Strategy Research Project

MILITARY AND THE MEDIA – WHAT'S NEXT AFTER EMBEDDING?

BY

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This paper will explore past battlefield relationships between military commanders and journalists, assess the embedded media strategy during Operation Iraqi Freedom I major combat operations, and identify a framework to assess embedding as a military-media strategy during future military operations.

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ABSTRACT

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The Department of Defense made a breakthrough in the military-media battlefield relationship during Operation Iraqi Freedom through the use of embedded media. The Embedded Media Program allowed journalists to be on the front lines with the different services prior to, during and after military combat operations. Both the military and media's initial feedback deemed the program a success and believe all future military operations will use embedded media.

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MILITARY AND THE MEDIA – WHAT'S NEXT AFTER EMBEDDING?

> The decision to embed is not policy. It is situational based on the commander's read of how that will best suit the situation for the operation and the media.[1]
>
> —unknown

America's coverage of war news has taken place since our nation's infancy, but the way newspapers gathered news has evolved over time.[2] Military leaders are concerned about the security of their mission and the safety of their personnel and see journalists as a threat to both. The Department of Defense has tried different media engagement strategies with the most recent being embedding media with military units during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). There have been numerous articles published, independent studies conducted and workshops held addressing the Embedded Media Program. Both the military and media's initial feedback deemed the program a success and believe all future military operations will use embedded media. This paper explores past battlefield relationships between military commanders and journalists, assesses the embedded media strategy during OIF I major combat operations, and identifies a framework to assess embedding as a military-media strategy during future military operations. Embedding is a strategy exercised occasionally throughout history by journalists who 'embedded' themselves in a military unit during conflict. In some cases, the journalist did so without official military authorization; in others, the military was a willing partner.

Military-Media Battlefield Experiences

The military-media battlefield relationship evolved in the 20th century as the military attempted various efforts to control journalists on the battlefield. War is

newsworthy for journalists, but dangerous. Military commanders view reporters on the battlefield as a potential obstacle in accomplishing the military mission. Commanders want to be able to control the situation and minimize the security risk associated with journalists in the battle area. The military has implemented different strategies to control journalists: prevent access or limit access to a theater of operation; require military review of all information prior to release; or require journalist control of information release as a negotiated condition of access.

As the population in the United States increased throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, so did the number of newspaper businesses. Competition led owners to devise new methods of gathering information in order to maintain relevancy.[3] During the American Revolutionary War, reporters were not on the battlefields; newspapers received reports from private letters or by copying stories from other newspapers.[4] The Mexican War was the first time military commanders had to deal with journalists rather than filing their own report about the military action. Historian Robert Henry described the Mexican war as, "The first War in history to be adequately and comprehensively reported in the daily press."[5] Newspaper businesses were finally able to use first hand accounts as a result of having their own journalists covering the action.

The Media's Influence. Military commanders would be remiss if they failed to consider the media's ability to influence others when making decisions on media utilization in future operations. News organizations and journalists, willingly or unwillingly, have been a part of the military's evolution of control in their non-stop pursuit of capturing "the story". Whether referred to as war correspondents, freelancers, embedded reporters, or unilateral reporters, journalists have historically choose the

most effective way to cover military operations, with or without military support. A journalist is one whose occupation is to write for any of the public news media, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, televisions or internet, also, an editorial or other professional writer for a periodical, as defined by Webster's. War correspondent refers to journalists covering war for a specific news organization, operating with the monetary support of the newspaper, magazine or broadcast company and liable to the organization's standards. A freelancer writes articles for any news organization willing to pay for the article but not necessarily associated with a particular organization; a freelancer is an independent operator without organizational responsibility or support like equipment or training for battlefield conditions. Embedded reporters cover a newsworthy event "from inside" and have been used for both military and non-military coverage. Alternately, a unilateral operates in the area of military operations without military support. The media will choose among the multiple ways to capture the battlefield story: embedding journalists, using unilaterals, using freelancers or using a combination. The media chooses embedding when it best supports the objective of getting a journalist to the story.

