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A PUBLIC RELATIONS MODEL
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DURING COMBAT CONTINGENCIES

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree Master of Journalism in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

by

Leta Y. Deyerle, B.S., Ed.M.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1990

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To my mother, Janelle Speers

Statement "A" per telecon Maj. Jill Whisker. Total Army Personnel Command/ TAPC-OPB-D. 200 Stovall. Alexandria, VA 22332-0411.
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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This purpose of this study was to determine the most appropriate model of public relations for the Department of Defense to use during combat contingencies. First Amendment issues regarding right of access by the media and pertinent Supreme Court rulings were examined. Media-military relations during World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Grenada and Panama invasions were discussed. The study concluded that the adoption of a two-way symmetic model is best suited to serve the needs of the military while assisting the media fulfill its obligation to inform the American people.

Advisor's Signature

A Public Relations Model for the Department of Defense During Combat Operations

The Department of Defense (DOD) has established policies to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and members representing the press, radio and television may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Three principles of information which apply in implementing this program are:

> Information will only be withheld when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.
>
> Information will be made fully and readily available consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification...
>
> Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.[1]

Despite DOD policy, many military leaders avoid contact with the media whom they consider excessively critical of the military establishment. Moreover, most senior commanders, if given the option, would exclude the media from all combat operations because of the perceived threat to military and national security. However, when any branch of the Armed Forces is involved in conflicts which may produce long-term national or international ramifications, commanders need to

be concerned with keeping the public informed and maintaining good relations with the media to achieve that end.

Conflicts between military commanders and the media during the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 emphasized the need for an effective public relations model for the DOD to use during combat contingencies. Implementation of the appropriate model would allow DOD to enforce its principles of information and simultaneously maintain appropriate security measures.

An analysis of relevant information available will show that the two-way symmetric model of public relations would be most suitable for future combat operations. To support this concept, an explanation of the four principle models of public relations will be presented. Supreme Court rulings and First Amendment issues regarding right of access by the media will also be examined. Finally, an evaluation of military-media relations during World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Grenada and Panama Invasions will be provided.

Four Models of Public Relations

Before selecting an appropriate public relations model for any organization, it is essential to understand the definition, purpose, and principal models of public relations. In their book, Managing Public Relations, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt define public relations as the management of communications between an organization and its publics.[2]

Scott Cutlip and Allen Center, whose Effective Public Relations text has served as a guide for military and civilian practitioners, state that the purposes of public relations are to: conserve favorable opinion, crystallize unformed or latent opinion, and to change or neutralize hostile opinion. These purposes are just as applicable to military public affairs as they are to civilian commercial and industrial public relations.[3] The DOD should be especially concerned with the media's role in keeping the public informed and gaining public understanding and support.

The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard depend upon the public for all the essential elements of their existence:

- Legal authority to exist and to function within their assigned areas of responsibility.
- Funds required to procure materials and pay personnel.
- Manpower and materials.
- The kind of public recognition that any such organization requires if it is to maintain high morale and perform at peak efficiency.[4]

In those circumstances when the Armed Forces are required to engage in combat operations, public support is even more critical. Selecting the correct public relations model to deal with the media at such times is crucial.

Grunig and Hunt call the four principle models of public relations: (1) the press agent/publicity model, (2) the

public-information model, (3) the two-way asymmetric model,
5
and (4) the two-way symmetric model. These models differ in the purpose or function that they provide for an organization.

In the press agentry/publicity model, the public relations function is primarily propoganda. Practitioners spread information about an organization which may be incomplete, distorted, or half-true, in order to persuade the public.

The purpose of the public information model is the dissemination of information, but not necessarily with a persuasive intent. A journalist in residence usually reports information about his organization to the public.

The two-way asymmetric public relations model has a function more like that of press agentry/publicity, except that the purpose is best described as scientific persuasion. Practitioners use social science theory and research about attitudes and behavior to persuade the public to accept the organization's point of view or to gain support for the organization.

In the fourth model, the two-way symmetric, practitioners serve as mediators between organizations and their publics. The purpose is a mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. Although this model also uses social science theory and methods, it relies on theories of communication rather than theories of persuasion for planning and evaluation of public relations.

The first two models use one-way communication, from the organization to the publics. Practitioners of these models generally view communication as telling, not listening. The models differ in that press agents/publicists do not always feel obligated to present a complete picture of an organization or product, whereas public information specialists do.

With the last two models, communication flows both to and from publics. There is, however, a difference in the nature of the two-way communication. The two-way asymmetric model is imbalanced in favor of the organization. It is asymmetric in that public relations do not change the organization, but attempt to change public attitudes and behavior. Communication from the public comes in the form of feedback which may in turn be used for persuasion.

The results of two-way symmetric public relations, in contrast, is usually better understanding rather than persuasion. With this model, the public is just as likely to persuade an organization to change as the organization is to change the publics' attitudes or behavior. Often, however, neither will change attitudes or behavior. If both parties communicate well enough to understand the other, the effort is considered successful.[6]

To effectively provide information to the public on combat operations, such a mutual understanding is required by both military commanders and representatives of the media. The military must understand that a primary function of the

media is to report news affecting the defense establishment in a timely and accurate fashion. The media, in turn, must understand commanders' concern for the safety of their troops and military security.

A lack of understanding by both organizations in the past has led to disputes over constitutional rights afforded to the media and constitutional protection provided to the DOD with regard to national security.

First Amendment Issues and Supreme Court Rulings

The First Amendment to the Constitutional, as drafted by the first Congress in 1789, states that "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech or of the press ..." Today these words raise theoretical controversies, such as whether the First Amendment affords the press a special right of access to information and events, or whether the free-press clause was intended to do anything more than prohibit government restraints before publication.7

The area within the circle of constitutionally guaranteed freedom of the press may have been as perplexing to the founding fathers as it is today. Recognizing possible abuses and shortcomings on part of the press, John Marshall, as Secretary of State, commented over 190 years ago:

> That this liberty is often carried to excess; that it has sometimes degenerated into licentousness, is seen and lamented but the remedy has not been discovered. Perhaps it is an evil inseparable from the good with which it is allied; perhaps it is a

> shoot which cannot be stripped from the stalk without wounding vitally the plant from which it is torn. However desirable those measures might be which might correct without enslaving the press, they have never yet been devised.[8]

One controversial area regarding press freedom concerns the media's perceived right of access during combat operations and DOD's requirement to protect national security. David Sobel, counsel to the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., points outs that there has been a conflict between First Amendment values and the claimed needs of national security since the earliest days of our Republic. Just seven years after the ratification of the Bill of Rights, Congress enacted the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, which Justice Brennan said (in New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 1964), "first crystallized a national awareness of the central meaning of the First Amendment."[9]

In 1960, Leonard Levy wrote a book, Legacy of Suppression, which has dominated much discussion of the First Amendment since that time. Levy concluded that freedom of the press meant no more than freedom from prior restraint to the Framers of the Constitution. He maintained that the Framers did not plan to institute any broad form of freedom of expression and intended to leave intact the law of seditious libel.

