press conferences and briefings were the only way for the military to talk directly to the American people. The stated purpose of these briefings and press conferences was to keep the large press corps informed on activities relating to the war but it also provided the opportunity to present the U.S. military side of the story. Moreover, it ensured that the press did not become too well informed on certain matters, particularly intelligence, tactics, and troop movements. Initially, the military was not very smart in presenting their side of the story in the daily news conferences. (22:75) They used mid-level officers who were unsure of themselves, nervous in front of the press, and totally refused to answer many questions. In sum, they did not present the image the military wanted to present back home since it looked as if the U.S. military was not forthcoming. After a week, senior leadership realized this and substituted other officers, principally Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Richard Neal in Riyadh and Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly at the Pentagon.(22:76)

General Perry Smith, Maj Gen, USAF Ret., a CNN military commentator during the Gulf War, wrote in "How CNN Fought the War" that a paradigm shift between the military and the media happened during Operation Desert Storm. (22:151) He argued the military of the Gulf War was not the military that fought the Vietnam War. The people, the weapons, and the training were different and brought about the incredible success of the Gulf War. The media did not recognize this prior to the war. He states, "the media, to a large extent, are captives of their own culture and beliefs. They have been caught in a classic case of "group think" about the military." (22:151) The Gulf War dramatically changed the media's perception of the military. An article in

Newsweek after the war bluntly stated that the success of Operation Desert Storm finally erased the stigma of Vietnam. (2:50)

After Desert Storm, the military held another conference with the news media and examined press coverage of DoD operations. The group agreed to eight principles. Of particular importance was their agreement that open and independent reporting would be the principle means of covering U.S. military operations. They further agreed that while pools may sometimes be used during the initial part of operations, they should be disbanded within 24-36 hours. Further agreements included: the U.S. military will credential journalists and they will abide by a clear set of military security ground rules. The media will send experienced journalists to combat operations and they will have access to all major military units. The military will provide transportation whenever feasible. Also, the military will supply public affairs officers with communications facilities to quickly transmit pool material. Additionally, the military will not ban communications systems operated by news organizations. (23:26) The next operation would test the patience of both the media and the military.

Somalia (Operation Restore Hope)

In December 1992, President Bush, because of media pressure and feeling a moral sense of responsibility, decided to send U.S. forces to help feed the Somalis. From the start, the media played a major role in covering events there. The Marine's landed at Mogadishu under the bright lights of live television. The spotlights gave away their position, interfered with their sophisticated night-vision equipment, and put them at risk from Somali snipers. (23:21) The U.S. military was furious about this incident, but there was another side to the story.

Initially, the Pentagon had encouraged the press to be present at the beach to cover the landing as it wanted press coverage of the military's role in this operation. Later, however, the Pentagon changed its mind and requested the press stay off the beach. Unfortunately, this change

came to late and many news agencies did not get the word. CENTCOM could not keep the landing secret since the reporters were in Somalia prior to the Marines' arrival there.

The influence of the media on the Somali operation was dramatically brought home by the graphic, stark pictures of the Somalis dragging a dead U.S. soldier through the streets. This soldier was part of a group of U.S. Army rangers that perished trying to arrest General Adid, a Somali warlord. The firestorm of public opinion that resulted from this footage withered any arguments for U.S. presence in Somalia. Accordingly, the American people bombarded Congress, which in turn demanded that U.S. troops leave Somalia. Congress gave the administration a deadline and all U.S. combat forces had left Somalia by March 31, 1994. (12:13)

Haiti (Operation Restore Democracy)

In contrast to previous engagements, the media arrangements for the invasion of Haiti were well thought out and executed. This was the first combat test of the media pool arrangements since the Gulf War. Even though the military did not have to use force to enter Haiti, the media pool was ready. The military called up the pool in secrecy on Saturday, September 17 and they were in position if there had been an opening attack. Associated Press Washington Bureau Chief, Jon Wolman, stated, "we were satisfied with the arrangements the Pentagon was able to make. It looked as if it could have been a successful combat pool."(10:9)