News organizations have a tremendous influence over the public. History shows that strategic leaders were keenly aware of the media's influence. During the Civil War, President Lincoln sought war correspondents out in order to get information to the public quicker and, at times, better.[6] During the world wars, both the United States and Great Britain's strategic leaders highlighted the importance of the media. Former President Theodore Roosevelt penned a letter to Sir Edward Grey, England's Foreign Secretary, stating if the British wanted to influence American public opinion, the British

needed to reassess their media strategy.[7] Once the British determined they needed additional resources to defeat the Germans, their propaganda bureau began targeting the American press in order to influence it.[8] When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the media's influence played a significant role, from headlines about the Germans' sinking the *Lusitania,* to multiple articles painting the picture of good versus evil.[9] The Germans learned a lesson from the British during World War I concerning the importance of the media's ability to influence others and changed their approach on how their reporters would cover World War II. Germans required anyone affiliated with news production -- journalists, cameramen, writers, radio broadcasters, etc. – to join the newly created propaganda unit in order to influence the homeland, the enemy, and other nations.[10] U.S. military leaders understood the importance of correspondents as well. General Eisenhower summed it up best when he said, "Public opinion wins war."[11] Beginning with the invasion of North Africa, controlling war correspondents became part of military planning.[12]

The military preference to plan for and manage the media's role on the battlefield proved irrelevant in Somalia where media were already covering the humanitarian crisis before U.S. forces arrived. The media's coverage of starvation and civil war taking place in Somalia stirred the world's emotion and caused both the United Nations and the U.S. Government to act. The U.S. military involvement in Somalia began in August 1992, supporting a multinational United Nations relief effort, Operation Provide Relief.[13] What started as a humanitarian mission quickly escalated to a peacekeeping mission then a peace enforcement mission in an effort to sustain the success of the humanitarian operation.[14] Once offensive operations began there were casualties. The media, not

under the control of the military, showed Somalis dragging dead U.S. servicemen through the streets of Mogadishu. This created an outcry back in the United States and led to the military's withdrawal.[15] In Haiti, in 1994, media reports may have played a role in preventing the United States military from invading Haiti. The United States and Haitian national leadership were in discussion about options to quell violence in that nation, but it wasn't until the media began broadcasting military forces had departed installations for Haiti that the Haitian military leadership agreed to permissive intervention by U.S. forces.[16]

Military Control of Media. Until the latter part of the 20th century, military leaders used two methods to control the media: censored journalists' articles or limited journalists' access. Over 500 reporters covered the Civil War. Military control was limited to censorship due to the easy access reporters had to the battlefield. Censorship failed initially due to improper oversight, evidenced by newspapers revealing classified information (details of planned operations); but its use improved by the end of the war.[17] During World War I, military commanders began to exert tighter control by limiting journalists' access to information. All nations involved in World War I used censorship.[18] The British military placed one of their officers in charge of writing about the war's progress in order to inform the public yet still vetted his reports through several generals before release.[19] Russian and German military leaders refused to allow correspondents near the front line and British military leaders ordered journalists on the battlefield arrested and expelled if captured.[20] Controlling what journalists reported continued during World War II. The United States began censoring information immediately following the attack at Pearl Harbor to prevent Americans from knowing just how severe

the attack was and in attempt to keep Japan from knowing the extent of damages as well.[21] During World War II, journalists did not seem to mind the censorship; correspondents felt they were doing their part to support the war effort and at least one believed censorship may have led to reporters being better informed due to the willingness military personnel of all ranks to share their stories.[22]