David Anderson, a law professor at the University of Texas, Austin, disagreed with Levy's assertions in an

article in the UCLA Law Review. He argued that the Framers of the Constitution were unanimous in denying Congress the power to regulate the press. He contended that freedom of the press was indeed a primary concern of the framers since it was a product of revolutionary thought. His interpretation was that most of the Framers perceived freedom of the press as necessary to ensure the success of government by the people.[10]

Another controversial area disputed by the Framers of the Constitution was the authority to commit the nation to battle. Although they gave Congress sole power to declare war, they recognized that unity of command was essential and made the President Commander-in-Chief, giving him potential authority to order troops into situations where war might become inevitable.

As early as 1801, however, President Jefferson complained that waiting for Congress to declare war enabled him to order only defensive actions. Later presidents took a less restrictive look at this authority and military actions begun by presidents far outnumber declared wars in this nation's history.[11]

In Fleming v. Page (1850), the powers of the Commander-in-Chief were first challenged in the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Taney speaking for the unanimous court said:

> As Commander-in-Chief, he (the President) is authorized to direct the movements of the naval and

> military forces placed by law at his command, and to employ them in the manner he may deem most effectual to harass and conquer and subdue the enemy. He may invade the hostile country, and subject it to the sovereignty and authority of the United States.[12]

The issue that further confounds both of these earlier controversies--what to do about the press in wartime--has been a source of tension for governments as long as the nation has been engaged in battle. Byron Price, a former chief of the AP Washington Bureau, a captain in World War I, and Director of the Office of Censorship during World War II pointed out the need for some degree of jouralistic restraints during combat situations:

> Both experience and common sense testify convincingly to the dangers which might result to a nation struggling for its life if the public prints were left untrammeled and unguided by considerations of security. General Sherman may have been guilty of characteristic overemphasis when he referred to war correspondents as "spies" because they were giving information to the enemy; yet his observation was not without its modicum of truth. Of sounder mold is the classic dictum of Justice Holmes (Schenck v. United States, 1919): "When a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its efforts that their

> utterance will not be endured as long as men fight."
>
> The best way to protect military information is to keep it out of circulation at home, and in this field the responsibility of the newspaper is very great. The need for restraint, either self-imposed or otherwise, cannot be questioned. The only debatable element is how the restraint should be applied.[13]

A discussion of the First Amendment and national security was the priority topic at a symposium on foreign affairs and the Constitution held in 1988. One panel member, Henry Mark Holzer, a faculty member at Brooklyn Law School, specialized in constitutional law in private practice before he began teaching and writing books on the subject. Holzer professed that he was "becoming very tired of hearing that the First Amendment is virtually the only provision of the American Constitution."[14]

According to Holzer, activities which sometimes chill free expression must be weighed against letting sensitive, classified, and highly important national security and national defense information get out. Such a possibility, he concluded, could cast a terrible chill on planning activities that are important to American national interests. Holzer noted that there are other provisions in the body of the Constitution that are of equal, if not greater, importance than the one that supposedly creates a right to provide information about planned American military activities.[15]

Don Oberdorfer, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter for the Washington Post and a former Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University, also served on the panel. He agreed with Holzer that it is "the right and responsibility of the government to keep legitimate secrets."[16] He mentioned that he realized the need to protect military operations in Vietnam. Oberdorfer also said, "I do not think the American press should publish or broadcast something in a tactical situation, such as American troops going into battle. I think to do that would be the height of absurdity."[17]

Julie Esther Keller elaborated further on the government's privilege to withhold sensitive government information in an article in the William Mitchell Law Review. According to Keller, the military and states secrets privilege has both legislative and constitutional origins. The Freedom of Information Act provides that "sensitive information relating to military plans, weapons, or operations, vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems ... may be closed to the public to protect national security interests."[18] Additionally, Article II of the Constitution allows the executive branch to control sensitive information as a constitutional perogative of the President as Commander-in-Chief.[19]

In Snepp v. United States (1980), the Supreme Court concluded that "the government had a compelling interest in protecting both the secrecy of information important to our national security and the appearance of confidentiality so

essential to the effective operations of our foreign service intelligence.[20]

Throughout the history of the nation, both the legislative and constitutional rights of the government have often conflicted with First Amendment guarantees for the press. Over the years, the Supreme Court has affirmed the rights of the press to furnish information that is of special concern to the public. Justices of the highest court have been very vocal in support of the indispensable function performed by the press.

In Branzburg v. Hayes (1972), Justice Potter Stewart stated:

> Enlightened choice by an informed citizenry is the basic ideal upon which an open society is premised, and a free press is thus indispensable to a free society ... A corollary of the right to publish must be the right to gather news. The full flow of information to the public protected by the free press guarantee would be severely curtailed if no protection whatever were afforded to the process by which news is assembled and disseminated ... No less important to the news dissemination process is the gathering of information.[21]

The Supreme Court, however, does not see press freedom as absolute. Results of several cases brought before the court have shown that First Amendment guarantees are indeed

limited. One such area is the right of access to information or events. In Saxbe v. Washington Post (1974), the Court clarified the extent of this right:

> It is one thing to say that a journalist is free to seek out sources of information not available to the public,that he is entitled to some constitutional protection of the confidentiality of such sources, and that the government cannot restrain the publication of news emanating from such sources. It is quite another to suggest that the Constitution imposed upon government the affirmative duty to make available to journalists sources of information not available to members of the public generally.[22]

According to Justice Stewart, "The Constitution does no more than assure the public and the press equal access once government has opened its doors."[23]

In Pell V. Procunier (1974), the court ruled that the First and Fourteenth Amendments bar government from interfering in any way with free press, but stated that the Constitution does not require government to accord press special access to information not shared by members of public.[24]

Once again in a 1978 case, Houchins v. KQED, Chief Justice Burger expressed the view that neither the First nor the Fourteenth Amendments mandated a right of access to government information within the government's control. He ruled that the news media had no constitutional right of

access to a county jail over and above that of other persons, to interview inmates and make sound recordings, films, and photographs for publication and broadcasting by newspapers, radio, and television.[25]