Moreover, there seemed to be good faith and cooperation shown by both sides. Prior to the conflict, Clifford Bernath, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense of Public Affairs, met with media representatives to discuss guidelines for coverage. The group talked about seven issues of concern that had occurred in previous operations. (10:10) An example was the use of TV lights as had been done in Somalia. The military and media group agreed on four issues including the use of TV lights but on three they could not come to agreement. They could not agree to a voluntary one-hour delay of broadcast video of initial troop locations. The media only committed to an effort at a delay. The other two issues were safety concerns for the reporters in

Haiti. The military wanted them to stay in hotels or at the U.S. embassy until the streets were safe and they wanted the media not to climb on rooftops. The media representatives did not agree with this and noted "they would take care of themselves." (10:10) As a whole, the media planning went very well and media considerations were an integral part of the operation.

CHAPTER III

FUTURE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Just as time and experiences have shaped the military-media relationship of the past, so too will technological advances shape the military-media relationship of the future. Future commanders will face a media in a technologically stronger position and even more competitively driven to report on military events than was the case in Desert Storm and other recent military operations. The media currently feels it does not have the capabilities needed to cover military operations. Because of this, it is preparing for the next conflict with technical capabilities and resources that will allow it to operate independently in a wide range of scenarios. This could have a significant impact on operations, and the military will have to adjust to this new environment.

Technology Advances

During Desert Storm, the capability of cellular phones and portable satellite transmission equipment advanced to an astounding degree. CNN displayed this capability with their reporters' vivid descriptions of attacks on Baghdad. Despite the F-117's targeting of the international telephone exchange during the initial attack, the CNN crew was able to get its portable satellite connections working in a matter of minutes to broadcast to the world. This was the first time in war that the media broadcast live television from the enemy nation's capital while under attack. This stunning real-time narrative provided a world audience with bombing and cruise missile reports. (22:175)

Future technology with respect to the media will be even more impressive. Specifically, the media is acquiring equipment that employs breakthroughs in miniaturization of electronic devises such as portable satellite-based phone and video systems. Motorola's Iridium system, for example, will enable world-wide communications for anyone with a cellular phone. (5:24) The Iridium system will be a network of 66 low earth orbiting satellites and will provide voice, data, fax, and paging anywhere on earth. A partial constellation of satellites will be in place by 1998.

(19:56) This capability will radically improve the speed and flexibility of the media. Reporters will be able to send stories and pictures back over this network from anyplace on the battlefield. The media will not be dependent on bulky technical equipment or on military cooperation for transmitting stories. Additionally, the reporters in the field will be in constant touch with their editors and will be able to receive instructions to investigate specific subjects.

Mobile satellite uplinks will also enhance the media's capability. These satellite uplinks allow a signal to be transmitted back to the U.S. from most regions of the world. Today these systems require a number of technicians and are air transportable, or "flyaway." In the future, antennas for these uplinks will be less than one meter in diameter and very portable. (13:175) Also, smaller, light weight television cameras will increase the mobility of television crews.

Another technological advance that will have a significant impact on the media and the military is the Internet. The Internet is a world wide information network system that provides any individual a vehicle for disseminating information. In essence, it is another media channel and can allow any individual to send news into the system. This system also makes information available to the users much quicker and news organizations are just now realizing the potential of the Internet. In the future, individuals may be able to send video through electronic mail to the media organizations and make it available to everyone through a world wide mailbox. The power of the Internet as an opinion shaper could be enormous.

Additionally, high resolution commercial satellite photography from any number of spacefaring nations, such as France, Russia, and the U.S. will be available to the press. (1:61) France's Spot Satellite Program began selling imagery in 1986 with a 10 meter medium resolution. U.S. print and television news agencies have already used satellite images for special reports. However, these images typically take months to photograph, downlink to earth and process (1:61) The Russians are currently selling high resolution images in the two meter resolution range. But the Russian system is not as responsive as Spot since they don't have downlink facilities. For the

US, "President Clinton signed a new remote sensing policy that, for the first time, permits U.S. companies to sell satellite imagery up to one meter in resolution." (1:61) Three U.S. companies are planning to place satellites into orbit and they will have their satellites in orbit by 1997. (1:61). With these new satellite ventures, images will be available in good weather within 24 hours rather than weeks.(1:61) Eventually, the technology will allow satellite images to be sent directly to a desktop computer.