However, the military changed media strategies for Vietnam. The military accredited over 600 journalists to cover the Vietnam War once they signed an agreement to abide by ground rules that focused on military operational security.[23] The military did not require articles to go before a military review prior to release and journalists could go wherever they wanted.[24] The military-media battlefield relationship changed in the absence of censorship. Drew Middleton, the New York Times military correspondent, believed the change was due to the absence of censorship. Military personnel shared more operational information to journalists knowing anything the journalist wrote about had to clear the military's review process. However, without the censorship process, military personnel either wouldn't talk to journalists or would tell the journalists to "ask the public relations people" for information about the war.[25] As the war continued, the military-media relationship soured over the nature of journalists' reports. Many within the government, the military and the American public believe the media's coverage of the Vietnam War played a significant role in the United States defeat.[26]

The Department of Defense significantly changed its media strategy after Vietnam. During the Grenada operation, the first U.S. military operation since Vietnam, military leaders limited journalists' access to the area of operations. The United States paid attention to how England handled the media during their war with Argentina, the

Falklands' War, and determined the media would not have access to the military operation for the first three days.[27] The Navy used sea and air assets to prevent the media's access as journalists attempted to reach the island via boat.[28] The media complained vociferously about being kept away from the island; as a result, the Department of Defense reassessed how to deal with the media in future operations.[29]

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John W. Vessey Jr, directed MG (Retired) Winant Sidle to preside over a Chairman's Panel on Media-Military Relations, later referred to as the Sidle Panel. Sidle was a retired Public Affairs Officer who was Chief of Information in Vietnam between 1967 and 1969.[30] The panel's goal was to identify how to conduct military operations that allow the media to keep the American public informed without putting service members or the security of the operation at risk. The panel recommended military leaders should properly plan for the media's inclusion during the planning phase of the operation. It recommended media pools for limited initial access by a small pool of reporters who would then share reports, photos and video, with transfer to normal media operations as early as possible.[31] Operation Just Cause, in Panama, was the first post-Sidle Panel military operation. The press pool did not work the way the Sidle Panel intended. A small pool of media was there, but the military kept reporters in a hangar during the initial operations versus trying to get them with operational units prior to executing their missions.[32] Operation Desert Shield/Storm was the next opportunity to implement the Sidle Panel recommendations. The Department of Defense activated the media pools prior to initiating offensive operations. However, the pools were slow in actually getting to the theater of operation due to Saudi Arabia refusing to allow journalists in country.[33] Press pools found that the military

managed media access and travel, leading to the media accusations of censorship.[34] Frustration with the military's pool system led some media organizations to file a legal case, claiming violation of journalists' first amendment right to freedom of expression.[35] Other journalists, determined to cover the war, found ways around the military pool system. They were known as "unilaterals".[36] The military had no control of these types of journalists and if the military (U.S. or Iraqi) caught these reporters on the battlefield, they were detained or sent out of country.[37]

In the late 1990s, the military's evolving efforts to manage media on the battlefield led to a new kind of relationship. During military operations in Bosnia (ground operation in 1995) and Kosovo (air operation in 1999), the military first used the term embedded press as the way to identify the military-media relationship; a reporter was assigned to a unit, deployed with it and lived with it.[38] Although embedded media was used for both operations, the media were not able to get an accurate account of the story in Kosovo.[39] Journalists were in the aircraft while the military executed its mission, but were unable to assess the outcome from the air.[40] Journalists' position was that military operations conducted predominantly from the air did not give the media the newsworthy stories they sought. Reporters were skeptical about military reports of operational success because of the Operation DESERT STORM experience when military leaders overstated the success of the air campaign. The Kosovo leadership brought to the reporters' attention the effects of the aerial bombardment by depicting stories and pictures of the devastation created by the allied bombing campaign.[41]

When Operation Enduring Freedom began in Afghanistan, there was no time to include the media in the planning phase of this operation. The Special Forces

spearheaded this operation and Pentagon officials did not believe reporters could cover Special Forces units without compromising security.[42] As with DESERT STORM, host nation Uzbekistan refused to allow media into the country and the Department of Defense was more concerned about staging rights than media presence.[43] Operation ANACONDA's embedded media coverage highlighted the benefit of having media embed with the unit, as the world was able to see the professionalism and heroism of the United States military. Positive embed experiences began to change the institutional attitude of senior military leadership on how they needed to deal with media in future military operations.