The Court further expanded its rulings regarding access to places not available to members of the public to include military facilities. In Greer v. Spock (1977), the Court held that a military base is not a public forum requiring general public access. Justice Stewart contended that the purpose of military reservations was to "train soldiers."[26]

One aspect of curtailing press freedom and access--perhaps the most sensitive issue in recent years--involves the ability of military commanders to deny what the press considers its First Amendment rights during wartime or combat operations. Justice Sutherland made a good statement of the conception of the relativity of constitutional rights during wartime in a passage from his opinion in U. S. v. Macintosh (1931):

> To the end that war may not result in defeat, freedom of speech, may, by act of Congress, be curtailed or denied so that the morale of the people and the spirit of the Army may not be broken by seditious utterances; freedom of the press curtailed to preserve our military plans and movements from the knowledge of the enemy; ... and other drastic powers, wholly inadmissable in time of peace, excercised to meet the emergencies of war.[27]

Some military members have even taken issue with their commanders' authority to curtail their perceived First Amendment rights in a combat environment. In Carlson v. Schlesinger (1975), the Court determined that:

> In combat zone situations, on bases in Vietnam, military commanders' decision to deny authority, under regulation, to publicly circulate petition to Congress calling for immediate cessation of hostilities in Vietnam, on grounds that such solicitations would pose a danger to discipline and morale, did not violate this (the first) amendment.[28]

In a peacetime decision, the Court of Military Appeals in U. S. v. Stuckey (1981) ruled: "Military commander's responsibilities with respect to installation or area over which he has command provide commander with basis for curtailing exercise of rights guaranteed by this clause (First Amendment) within the area under his command."[29]

Curtailing First Amendment rights of soldiers in a combat zone or on a military base is one thing, but applying those same standards to members of the public or press is seen as quite another issue. For instance, when military commanders have attempted to deny public or press access to combat zones, this action has been questioned through the court system.

Article II of the Constitution, as well as such cases as Fleming v. Page (1850), affirm the right of the President as

Commander-in-Chief to employ military and naval forces to invade hostile countries and subject them to the authority of the United States. However, the delegation of authority to subordinate military leaders in combat zones has created tension between the media and the military. Although the Supreme Court has previously established precedents refuting any special privilege of press access to areas not available to members of the public generally, the press still challenges the authority of the military to deny them access to combat areas.

One of the most controversial cases involving the right of press access surfaced during the invasion of Grenada in 1983. The press was denied access to the island for the first two days of the operation. In the aftermath of the invasion, the actions of the Department of Defense were challenged in the courts. Previous legal precedents were examined and one ruling, directly stemming from the Grenada invasion, was issued.

In "Flynt v. Weinberger (1984), Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler magazine, filed suit in federal district court, seeking declaratory and injunctive relief against Secretary of Defense Weinberger, alleging that the exclusion of Hustler magazine reporters from Grenada was a violation of the first amendment. Judge Gash ruled that:

> an injunction such as the one plaintiffs seek would limit the range of options available to commanders in the field in the future, possibly jeapordizing

> the success of military operations and the lives of military personnel and thereby gravely damaging the national interest.[30]

Richard Clurman, chairman of the board of Media and Society Seminars at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, pointed out that the media knows that "it has never had a constitutional right to go wherever they want, report whatever they choose, however they want."[31] Legally, he says, the Grenada ban did not present a real First Amendment isssue, but rather the aftermath demonstrated "that the press may no longer have much more public support in our democracy for its traditional rights than many other special interests groups."[32]

Historically, the Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment does not afford the press a special privilege of access to areas denied to the general public, including combat zones. The Court has also asserted that First Amendment rights can be restricted for the purpose of national security. Despite these court rulings and the military's exercise of authority to deny access during Grenada, the past successes of media-military relations in other wars have often been overlooked by both the Court and present military leaders.

Media-Military Relations During World War II

World War II was the most covered war in history, with more than 1600 correspondents describing battles in Europe and the Pacific.[33] "Thirty-seven reporters were killed and

112 were wounded. Six correspondents were in the planes when American aircraft first bombed Rome, and another was in the airplane that dropped the second atomic bomb on Japan ... When D-Day arrived, 78 newsmen accompanied the troops on ships and through the air. Before they left, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower told the correspondents, 'I believe that the old saw--'Public Opinion Wins War'--is true. Our country fights best when our people are best informed.'"[34]

A reporter landed with the troops at Omaha Beach and another was on Gen. Omar Bradley's command ship. Not only did reporters accompany troops into combat, the major press associations had been given advance notice of the invasion so that they could be prepared when it began. Because the notice was given so far in advance, one Associated Press (AP) telegrapher in London put the story on the wire one day before the landing at Normandy. Fortunately, this story was caught and killed before it could be transmitted.[35]

An incident such as this, if not checked in time, could have greatly damaged military security and the success of the military invasion. It also serves as an example of how an absolute freedom of the press could have been lethal to American fighting men and to the whole war campaign. Realizing the potential effects of untimely release of information, the government, the press corps, and military leaders operated under a number of controls which were aimed at not only protecting national security, but also fostering

support for the war effort. One such control was censorship.

Robert E. Summers, in a 1942 book, discussed censorship during World War II and the creation of the Office of Censorship by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In a statement released at a press conference in 1941, President Roosevelt said that although Americans abhorred censorship as much as they did war, that experience of our and other nations demonstrated that some degree of censorship was essential in wartime. His concern was that censorship be administered effectively and in harmony with the best interests of free institutions.

He indicated that it was necessary to the national security that military information which might be of aid to the enemy be scrupulously withheld at the source. Roosevelt also urged that a watch be set up to avoid such information reaching the enemy, inadvertantly or otherwise, through the medium of the mails, radio or cable transmission, or by any other means. Additionally, he called upon a "patriotic press and radio to abstain voluntarily from the dissemination of detailed information of certain kinds, such as reports of the movements of vessels and troops."[36]

In order that censorhip undertakings, required and voluntary, be coordinated in accordance with a single policy, President Roosevelt appointed Byron Price, executive news editor of the Associated Press, to be Director of Censorship, directly responsible to him.[37] Price brought to the job 29

years of experience, 22 of which were in Washington. Theodore F. Koop, formerly of the AP Washington bureau, was named as assistant director and later as deputy director. Price's staff eventually numbered 11,500 persons and the budget for his operation in 1943 was $26,500,000.[38]