The impact of these advances in remote sensing will have a tremendous impact on military operations. At less than 5 meter resolution, troop formations and aircraft placement will be discernible. The large flanking movement that occurred during Desert Storm under strict secrecy would have been impossible with this detailed imagery. In the future, countries not part of the coalition war effort will probably sell these photographs to the media and the military's attempt to use the element of surprise will be much more difficult. In "War and Anti War," futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler support this conclusion by stating, "commercial reconnaissance satellites will make it almost impossible for combatants to hide from the media, and with all sides watching the video screen, instant broadcasts from the battle zone threaten to alter the actual dynamics and strategies in war." (27:172)

Another technology the media will have is the capability to stage or create events that will look real. "The new media will make it possible to depict entire battles that never took place or a summit meeting showing (falsely) the other country's leader rejecting peaceful negotiation." (27:174) This is currently being done in the cinema with computer simulation. Movies such as "Forrest Gump," where the main character meets past U.S. Presidents, appear convincingly real.

One consequence of these technological advances is that the very definition of a reporter may change. With people moving about the world with greater ease, anyone with a camcorder and an Iridium link or an Internet link will be able to provide breaking news to the entire world. This trend is already occurring with amateur video commonly being televised on the news. Future use

of Iridium and Internet will provide greater access to the world community by individuals who are not professional media. The increase in distribution channels will compel the media to report the news quicker and will create a more competitive environment.

Competitive Pressures

CNN, more than any other media organization, influenced reporting in the Gulf War and created the new competitive standard for future media reporting. CNN was willing to take risks to get the story. Prior to the war, CNN had moved John Holliman, Bernard Shaw, and Peter Arnett into Baghdad, Iraq to broadcast live from their hotel. (22:6) When the Iraqis told all other news organizations to leave, they permitted CNN to stay because of CNN's influence and credibility. (22:38) CNN broadcast hundreds of hours of live coverage of the conflict and this greatly reduced the time between when an event occurred and when it was on television in the U.S. This instantaneous coverage allowed CNN to hold viewers who might have defected to other channels--tremendously improving its ratings. It also forced other media organizations to meet this new standard in order to remain competitive in the competition for news.

Significantly, the media will be more diverse and fragmented in the future. Other nations and companies are starting 24-hour live news coverage to compete with CNN. The British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) will start a 24 hour news network called BBC World Service Television in 1995. (11:70) Reuters Television is also an aggressive competitor to CNN since it provides news to 650 broadcasters in 80 countries. Moreover, Rupert Murdoch, head of News Corp. has a rapidly expanding subsidiary called Sky News that is broadcasting news to Europe and Asia. (3:26) These developments are in addition to the proliferation of news sources within the U.S. The Tofflers researched this trend, stating, "within a decade or two we can expect a multiplication of global channels, paralleling the diversification of media already taking place inside the Third Wave countries. Instead of a handful of centrally controlled channels watched by

all, vast numbers of humans will eventually gain access to a dazzling variety of over the border messages their political and military masters may not wish them to hear or see." (27:174)

News competition will make broadcasters more aggressive in reporting news and will make it more difficult to keep operationally sensitive news from leaking. Minutes in the television business can make the difference between winning or losing the public's viewership. Some media organizations may feel they have a responsibility to hold a story for security reasons, but do not want to be scooped by other news services. Thus, the temptation will be great to broadcast if they believe the story is going to come out anyway. Another characteristic of aggressive journalism is that the possibility of mistakes is greater. There is less time to check sources or review the material. Erroneous reporting may be a serious problem for theater commanders since they will have to correct the story or deal with the false perception.

Competition in the media, especially television media, will push reporters to become a participant or "star" of the event rather than just a reporter of the news. Television, because of its visual nature, will shape the news agenda and set the rhythm of print journalism. (27:170) The Tofflers observed, "leaders send messages to one another not simply through ambassadors, but directly on CNN, confident that their counterparts and adversaries will be watching - and will, in turn, respond on camera."(27:172) With this power the media is not just reporting the story, it is shaping the story.

CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCE ON THEATER COMMANDER

How will the future media environment affect future commanders? It is difficult to answer that question considering the wide range of scenarios involving U.S. forces. However, recent experiences provide some indication, and future impacts can be deduced from careful consideration of past trends. A look at some historical examples will provide insight into the media's impact on military operations.

During Desert Storm, CNN's coverage in Baghdad had an influence on the theater commander and the conduct of the war. Peter Arnett broadcast the aftermath of the Al Firdos command bunker bombing on February 13, 1991. This broadcast had an impact on the political and military leadership and subsequently on the conduct of the air war. The spectacle of watching the bodies of dead women and children caused the Pentagon and CENTCOM to spend an enormous amount of time explaining why it was a military target. As Press Secretary Fitzwater stated, "the power of the image on television is so much stronger than the power of the word. It doesn't matter how many caveats (sic) you put in there, the picture tells a story that establishes itself in the mind's eye no matter what is said." (8:148) In analyzing this, the Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) stated, "for the government...this was a dangerous story, dangerous in the sense that it could threaten domestic and international support for the war effort." (8:148) More significantly, GWAPS documented that "the Coalition did not bomb any other similar facilities in the immediate Baghdad area" for the rest of the war. (8:152)

Another event that influenced the commander in Desert Storm was the "Highway of Death" incident. (18:468) The Iraqi evacuation of Kuwait in late February caused a massive traffic jam on the road to Basra and it became known as the "Highway of Death." Gen. Schwarzkopf in his book "It Doesn't Take a Hero" relates that Gen. Powell called and told him members of the

National Security Council and the news media were complaining about destruction that was occurring. Schwarzkopf wrote:

> What had happened, of course, was that journalists were now interviewing Air Force pilots who'd been hitting the convoys fleeing Kuwait. And as soon as we'd liberated the area around Kuwait City, reporters who had once been part of the media pools had taken pictures of Highway 6, where we'd bombed a convoy Monday night . It was a scene of utter devastation that they named the "Highway of Death"-a four-lane road strewn with the burned out wreckage of more than a thousand military vehicles and stolen civilian trucks, buses, and cars. That was what people saw when they sat down Monday evening and turned on their TV sets. Powell informed me that the White House was getting nervous: 'The reports make it look like wanton killing.' (18:468)

Even more significant, the coalition allies were nervous about the Highway of Death and this was relayed in another conversation with Gen. Powell. Schwarzkopf recalled, "he told me that in Washington the controversy over wanton killing had become uncomfortably intense--even the French and the British had begun asking how long we intended to continue the war." (18:469) This demonstrates the incredible power of the camera. Even though Schwarzkopf knew most of the vehicles had been abandoned and the military fled from the highway of death, the incredible scenes of destruction could weaken the public's and political leadership's resolve to continue the war and accomplish all strategic objectives. Specifically, Schwarzkopf wanted to ensure the destruction of the Republican guard armored divisions that propped up the Hussein regime. Yet, based on the pressure he was getting, and the fact that fewer lives would be lost, he gave in to an early end to the war. (18:469)

In a major conventional war, one in which the stakes are high, with the loss of world position, energy supplies, or our way of life threatened, the temptation to go back to the media rules of Desert Storm will be powerful. Commanders will again want to control the media to maintain operational security to the maximum extent. The old issue of trust will again arise and the commander will not want to respond to every crisis or story that the media portrays. Of course, the particular conflict scenario will have a direct bearing on the commander's comfort level with the media. Considering the media's new powers and their motivation to get the story,

future commanders must assume that it will be very difficult to keep out the media. Because of this, commanders must assume that the horrors of war will be shown to the American people and that the whole story must be told so that the horrors will not undermine support for the conflict.

To cope with this intense media environment, the commander must prepare to spend time with the media. Commanders must aggressively manage the message they want portrayed to the American people and the world audience. This "spin control" is vital if the commander wants to ensure the whole story is transmitted to the world audience. This means granting access to the media and, when necessary, initiating press conferences to go directly to the audience.