In the last century the military recognized the need to change its strategy in dealing with the media during military operations but struggled with the acceptable risk to operational security. The military-media battlefield relationship evolved from controlling the media through censorship to controlling it through limited access and, in the 1990s, to embedding journalists with military units. The media constantly pressed the military for better battlefield access and routinely complained about the military's media strategy. The military embedded media in the late 1990s coverage of the Balkans, but it wasn't until Operation Enduring Freedom that embedding media gained a foothold as a strategy in the military-media battlefield relationship. The military recognized that embedding minimized operational security risk and provided opportunity to influence media reports by giving front-row seat to operations.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Experience

Military leadership saw the benefits of embedding media during Afghanistan and determined the same strategy would allow them to meet the military's media objectives

for Iraq. The media agreed to a list of ground rules because embedding would give reporters excellent access to the story. As the military began contingency planning for a potential invasion of Iraq, the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD PA) was actively planning to embed the media with military units throughout the area of operations. On October 30, 2002, Victoria Clarke, the ASD PA, informed the news bureau chiefs that if there should be military operations, the leadership was committed to them having access to troops in the field.[44] In February 2003, the Secretary of Defense sent Public Affairs Guidance to all commanders, with guidance to accept embedded reporters in their units in order to tell the factual story, good or bad. The premise was that if we didn't tell the story, someone else would.[45] The embedded media plan offered unprecedented access to military action and to commanders' insights, which the media would not accomplish through other ways. The Department of Defense had two objectives for the embedded media program; neutralize the disinformation efforts of our adversaries and demonstrate the professionalism of the U.S. military.[46] The media's objective was to provide fair, accurate and balanced reporting. Military commanders were to plan on including the media during OIF and the Secretary of Defense's staff was responsible for managing embeds which included allocating slots to media organizations. Over 600 journalists, photographers, television crews and other news personnel were embedded with U.S. and coalition military units during OIF I.[47]

Embedding media allowed the Department of Defense to accomplish the two objectives it set out to achieve when determining which strategy to use. The United States Army War College hosted a conference September 3-5, 2003, "The Reporters on

the Ground: The Military and Media's Experience with the Embedded Journalists During Operation Iraqi Freedom." Military representatives believed the military objectives were achieved and identified benefits exceeding the original military objectives. They identified the critical timing of the Department of Defense decision – early enough to allow for proper planning to take place. One of the military objectives was to neutralize the disinformation efforts of our adversaries, and conference attendees identified multiple examples. Mohammad Saeed al-Sahhaf, the Information Minister of Iraq, was a master of propaganda. A clear example of embedded media refuting the information put out by Iraq's Information Minister is when the embedded media were reporting American tanks were in Baghdad, at the same time the Information Minister was emphatically exclaiming there were no American troops in Baghdad.[48] Iraq's Information Minister attempted to use embedded media reports to substantiate his claim that the Iraqis had American forces bogged down in Umm Qasr, but the *USA Today* published a report explaining U.S. Marine forces were moving through that area slowly to ensure civilians were not mixed in with Iraqi soldiers.[49] The conference attendees discussed the way that the program met the second objective, to show the professionalism of the U.S. military, with stories captured throughout the military operation. Some stories, although geared to specifically cover a mission, still captured the actions of individuals. Other stories were to capture the activities of a unit while not conducting missions. Mike Wilson, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, indicated during the Reporters on the Ground conference that his goal was to get two stories a day, one about a battle and another profiling a soldier. The conference revealed a secondary effect, that family members were kept informed by embedded journalists' reports. It didn't matter whether

or not the story was about their loved one, if it was about the unit, families were able to understand what their loved one was doing.[50] LTC Terry Farrell, a squadron commander, during OIF I had CNN embedded with him and stated his unit's family readiness group created a 24-hour television watch at his squadron's headquarters to monitor reports from CNN or other television stations, which calmed the family members.[51] Retired officers often find their way into newsrooms as special guests during military operations, but until OIF, there had been limited interaction, much less day-to-day, between journalists and service members. Media representatives at the conference said that embedding built a relationship of trust with those he/she was embedded with. This newfound relationship of trust could be the most significant impact on future military/media relationship.