President Roosevelt then established the Office of Censorship on December 19, 1941. In an Executive Order on that date, he prescribed the duties and functions of the Director of Censorship. This order included the establishment of a Censorship Operating Board to advise and aid the director.[39] This board consisted of a group of experienced editors of newspapers and magazines and radio newsmen on leave from their regular posts for rotating periods in Washington. Another 40 editors in various parts of the country were named to observe censorship in their part of their country and to urge compliance with a censorship code.[40]

Censorship plans previously worked out cooperatively by newsmen in a voluntary relationship with the Army, Navy, Post Office departments, and the Federal Communication Commission, were coordinated by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI and fused into a single plan. A Code of Wartime Practice for the press and radio was prepared with the advice and assistance of both media and distributed in printed form in January 1942.[41]

As director, Price in turn appointed J. Harold Ryan as broadcast censor and an assistant director of censorship. Ryan's responsibility was to deal primarily with problems

affecting radio. At the same time, Price named John H. Sorrells, executive editor of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, as assistant director of censorship in charge of press activities.[42]

Many of the guidelines under which the Office of Censorship operated were based on policies governing the release of war information by the Committee of War Information (CWI) of the Office of Facts and Figure (OFF). The CWI was actually the government's high command as far as war news policy was concerned. President Roosevelt had established the OFF on October 7, 1941, to correlate information on defense and foreign policy and to prevent issuance of inaccurate or contradictory statements.

Headed by Archibald MacLeish, Pulitzer prize-winning poet and the librarian of Congress, the OFF collected non-secret information from defense agencies which might be given to the news media upon request.[43] The agency then published an official statement which covered policies for handling news from all of the agencies most actively engaged in the war effort, including the Army, Navy, and Maritime Commission:

> It is the policy of this government to make public the maximum of information on military, naval, production, and other matters concerning the war, which can be revealed without giving aid to the enemy. This policy is based upon the firm conviction that the people of a democracy are

> entitled to know the facts, whether they are good or bad, cheerful or depressing. On the other hand, our people will willingly forego knowledge of those facts whose revelation will help the enemy to harm us. Where there is conflict between consideration of public information and of military security, every attempt is made to provide such form of publication as will inform the public while reducing the military risk to a minimum. Under no circumstances does the government publish information which is known to be untrue. Under no circumstances does the government withhold news from publication on the ground that the news is bad or depressing. When news is deliberately withheld, it is withheld for reasons of military security.[44]

At the War and Navy Departments, information was provided by officers of high rank. Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, and Charles Edison, Frank Knox, and James V. Forrestal, who served successively as secretaries of the Navy from 1940 until the end of the war, conducted news conferences and provided photos to the media.[45] Beyond official policies set down by government agencies in Washington and official information provided by senior defense officials, there was censorship by the Army and Navy over information at their disposal.

Military officials elaborated on this point by explaining that under certain military regulations, the commander in a

theater of operations had the duty to impose certain types of censorship, covering the actions of newspaper correspondents, photcgraphers, radio commentators and even visitors. The degree and extent of the censorship was said to depend on the controlling factors in each particular theater, but that the responsibility rested with the commander who had a wide lattitude in its application.[46]

The fact that censorship should be restricted to theaters of operations was reiterated by Major General Robert Charlwood Richardson, Jr., head of the Army's Bureau of Public Relations during World War II, "The present attitude of the War Department toward censorship is that there shall be no censorship, even in time of war.... No one...will object to that type of censorship in the theater of operations if intelligently conducted."[47]

Arthur Krock, a Washington correspondent for The New York Times in 1942, offered what he deemed an official explanation of military censorship was. He said that it consisted of control of war news at the source of war news, plus control of outgoing communications, including especially radio. He added that all the control was exercised with one objective in view--to keep from the enemy any information which might be valuable to the enemy.[48]

Determining the degree of censorship back home was a problem that Byron Price had to consider often as Director of Censorship. In an article in 1943, Price stated that the question of what to do about the press in wartime had puzzled

governments since the invention of movable type. He said that the need for "journalistic restraint when guns speak" was no longer denied by anyone.[49]

Price indicated that the potential danger to the nation was not a reflection upon the patriotism or good intentions of the press. He pointed out that editors were human and that few of them had likely given intensive study to what may or may not have helped the enemy. He concluded, however, that an inadvertant disclosure could be as damaging as a malicious disclosure.

Price suggested that there were three types of censorship possible during war. The first, he said, was a compulsory and rigid government system with a censor always at the editor's elbow. The second was described as a compromise procedure with a strictly worded statute, but with enforcement largely voluntary.

Price said the third was a system of self-discipline under the leadership of the government, but without statutory sanctions or penalties. Such a system, he indicated, was almost exclusively an American institution. According to Price, although the third system of voluntary censorship was an experiment being conducted at that time, it had met the highest level of success ever attained in any country.[50]

John H. Sorrells, Price's assistant director of censorship for press activities, also offered laudatory comments about voluntary censorship by the press:

> The American newspaper is performing its war-time duties brilliantly and faithfully. Despite the self-imposed restrictions of censorship, the American public is still the best informed public in the world....In the period we have been at war, the power of public opinion has been directed to certain broad subjects, with the result that recognition of certain needs has been forced, and corrections of some major faults have been made. The constant pressure of public opinion, through the medium of the newspaper, has forced a universal recognition of the importance of air power. The victories of American air power to date have been achieved not altogether alone by the men who fight the planes or the generals who direct them, but to some extent because the American public has, with intuitive wisdom, insisted that our leaders give us superiority in this vital arm.[51]

Sorrells said that the American press had taken its responsibility for screening important military information seriously. He cautioned, however, that suppression of too much material could result in denying the American public valuable information with which to form an intelligent opinion on certain features of the conduct of war.[52]

The American press was joined by the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) in a system of voluntary controls. Soon after the outbreak of World War II, the NAB started

sending to every station in the industry War Service Bulletins designed to guide stations on wartime operations. These bulletins included suggestions about various types of programs, especially news programs. The association realized that the effect of news upon the national morale was so great that the industry needed to change its peacetime practices in some respects. News broadcasters did not wish to divulge vital information to the enemy. To avoid such a possibility, the NAB cooperated with the Office of Censorship in preparing
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a Broadcasters War Time Code.

As indicated by the actions of the press and the NAB, the media was cooperative with the Office of Censorship. Roy A. Roberts, managing editor of the Kansas City Star and president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1943, praised Byron Price for creating the good working relationship. He credited Price with getting stories released that otherwise would have been kept out of papers. Roberts suggested that it was only justice to say that Price handled the job with understanding and intelligence.