Schwarzkopf himself was a master at these briefings. He carefully analyzed the importance of the briefings and prepared himself mentally. He wrote that after he arrived in Saudi Arabia he felt it was crucial not to "repeat the mistake we made in Grenada, where the military had stonewalled." (18:343) He established four media ground rules. First, "don't let the media intimidate you." Second, "There's no law that says you have to answer all their questions." Third, "Don't answer any question that in your judgment would help the enemy." Fourth, "Don't ever lie to the American people." (18:344) Thus, when Schwarzkopf gave his final briefing it made a powerful impact because of the credibility he had built up before and during the conflict by not overreporting or overpromising. (22:72)

Theater commanders must prepare for quick, decisive campaigns with minimal casualties, civilian and combatant. Desert Storm has set the standard for future conflicts. It will be difficult to tell the President we are going to experience tens of thousands of causalities and that this slaughter will be shown in real time to America's and the world's living rooms. A high level of causalities will be unacceptable in a war where our vital interests are not at stake. The press, and especially television, will influence the conduct of the conflict and in some respects limit the options of the commander.

Implicit in future military operations is the consideration that the press will play a major role in reporting the war and characterizing the war. One media observer, Lt. Col. Feldman, who wrote an extensive study entitled "The Military/Media Clash and the New Principle of War: Media Spin", stated:

> Live television news coverage is a reality of modern warfare that places more than just military constraints on operations. While military objectives might be easily attained with more economy and less risk to American lives by carpet bombing an adversary's capital, the gruesome sights of massive collateral damage and civilian deaths beamed instantly as it was occurring, make such tactics politically untenable. Such means might have been acceptable in World War II, but the watchful eye of the news media make such messy alternatives no longer acceptable. (7:42)

Supporting this view, Colonel Warden, Commandant of the Air Command and Staff College and a key planner in the initial Desert Storm air campaign plan stated, the technology and the media environment will advance in the future to where "every bomb is a political bomb." (13:-) He agreed that with real time reporting, the military must assume that every bomb dropped could very well be broadcast around the world. The consequences of improperly targeting could have a tremendous impact on the conduct and the outcome of the war.

Col. Warden also stated the military needs to accept the media as a part of the future combat environment. The media should be considered a given, like weather or terrain, on a battlefield. (28-) Thus, rather than constantly trying to avoid or ignore the media the military should learn to accommodate it. Just as with the weather, the military should be able to analyze the media environment and plan accordingly, but not think it can manage the media or change it. Col. Warden stated the time may come when the military commander will ask the question "what is the media forecast?" (28:-)The answer to that question could be as important as the weather forecast.

A further reason future theater commanders will need to be sensitive to media issues is that in all likelihood the U.S. will be fighting in a coalition on the battlefield. With the recent military drawdown, the U.S. will need partners to help fight a battlefield adversary. The National Security

Strategy specifically mentions operating "in concert with regional allies to win two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts."(15:5) This means a commander must take into account the sensitivities of our coalition partners, especially those who do not share our Western heritage, to maintain support for the alliance effort.

Futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler present a strong argument that the media will have an even greater role in warfare of the future. In "War and Anti War," they state, "the people thinking hardest about warfare in the future know that some of the most important combat of tomorrow will take place on the media battlefield." (27:165) The Tofflers also believe that the military will need and make great use of the press, but that the military and the media confrontation will remain. Specifically, they predict that further acceleration into real-time reporting will stress the military leadership. As was demonstrated in the Gulf War and Somalia, the time compression of media reporting forces the military leadership to respond much more quickly to events.

Another probable future occurrence is that the enemy will deliberately place noncombatants around valid military targets. The end result could be similar to the Gulf War bombing of the Amiriya command and control center. U.S. attacks against these targets may kill civilians and yield a powerful visual media blow that could threaten domestic and international support. A despotic adversary could sacrifice its citizens to allow the media to transmit these pictures back into the U.S. The theater commander and the National Command Authorities will have to be prepared to respond to these tactics. Along this same line, an adversary could purposely destroy prominent cultural and religious structures and blame the U.S. for their destruction. Again, adversaries would attempt to dupe the media into transmitting these pictures, putting intense pressure on the theater commander to prove that U.S. action had not caused the destruction.