Once the war started the media coverage was non-stop; embedded reporters had in fact given news organizations access to the story. The media wanted to capture the story while providing fair, accurate and balanced reporting. The military's media strategy embedded reporters throughout the military's tactical and operational levels; providing reporters access to the service members executing the missions and the leadership that planned the missions. Several members of the media were at the "tip of the spear." David Zucchino, a correspondent with the Los Angeles Times, was embedded with the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) 2d Brigade Combat Team, commanded by COL Dave Perkins and reported on the brigade's exploits in capturing Baghdad as a result of the brigade's "Thunder Run" operation.[52] Not only did the media have access to these action stories, they had the ability to broadcast them live without censorship. Additionally, since embedded media were at the military's operational level,

journalists were able to advise news editors not to publish some initially received negative stories based off the operational knowledge they had access to.[53] A second effect for the media was the ability to get an education about the military. Prior to the war, each service conducted a media boot camp for media representatives to familiarize them with what to expect in Iraq. These camps were not required, were not designed to get reporters into shape, and did not guarantee selection as an embed reporter. The training camps covered basic military knowledge, law of war, rules of engagement, embed procedures and ground rules, and survival skills including training in Nuclear, Chemical and Biological warfare.[54]

Military and media representatives participating in The Reporters on the Ground Conference, as well as other studies, identified areas that warrant the military to re-look in order to better understand the battlefield relationship. Three areas covered here are rules, equipment issues and unilateral reporters. The rules should cover examples of what is/isn't acceptable concerning security (locations, future operations, etc.), casualties, and enemy prisoners of war. The rules created lively discussion during the conference with a consensus that the rules were too long and were too confusing in the area of access to classified information. Everyone understood the need for ground rules but believed there should have been a heavy dose of common sense and simplicity applied. One reporter referred back to Vietnam saying reporters only had one page with "maybe six rules." Senior leaders of First Battalion, Second Marines determined the rules weren't going to work for their unit so the commander provided simplified guidance to his Marines to tell the reporters what they know and control when the reporters could release their reports. Another senior military officer admitted he never saw the rules and

stated there isn't time to wade through "things like that." His dealings with the media boiled down to the simple rule of do what is right.[55] For the most part the media did what was right; only a handful of reporters were permanently removed from embedded status for violating the rules, some were temporarily removed but allowed to embed again.[56]

The conference identified two equipment issues, one of which had the capability to significantly impact military operations: journalists' inability to use their own vehicles and the journalists' use of satellite phones. The OIF Public Affairs Guidance stipulated the media were not allowed to have their own vehicles.[57] This allowed the military to control media movement. Journalists couldn't stay behind to report when the military continued moving forward. News organizations were willing to accept that stipulation in order to embed. Some broadcast news crews found it difficult to operate without their own vehicle, but for most reporters the inability to have their own vehicle was not an issue. On few occasions, the military leaders actually allowed reporters embedding to use their own vehicles, but typically the units squeezed reporters and their equipment into military vehicles. In some instances, commanders modified a military vehicle in an effort to support the media.[58] When military commanders invited journalists into command vehicles, they offered greater insight as to what was going on. Riding in military vehicles provided reporters the opportunity to get to know the soldiers in the vehicle. One embed reporter stated, "I hitched rides in different vehicles and got some of my best interviews with the different soldiers I met."[59] The second equipment issue dealt with the journalists' satellite phones, which transmitted a signal indicating location. The enemy could potentially use this signal to target the location, with a significant impact to military security if the reporter was embedded. Reporters were told they could

no longer use the satellite phones.[60] With the decision to embed reporters made early on in the planning phase of the operation, better coordination should have taken place to ensure compatibility between reporters' equipment and the military.