Roberts, however, was not as impressed with the military when it came to releasing news. The Army controlled all of its information while the Navy handled all its releases. The Office of War Information, headed by Elmer Davis, put out all other war information. Roberts stated that the military was not trained primarily in public relations and often did not have "the appreciation that in a total war the American

people must be kept informed, fully and accurately, as to the progess of that war."[54]

Roberts said that his statement was particularly true of high military and naval officials who thought chiefly in terms of strategy and fighting. He said that although there were a lot of stupidities in handling military news at first, that the self-imposed voluntary code of censorship by newspapers worked to a degree that "amazed the Army and Navy."[55]

Confidence in the American media and sentiments about the importance of effective public relations to the war effort, have been echoed by important military leaders. In 1964, Dwight D. Eisenhower praised war correspondents in the foreword to a book published by the Overseas Press Club and edited by David Brown and W. Richard Bruner. The Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, Eisenhower credited war correspondents with keeping many nations informed of the daily happenings of the Armed Forces of the United States and her allies in all the principal war areas. He stated that newsmen operating in theaters where he commanded had been ready to make sacrifices or undergo any risks in pursuit of legitimate news. Moreover, he said that he used them as quasi-staff officers to seek information labeled as human interest which reflected the soldiers' thinking and sentiments.

Most importantly, Eisenhower said that newsmen could be trusted. He mentioned the important occasion when secrecy

had been so important that he revealed future attack plans to the entire press corps so that no word of his true intent would be revealed even inadvertantly. On other occasions, Eisenhower stated, newsmen had reported incidents to him that would have had harmful results on the war effort if published. In these instances, the reporters had voluntarily held up the information indefinitely. According to the general, "those reporters proved that trust is a far better weapon than censorship to maintain absolute secrecy."[56]

While some military leaders and war correspondents collaborated on the coverage of the war effort, some representatives of the media complained that many military censors were unfamiliar with the war-time censorship code. Palmer Hoyt, the managing editor of the Portland Oregonian and later the Domestic Director of the OWI, stated that censorship, applied unwisely, could destroy the very purpose it seeks to serve. Hoyt was also convinced that the government unnecessarily withheld information that might have helped gain the public confidence of the people. He said that there was no basis in fact for the idea that Americans could not take bad news. Before joining the OWI, Hoyt made the following observations in a national broadcast from Seattle:

> The government has repeatedly failed properly to report unfavorable war news. Often the first word of disaster has come from enemy broadcasts which, in turn, have helped to authenticate potentially

> dangerous propoganda--and, more important, it has reflected directly on the reliability of our own government's reports. Too often such government failures have been attributed to the necessity for military secrecy.--too often military secrecy has not justified misleading reports.[57]

Hoyt continued his broadcast by saying that no one wanted to violate military security, but that American security was more important. His description of that security included faith in ourselves, faith in our leadership, and faith in our government. He warned that a policy of silence would give aid and comfort to men responsible for military failures. Hoyt then referred to the words of a commentator in the British official film, "Desert Victory," who said, "A citizen army fights best when it knows what is going on."[58] He concluded by saying that although providing information might be a weakness of democracy at war, it was also the paramount strength of democracy at war.

Another newspaperman, Kent Cooper waited until he retired from executive control of the news service and personnel of the Associated Press to offer his criticism of unnecessary wartime censorship. In 1956, he authored a book entitled <u>The Right to Know</u> in which he discussed some problems related to military censorship.

Cooper suggested that the matter of military security never posed real problems because circumventing the censor during war constituted disloyalty or even treason. He also

mentioned that news reporters did not receive accreditation if there was any doubt about their loyalty. During World War II, correspondents had to pledge in writing that they would abide by the restrictions imposed upon them by field or base commanders. If they tried to bypass the censorship, they risked arrest and conviction by military court.

According to Cooper, only a spy would be interested in trying to get out restricted news such as the movement of troops and ships, the production of weapons, location of bases, combat lines, command posts and the whereabouts of important military personnel. He indicated that usually correspondents in the field did their own censoring because they knew what was proper to disclose and what was not. Because they did abide by the rules, he said that correspondents became incensed when a good story not involving military security was suppressed. Moreover, he said that reasons for suppression sometimes became part of the story and lended signifance and importance to the event.

Cooper illustrated his point by discussing the case in which General George S. Patton, Jr., commander of the United States Seventh Army, slapped a hospitalized GI. He suggested that a news story about the incident would have aroused some criticism at home but no further interest among correspondents had it not been suppressed.[59] Phillip Knightley elaborated on this unfortunate story in his book, The First Casualty. In August 1943, General Patton, known as "Old Blood and Guts", visited a military-hospital evacuation

tent in Sicily. When he came across a soldier he suspected of feigning illness, he slapped the soldier in front of astonished doctors.

Five days later, Patton visited another hospital tent and asked a soldier what ailed him. When he replied that he thought that it was his nerves, he called the man "a yellow bastard", slapped him across the face with a pair of gloves, and when the soldier moved towards the door, kicked him in the behind.

As it turned out, the soldier had fought in both the Tunisian and Sicilian campaigns and had an excellent record. His unit doctor had tried to get him to have treatment earlier, but the soldier had refused to leave the front until he was ordered to go to the hospital. About twenty local correspondents held a meeting at the local press camp,and decided not to send a story about the incident, but sent a petition to General Eisenhower and asked that General Patton apologise to the soldier.

Having already heard about the incident, Eisenhower wrote to Patton, denouncing his conduct and ordered him to apologise to the two men, all witnesses of the incidents, and to soldiers of each of the divisions, or be removed from command. When Patton complied, the story became known to thousands of soldiers scheduled to return home.

Edward Kennedy, a senior Associated Press correspondent, urged Eisenhower to let war correspondents write about the event. Although he did not forbid publication of the

story, Eisenhower told the correspondents that he feared such news might be used as enemy propoganda and embarrass the United States Army command. As a result, the correspondents complied with what amounted to a personal request to suppress the story.[60]

About three months later, a Washington columnist, Drew Pearson, heard about the story, submitted it to censors at the War Department, and received approval to publish the story. When the incident spread over the country, the report was not denied and caused much trouble for the Army. Resentment was aroused and mothers demanded to know why their sons were being slapped around. Such talk made the Patton incident more of an issue than it need have been and served to illustrate an improper exercise of the power to suppress news.[61]

With regard to events that truly related to national security, the media acted commendably in their suppression of news. In his final report on the activities of the Office of Censorship, Byron Price spoke about many well-kept secrets that the media knew about but did not report until officially released. These included details of the Pearl Harbor attack, vast damage to the U.S. Pacific fleet, landings on some western states of Japanese bomb-carrying windborn balloons, the story of radar, the preparations for the Normandy landings, and the development of the atom bomb.[62]