Military's Need For Press Coverage

Operations such as Provide Comfort and Provide Hope showed that good media relations can actually help military operations proceed with full support. Media coverage and recognition

can be a morale booster to those who have to leave their families and be away from home for an extended time in marginal living conditions.

It is imperative that the media have access to the U.S. military. Only the media can tell the military's story, and provide recognition of military members and their service to America. This recognition is vital. The American people need to realize the importance of having a strong, well trained, high-quality military. Moreover, the future modernization of the U.S. military is at stake with the tremendous budget deficits this country is experiencing. Thus, if we prevent the media from transmitting the story we are only hurting ourselves. It will be reflected in lower operating budgets and a lower priority for the military. Also, the media's coverage of a military operation and how it is conveyed to the American people can influence whether the operation is successful or not. Thus, the commander needs to consider the media and manage the story.

Media Management or "Media Spin"

The future wartime military-media relationship will require the utmost media savvy on the part of military commanders. They will need to plan for a large influx of media representatives. They will need to consider that they will probably not be able to control or censor this diverse, highly competitive group. Open coverage will be the standard procedure for combat coverage. Commanders will have to anticipate that the media will stretch the limits on providing sensitive information to the American people. Moreover, even though some media groups will agree to cooperate, many non U.S. news organizations will not feel compelled to cooperate, thus posing a threat to U.S. and allied operational security.

This outlook motivated Lt. Col. Feldman to describe what he calls a new principle of war. This principle, the principle of "media spin," he defines as follows:

> Media Spin--Pay close attention to public relations, recognizing that public support is an essential ingredient of combat success. Aggressively insure that media portrayal of combat operations is neither distorted nor misrepresented through press omissions. Above all, safeguard the safety of troops and operational security but do not lie to the media merely for sake of convenience. Never take for granted how combat operations will be portrayed

> in the news. Avoid operations that will swiftly turn public support away from the war effort and capitalize on success stories by insuring they get maximum media exposure. In an age where 24 hour instantaneous battlefield news coverage is a fact of life, paying attention to media spin is of paramount importance. For a combat commander, anything less would be irresponsible. (7:2)

In a sense, commanders are also public relations officers. Military commanders must make themselves accessible to the media to reinforce and explain the military's story to the American people.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The American military and the media have had a long history of conflict and cooperation in wartime and in peace. The conflict in the relationship derives from the fact that the military and the press often have objectives that run counter to one another. The military wants to achieve surprise and maintain security to deny the enemy any useful information. The military would also prefer to restrict the transmission of images of the horrors of war on television every night. The media, on the other hand, want to provide information to the American people and retain them as viewers, listeners, or readers.

The future media will have access to new technologies that will allow them to easily broadcast from the battlefield. New, highly mobile satellite uplinks and high resolution satellite images will make operational security very difficult for the operational commander. Also new networks such as the Internet will distribute information from a wide range of sources very quickly. New world-wide satellite communication links from a variety of companies will allow unprecedented communication from virtually any spot on earth.

The future competitive environment of the media will only get tougher for news organizations. World-wide news organizations, such as CNN, are increasing at a dramatic pace and could overwhelm the military commander with numbers. Also, the pressure to report the story first will make it difficult for the media to cooperate with the military.

The future wartime military commander will need to plan for a large influx of media representatives. Moreover, it is unlikely the U.S. military in the future will be able to control or censor the highly competitive and diverse media. Open coverage will be the normal procedure for combat coverage. Additionally, the commander will have to anticipate that the media will provide sensitive information they would rather not see published to the rest of the world. In this type of environment every bomb will have an impact in the media and possibly on the conduct and

outcome of the war. The commander could also face adversaries with advanced techniques for manipulating the media.

The bottom line to the military-media relationship is that despite the conflicts we truly do need each other and must learn to work with each other. This does not mean there will be no conflict in the future, because there will be. However, despite the conflict, arrangements can be made to allow military and the media to do their jobs. For the military it also means that the military and its commanders will have to take a very active role to convey the military's story to the American people. They will need to be accessible and prepared for the demands of the media and carefully consider the media in operational planning. Working with the media holds many opportunities as well as pitfalls. However, working together is essential for the U.S. military to be successful in accomplishing this country's national goals.

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