The media's position on embedding was that they were unable to get the entire story. The media's preferred method to cover operations is to use a combination of journalists.[61] The military needs to develop plans for dealing with unilateral reporters just like they did for embedded reporters. Unilaterals provide the media another way to capture the news and just like embeds were accredited by the military to cover the military operations. The primary issue with unilaterals is trust, or lack of. Trust was a recurring theme shared by both media and military representatives during the Reporters On the Ground Conference. Embeds often times joined their unit a week or two prior to deploying allowing them time to develop a relationship with the military leadership and enlisted members. This same type of relationship is not there when dealing with unilateral reporters. Other factors also affected the level of trust in dealing with unilaterals. Reports indicated terrorists would impersonate media in an effort to gain access to military locations; a tactic used successfully in Afghanistan. Reports that some unilateral reporters were caught trying to sneak into camps further exasperated these relationships. Additionally, there were concerns that a car bomb would be placed on a vehicle that had "TV" on it.

The Department of Defense's decision to aggressively implement the embedded media strategy proved effective for both the military and the media during major combat operations. The military and the media not only achieved their objectives, but also realized unexpected benefits, most notably a new atmosphere of trust between the

soldiers and embedded journalists, largely because reporters' presence was not an operational security problem. The program was not without faults and the military has taken numerous steps to identify those problem areas. With more thorough planning, these areas should not be an issue in the future.

Embedding appears to remain a benefit for both military and media during future combat operations, although we may never again see the size and scope of embedding as seen at the beginning of OIF. Embedding also appears beneficial to both during counterinsurgency operations as well, primarily for the military. Overall, it appears the military needs the media more in order to accomplish the military objectives, than the media needs the military in order to accomplish media objectives.

Will Embedded Media Work Across the Spectrum of Operations?

The assessment above revealed that embedded media worked during major combat operations. For embedding to work effectively, there must be a perceived benefit by both the military and the media. As OIF entered the stability operations phase, the media no longer perceived a benefit and reassessed risks and costs. The media, anticipating a reduction in hostilities and improved freedom of movement, made the decision to dis-embed, allowing them to move more freely around Iraq.[62] Despite the military's continued intent to maintain media coverage, neutralize misinformation, and profile U.S. military professionalism, the media's decisions to end embedding significantly impacted the military's ability to continue to achieve its media objectives.

Operation VALHALLA was a Special Operations mission that took place three years after the announcement major combat operations were over and demonstrates why the military needs embedded reporters in other operational settings. On May 1,

2003, the President announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq and the number of reporters covering military operations in Iraq began to decline. There were 422 embeds in April when Baghdad was captured but only 108 embeds on the day after the President's declaration.[63] In succeeding phases of OIF, misinformation and disinformation continued but as the number of embeds declined, the ability to sustain the neutralization of disinformation efforts declined as well. The VALHALLA experience demonstrated the enemy's capabilities and the importance of embedded reporters to the military. As early as 45 minutes after Special Operations forces conducted Operation VALHALLA, insurgents posted images and a press release to a web site, manipulating the impressions that U.S. soldiers had killed men praying at a mosque.[64] It took the Department of Defense three days to respond to and refute the accusation despite the fact that U.S. Combat Camera photographers had pictorial evidence to dispute the insurgent's claims. The Department of Defense took so long to contest the claims, the time delay allowed the insurgent's message to appear truthful. Had an embedded reporter been part of this operation in lieu of "combat camera" personnel, a rebuttal could have been much timelier.