Price's praise for the media included a broad spectrum of news coverage. During World War II, there were a handful who

chose to concern themselves with the GI. They reported on the GI's trials and tribulations, complained to generals when they were treated badly, and saw that the lowly GI's name got into hometown papers so his parents or friends knew he was alive or, sometimes, how he died. Correspondents such as Gordon Gammack, Ernie Pyle or cartoonist Bill Mauldin, painted the little picture of the war--the GI's views.[63]

Some correspondents preferred life at the front and were able to identify with the GI situation. One correspondent, Gordon Gammack of the Des Moines Register and Tribune, roamed the western front looking for GIs from Iowa so he could send their word back home. Gammack asserted that at the front lines or at a combat air base, war correspondents were very welcome and that officers almost overdid themselves in being cooperative.[64]

Perhaps one of the most famous war correspondents of World War II was Ernie Pyle. Called the "Boswell of the Infantry", Pyle covered World War II alongside combat soldiers. In a column written on June 12, 1944, from the Normandy Beachhead, Pyle described activity the morning after D-Day after the first wave of assault troops had hit the shore. He vividly described such dangers as water obstacles, buried mines, barbed-wire entangelements, hidden ditches, and machine guns firing from slopes.[65]

In addition to praising the American fighting men, journalists made other significant contributions to soldiers during World War II. One way was assistance with an

educational program in military and current affairs designed for the European Theater of Operations. A series of publications called Army Talks were used primarily for this endeavor. The Chief of Special Services in Europe, Col. Theodore Arter, commented in the foreword of the first issue that the effectiveness and success of the program depended on timely materials for discussion.[66] To accomplish this end, journalists contributed articles for publication.

Arthur L. Goodhard, editor of the Law Quarterly Review and a Army veteran, authored the November 24, 1943 issue which he entitled "What Are We Fighting For?" In this issue, he discussed reasons for entry into the war, the role of the United States, and the need for international organization. The information Goodhart provided was used to stimulate discussion and thought in an effort to help American officers and enlisted personnel become better-informed men and women and therefore better soldiers.[67]

While the media reported on and helped educate soldiers overseas, the newspapers back home "became one of the main buttresses of national morale."[68] In a book, Great Front Pages: D-Day to Victory 1944-1945, Wynford Vaughan-Thomas used historic front pages to illustrate how the average man and woman learned news of the world at war. Headlines such as "Entire Nazi East Front Collapses" in the New York Daily News on July 28, 1944, showed the progress of the United States after the Normandy landing.[69] One newspaper, the New York Post, sometimes used a full-page headline, such as

"Siegfried Line Completely Pierced" on September 16, 1944, to dramatically emphasize successful campaigns of U. S. forces.[70] Vaughan-Thomas aptly noted that newspapers mirrored the spirit with which the country saw World War II.

The myriad functions performed by the media during World War II were indicative of cooperative media-military relations. Most references to the work of the correspondents and to the general coverage of the war were favorable and even flattering. "General Omar Bradley of the U. S. Army spoke of thier efforts in 'hammering out on tired typewriters in the ruins of buildings throughout the world' those reports that gave to the people 'knowledge of what we were, what we were doing, and why we were doing it.'"[71]

Although some journalists complained that they were merely a "propoganda arm of the government" or "totally dependent upon the military to see the war at all", the system afforded correspondents opportunity to display individual initiative and provide eye-witness, personalized accounts of the war.[72] Substantial reports prepared by correspondents in those positions were used in newspapers, magazines, and radio reports. Supported by photographs and motion picture films, they appeared in newsreels and other forms. Sometimes there were delays in transmissions because of delivery of materials from combat areas or ships at sea or because of added censorship delays. Even when those accounts did not reach the intended audience before public

attention shifted to a later development, they became available eventually.

Additionally, the accreditation and field censorship system, voluntary censorship regulations drafted with media cooperation, and the later censorship reviews, gave correspondents and editors a thorough indoctrination to the concept of military security.[73] The name and reputation of such World War II correspondents as Ernie Pyle have frequently been used by both media and military in the debate over how or if the press can be included in future military operations without jeapardizing the safety of American forces or the success of their missions.[74]

The performance of the media during World War II demonstrated that coverage of combat operations of the largest scale could be accomplished while maintaining national and military security. There is substantial evidence from World War II to suggest that cooperative media-military relations can be mutually beneficial in future military conflicts.

Media-Military Relations During the Vietnam War

The successes of media-military relations during World War II were difficult to relate to the completely different scenario of the Vietnam War. At the end of World War II, the United States decided to support France in her efforts to cling to her former colonies in Indochina. In 1954, following a French defeat there, Vietnam was divided between a Communist North, under Ho Chi Minh, and a non-Communist

South, under Ngo Dinh Diem. The United States supported Diem in what later became the most traumatic war in American history.

American press activity in Vietnam escalated with the war. At first, there was very little interest by the American press. Most articles on the area from 1954 to 1960, concentrated on the Communist menace and the need for greater American involvement. It was not until 400 civilians were killed during a revolt of army paratroopers in Saigon in November, 1960, that the media showed interest in what was going on. Even then, most major newspapers depended on the national wire services' correspondents for coverage of events--Malcolm Browne of the Associated Press, Ray Herndon of the United Press International, Nicholas Turner of Reuters, and Pierre Chauvet of Agence France Presse. The only newspaper with a full-time correspondent in Vietnam was The New York Times.[75]

Early correspondents in Vietnam had a difficult time. They were accredited by the Diem government which saw no reason to let foreign correspondents write stories critical of its performance. When stories of Diem's inneptness and corruption emerged, Diem immediately moved to expel these correspondents, such as Newsweek stringer Francois Sully. The U.S. State Department, however, applied pressure to get the decision reversed.

In Saigon, the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) tried to conceal the full extent of American

involvement against the Vietcong. When newsmen in Vietnam did uncover information they desired to inform the public about back home, officials appealed to their patriotism to protect the national interest.

The government in Washington had been accused of misleading correspondents there to such an extent that "many an editor, unable to reconcile what his man in Saigon told him, preferred to use the official version...Many American editors ignored what their correspondents in Vietnam were telling them in favor of the Washington version."[76] As American war correspondents became more determined to report the war the way they saw it, they began not only to question its effectiveness, but also its morality.

Some media representatives became intent on reporting the atrocities of the war, but found difficulty in obtaining a stateside outlet for their work. As a result, there was a reluctance by many correspondents to report grisly acts of war. One of the most publicized events of the war, the My Lai Massacre, occurred on March 16, 1968. Under orders from an American infantry platoon leader, Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., 109 men, women and children of the My Lai Village were gathered into groups and killed by automatic weapon fire.

As the rumors about My Lai circulated, it took a reporter who was not caught up in the day-to-day atrocities to be shocked by the act. This dramatic story was not revealed by a war correspondent, but rather by an alert newspaper

reporter back in the United States. The first mention of the incident in a major newspaper, however, did not appear until over a year later, September 8, 1969, on the bottom of page 38 in The New York Times. It was not until November 13 that a major article on the event was published.[77]

This incident also occurred during a period in America when the public was more ready to believe and accept such stories. The My Lai Massacre followed the other most publicized event of the Vietnam War, the Tet offensive. On January 31, 1968, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese launched a major offensive throughout South Vietnam. Despite Pentagon assurances that a victory in Vietnam was just around the corner, a commando squad of Vietcong succeeded in getting briefly into the compound of the United States Embassy in Saigon. Additionally, nearly every town, city, and major military installation came under heavy fire for the next 25 days. The attack on the embassy was given extensive television coverage and came as a traumatic shock to the American public. Although the attack was inflated beyond its military significance and the Tet offensive was a disaster for the Vietcong, the coverage of the event did provide a psychological victory of sorts for the enemy. Television coverage of the event also impacted heavily on the outcome of the presidential primaries back in the United States.[78]

Daniel C. Hallin, in his book The Uncensored War, attempted to explain why television was singled out as a decisive influence on American public opinion during this

period. He explained that the intensity of coverage was facilitated by a number of technological changes. Such factors as the development of a new, lightweight sound camera, the increasing speed of transportation and communication, and the satellite made it possible to transmit images as fast as words.[79]

Hallin said the evidence most often cited for the power of television was a series of surveys conducted by the Roper Organization for the Television Information Office. The first surveys were conducted in 1964 and indicated that television (58%) and newspapers (56%) were about even as media from which most people got their news. By 1972, the last year that Vietnam was a major news story, the balance had shifted in favor of television--64% to 50%. The U.S. Senate also commissioned surveys by Louis Harris in 1973 which produced nearly identical figures.

The surveys asked respondents which medium they would be most inclined to believe if the media gave conflicting accounts. Again, television came out on top--48% said television, 21% newspapers. Hallin indicated that the trust in television was due primarily to two factors, the personal nature of the medium and the presence of pictures.

Evidence indicated that the public relied on television for news about the war even more than about other subjects. Other Harris surveys, however, revealed "that public confidence in both television news and the press were at a lower level than confidence in major governmental

institutions, including the military and the executive branch, during the Vietnam period."[80]

The executive branch did not underestimate the role the media played during Vietnam with regard to public opinion. President Lyndon Johnson was duly alarmed when Walter Cronkite proclaimed that American policy in Vietnam was wrong and the war must end in a stalemate. Following the Tet offensive on February 27, 1968, Cronkite told a national television audience that he had been "too often disappointed by the optimism of American leaders, both in Vietnam and Washington, to have faith any longer in the silver linings they find in the darkest clouds."[81]

After watching Cronkite's broadcast, President Johnson confided to his press secretary George Christian that "losing Walter Cronkite meant losing the center" (of a coalition he had painstakenly constructed to buttress Vietnam War policies).[82]

Richard Nixon further emphasized presidential attention to the role of the media during the Vietnam War:

> The Vietnam War was complicated by factors that had never before occurred in America's conduct of a war...The American news media had come to dominate domestic opinion about its purpose and conduct...In each night's TV news and each morning's paper the war was reported battle by battle, but little or no sense of the underlying purpose of the fighting was conveyed. Eventually this contributed to the

> impression that we were fighting in military and moral quicksand, rathar than toward an important and worthwile objective. 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.[83]

Despite criticism of television coverage of the war, very few film reports from Vietnam showed actual graphic depictions of the horror of war. About 22% of all film reports before the Tet offensive showed actual combat and only 24% showed film of the dead or wounded. Even these shots were usually no more than a brief shot of a wounded soldier being lifted into a helicopter.[84]

Much of the absence of blood on television was a result of network policy not to use certain pieces of film. Network policy precluded showing film of identifiable American casualties unless their families had been notified by the Defense Department. A CBS directive on combat filming read:

> Producers and editors must exercise great caution before permitting pictures of casualties to be shown. This also applies to pictures of soldiers in a state of shock. Obviously, good taste and consideration for families of deceased, wounded or

> shocked takes precedence. Shots can be selected that are not grisly, the purpose being to avoid offending families of war victims.[85]

The limited amount of bloody film could also be attributed to the fact that most operations in Vietnam involved very little contact with the enemy.

Another major factor which greatly impacted on media coverage of Vietnam was the absence of censorship. There was official accreditation of war correspondents which was not new, but had never been used without censorship. At one point, it looked as though censhorship might be a possibility.

With the buildup of troops in 1965, the American Command tightened restrictions on the media, particularly on access to American air bases. A wave of protests from news organizations ensued and the possibility of submitting to censorship in return for access was raised.[86] The Defense Department did suggest instituting censorship in 1965, but it was ruled out at the urging of U.S. officials in Saigon for the following reasons:

> (1) it was impractical, given the freedom of reporters in Saigon to travel to Hong Kong or elsewhere to file stories without censorship; (2) there was no censorship in the United States and there could not be without a declaration of war; (3) the South Vietnamese, hosts to the U.S. forces, would have to have a hand in censorship, and they

> had already set some unpopular precedents with their own press; (4) it was impossible to censor television film because of a lack of technical facilities, and (5) it was difficult to suddenly impose censorship during a war that had long been covered without it.[87]

Other factors also made formal censorship impractical. There was a problem of legal jurisdiction in a war where U.S. forces wer fighting as guests of a foreign government. U.S. court-martial jurisdiction would have had to be extended not only to American civilians in South Vietnam, but also to reporters from other countries.

American officials felt that the voluntary guidelines which substituted for formal censorship served adequately to protect military security. Correspondents accredited to U.S. forces agreed to a set of rules outlining fifteen categories of information which required authorization to report.[88] These rules banned casualty reports and unit identification related to specific actions, troop movements or deployments until released by the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), and identifications of units participating in battle. Combat photography and television that emphasized visual close-ups or identification of wounded or dead were prohibited.