History has shown that the enemy's use of disinformation will be present in all kinds of military operations. Anticipating adversaries will use misinformation as a tool for their cause; the military must improve its timeliness in responding. Additionally, the military should maintain an effective military-media relationship in which media reports can provide timely, independent alternatives to misinformation. Today's adversaries in Afghanistan and Iraq are extremely skilled in manipulating information and broadcasting it to the world in an attempt to influence public opinion. Their use of information today is

geared towards stirring hatred towards the United States in an effort to build support for their cause and get others to join the insurgency.

For any imminent military operation, in addition to major combat operations, both the military and media should consider the embedding strategy. Effective strategy balances ends, ways, and means as tested against the criteria of feasibility, suitability and acceptability: are resources adequate, will the strategy achieve the ends, and are the costs acceptable? As commanders plan for stability and support operations – peacekeeping, peace enforcement and counterinsurgency –they must anticipate media interest and plan an effective, balanced strategy.

For military commanders, the OIF objectives—to neutralize disinformation and to demonstrate the professionalism of U.S. forces—will likely remain the objectives for military-media relationship in any military operation. Embedding has been shown to be a suitable strategy to achieve that end. OIF-I showed that resources required for embedding were reasonable. In fact there were fewer resources required than for pool operations in DESERT STORM when military units were responsible to move media personnel and products around the battlefield. When military commanders weigh the cost against ends, they consider operational security risk. The ad hoc embedding of the 1990s, the ad hoc embedding in Afghanistan and the major embedding program for OIF revealed that including the media throughout the tactical and operational level did not compromise any military operation.

Media decision-makers will make the same strategy assessment with different criteria. Their objective is to deliver an interesting, accurate news product that will maintain or build new audiences. Embedding can be a suitable strategy but not the only

one. The media will weigh the value of access to action and access to commanders against the fact that they cannot move freely. When the media considered costs against ends, they determined in later OIF phases that the financial costs of insurance and security were not acceptable. Also, they consider the loss of independence to be unacceptable and unnecessary when the security risk is lower than in major combat operations.

News organizations have demonstrated their willingness to coexist with the military on the battlefield as embedded media as long as the potential gains outweigh expected costs. Media organizations must weigh newsworthiness, audience interest, competitor participation, length of the operation and fiscal capability. War is expensive and not just for the military; it is very expensive for the media as well. As broadcast network executives prepared to invest in this first major embed program, they estimated expenditures of about $1 million a day on war coverage, and expected to forfeit a similar amount in advertising revenue during the first couple of days of war, which they planned to carry without commercials.[65] Some smaller media organizations, based on forecasted costs to cover the war, traded their Department of Defense allocated embed slots to CNN in exchange for freelance contributions.[66] News organizations are businesses and must balance the cost of covering military operations with potential gains. According to Advertising Age, the networks lost an estimated $100 million in revenues in the first 48 hours of coverage.[67] However, covering major military combat operations provided opportunity to capture headline stories and capture media market share. The same payoff is not generally expected in other phases of military operations. The media reports less often on newsworthy stories associated with counterinsurgency operations

in Iraq, such as elections, schools, roads, and restored power; these stories normally aren't on the front page of newspapers or opening stories for broadcast media. The media has to balance whether the costs incurred to cover other phases of operations are profitable. Media costs to cover the story vary depending on how they choose to cover it: unilaterals, embeds, or freelancers. The Project for Excellence in Journalism began assessing the state of the news media in 2004.[68] In 2005, audiences appeared to gravitate towards lighter news, which is cheaper for the media to cover.[69] In 2007, the Iraq War was one of the top three stories with coverage hovering around 16 percent; however, in 2008 the Iraq War coverage reduced to four percent. The explanation was story fatigue and competition mentality - cover what the competition is covering.[70] A November 2007 study, by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, showed that news interest for OIF dropped from a high of 63 percent in 2003 to an average of 44 percent in 2004 and continued to decline to 33 percent through 2007.[71] Embedding media is best suited for high-profile stories, with limited means of access to the information, covering a short period of time, with competitors doing the same. Any deviation from these characteristics makes the cost of embedding too great to news organizations.

Technological advancements have changed how the world receives information and how the media develop news. In 1980, television news changed significantly when the Cable News Network first provided 24-hour news coverage, a stark alternative to the normal morning and evening news. In 1986, Peter Stoler stated, "The electronic media, radio and television, have become the world's most powerful means of communication…They, more than any other institution…determine what every

American knows, thinks, and wants."[72] Today that statement can be revised to say the Internet has become the world's most powerful means of communication. In the 2006 Annual Report on American Journalism, research indicates power governing what the public knows is moving away from journalist to citizens; citizens are taking a more active role and creating their own news.[73] Anyone with a cell phone and Internet access can fill the role of a journalist and influence the public. The military should no longer be concerned with trying to control the media's access to information during military operations when "anyone" with this new capability can fill the void of journalists not being present. The ability to provide more, better and faster news makes the military-media relationship more important today.

The balance among ends, ways and means for the media-military relationship can be shifted. The Department of Defense could look for ways to reduce the media's financial costs, if the military determined its objectives justified the expense. An example would be the military paying reporters' insurance premiums. The military could also shift the relationship by providing the media access to information they normally are not privy to. This would generate new audience interest and create competition amongst news organizations. The military would meet its objectives through this increased interest and competition. Also, the military will need to face the likelihood that media will not commit to all-embedded operations in the future, and should create processes to routinely accept embeds for short periods.

In looking to future plans for media in the battlespace, military leaders can apply the understanding that every operation requires a unique plan, with branches and sequels. The same is true for determining the media strategy. Major combat operations

appear to be the most enticing operations for the media to accept embedding based on the story newsworthiness and expected lack of freedom of movement. Shaping operations, and stability and support operations -- peacekeeping, peace enforcement and counterinsurgency -- appear to be best suited for the media to cover in a manner other than embedding based on the expectation of freedom of movement, ability to capture good but not great stories, and expectation that audience interest will not endure an abundance of press. However, military leaders know an escalation of violence could happen at anytime during stability and support operations. Plans for media engagement can include a branch or sequel that incorporates the media in temporary embedded status in order to accomplish both the military and the media objectives.

After a century of experimentation about the military-media relationship on the battlefield, experience reveals that media will be in the battlespace, and that technology advances make it possible for anyone to report news. The military should be concerned that all future adversaries will most likely engage in disinformation operations and must prepare to counter that disinformation. It would be easy to say since embedded media worked in the last military operation, it will work in all future operations. Analysis shows that that is not the case. The ends-ways-means balance for military and media will not always support the embedding strategy. Although embedding may not work for all operations, the military and the media demonstrated during Operation Iraqi Freedom the ability to work together while accomplishing separate goals. This same cooperation should be applied when planning media strategies for all future military operations.

Endnotes

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[24] ibid, 465

[25] ibid, 465 and 345

[26] Dr. Donald P. Wright and Colonel Timothy R. Reese; *On Point II, Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM May 2003-January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008) 291

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[47] Richard K. Wright, "Assessment of the DoD Embedded Media Program",(Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Defense Analyses, September 2004) S-1

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[49] Christopher Paul and James J. Kim, *Reporters on the Battlefield, the Embedded Press System in Historical Context*, 56-57

[50] *Reporters on the Ground: The Military and Media's Experience with the Embedded Journalists During Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Conference Transcript (Carlisle, PA: Collins Center, September 3-5, 2003). Author was provided transcript by USAWC, PAO. Joe Galloway talking about an email he received talking about how families win because of the media. Ross Simpson from AP radio who was embedded with First Battalion, Fifth Marines stated he received an email stating "you helped this mother sleep soundly tonight." Page 15 of transcripts

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