Interviews of wounded, without the permission of a medical officer, were generally avoided out of respect for the feelings of the next of kin or the wounded person's right

to privacy.[89] Violation of the rules could result in suspension or revocation of a reporter's accreditation. Such sanctions were imposed only a few times. In 1969, General Winant Sidle, top press officer for the U.S. Mission in Vietnam, told the New York Times that "an awful lot of odds and ends get out that are helpful to the enemy," but that the voluntary guidelines in Vietnam generally worked very well.[90]

Although formal censorship was not instituted, journalists still felt that the military interfered with their ability to report the war. Information, such as casualty figures, was often withheld. Additionally, "there were embargoes on access to the 'front'--which was generally accessible only by military transportation--which was ostensibly intended to to protect military security, but which journalists believed were politically motivated."[91]

David Hallin suggested that the outcome of the war may not have been much different even if the news were censored, or television excluded, or journalists more inclined to support the government's policies. The behavior of the media, he said, was related to the degree of consensus by the American public. Hallin concluded that the collapse of the American will to fight resulted from a political process of which the media was only a part. He supported this conclusion by saying that public support for such wars as Korea--despite tight censorship and the infancy of television--also lost support when costs rose.

William Hammond agreed with this conclusion in his book, Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962-1968. Using materials drawn from Army and Defense Department records, he worked in conjunction with the U.S. Army Center of Military History to interpret the role the press played during the Vietnam War. At the end of his study, he concurred with Hallin's assertion that what alienated the American public in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, was not news coverage but casualties. Hammond said that "public support for each war dropped inexorably by 15 percentage points whenever total U.S. casualties increased..."[92]

Hammond was able to offer some insight as to why the media and the military were often at odds. In 1962, Secretary of State Robert S. McNamara declared that pessimistic reports in American newspapers were hurting our efforts in Vietnam. Instead of demanding restrictions on the press, he suggested that the U.S. Mission in Saigon become more open and declassify more information. Because of objections from the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, Frederick E. Nolting, Jr., however, McNamara did not insist on opening military operations to the press.

U.S. military leaders were then able to declassify using their judgement. Since the South Vietnamese regime wanted information cut off rather than open, less declassification occurred. Moreover, Hammond stated that military, political, and diplomatic concerns argued against a policy of open

information. Military security was used as the primary defense for secrecy.

U.S. intelligence analysts contended that they had to work hard to gain anything other than propoganda from Communist periodicals, while the Communists could learn important details from the American press. This concentration on secrecy was also useful, Hammond determined, in limiting the American public's knowledge of what was happening in Southeast Asia. Restraints on the press seemed the easiest way to maintain a low profile in Vietnam and sustain American support for the war.[93]

The Military Assistance Command (MACV) served as the chief clearinghouse for press accreditation with U.S. forces in Vietnam. Formal information briefings provided by the MACV were held each day at the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) in Saigon. Representatives of the four major services, along with civilian representatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency, provided authorized official information and answered questions from the press.

The central event at JUSPAO was a five p.m. briefing held seven days a week. Reporters gathered to get the day's figures on KIA's, WIA's, and MIA's (killed, wounded and missing in action); bombing raids, planes lost, and the new number of refugees. Three briefers--two military and one civilian embassy spokesman--stood on a platform in front of a

huge map of Vietnam and discussed activities of the day to include ground action and air activities.[94]

These briefings, called the "The Five O'Clock Follies", were often disdained by American correspondents who disputed many assertions made by official spokesmen. Since these briefings were the single most important source of day-to-day news for Saigon reporters, Rodger Bankson, MACV Chief of Information, made changes to improve the accuracy and quality of the briefings. He concentrated on finding briefers who had both public relations credentials and combat experience in Vietnam. After revamping MACV's information services, Bankson issued revised standards that confirmed rules in effect and added others to ensure the safety of troops in the field.[95]

Although aware of the need to preserve secrecy, Bankson realized that some information was being withheld from the press to the detriment of official credibility. Despite continued attempts to provide information to the press which was already known by the enemy, policies restricting the release of information on such subjects as napalm and cluster bombs remained in effect.[96]

Military leaders often did not understand why war correspondents objected to the policy of secrecy. During an early press conference in Saigon during Diem's regime, an American newsman asked a senior U.S. military officer an embarrassing question. The officer snapped, "Why don't you get on the team!"[97] Such responses suggested that the

attitude of the military was that the press should act as an arm of the government.

In addition to the central JUSPAO, there were various press centers scattered about Vietnam and operated by the U.S. military commands in the areas. Two of the most elaborate, the Danang Press Center and Combat Information Bureau, were run by the Marines. From the JUSPAO in Saigon, correspondents were able to book transportation aboard C-130 courier flights to areas they wished to visit. Sometimes, press facilities were set up by smaller units when they were involved in major operations and expected to get significant press attention.

At these sites, officers and men were designated to brief, escort, guard, and duplicate efforts of the correspondents. Military reporters also worked at these areas to cover the activities of their units and to write stories for publication in their unit newspaper and for news services at home.[98]

General S.L.A. Marshall once wrote an article blasting the Saigon press corps and argued that it was not the duty of the Army "to function as war reporter to the nation."[99] Dale Minor replied to his article in a later edition of the same magazine and said "that the General may have been right, but the number of officers and men the Army employed in that activity might mislead people."[100]

Edwin Emery, in his book The Press and America, ironically pointed out that major censorship in Vietnam,

affected the newspaper of the GI, the Stars and Stripes, and the Armed Forces Vietnam Network, supplying news and radio programs to the troops. The U.S. Command's Office of Information heavily censored stories that they believed would embarrass the South Vietnamese government or affect troop morale. As a result, there was a rebellion by staff newsmen who eventualy simmered down but remained under the control of the censors.[101]

Some prior-military leaders recall media-military relations in Vietnam in a more positive light. In his book, Vietnam War Almanac, retired Army Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr. provided his view of media coverage of military operations in Vietnam. According to Summers, Vietnam was the most reported conflict in the history of warfare. Although there were only 40 U.S. and foreign journalists in Saigon in 1964 when the American buildup began, the number increased to 419 news media representatives, support personnel and family members from 22 nations by August 1966. Of the 179 Americans included in this total, only about 40 were in the field with U.S. troops at any given time, he said.[102]

Summers contended that Vietnam war correspondents in the field shared the dangers confronting the front-line forces. He cited examples--Washington Post's Peter Bradestrup at the siege of Khe Sanh; the New York Times' Charles Mohr at the battle of Hue, where he won the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for rescuing a wounded Marine under enemy fire; CBS News reporter Dan Rather in battles in the Central Highlands;

the Associated Press' Peter Arnett and George Esper. He stated that sixteen American journalists lost their lives while covering the war.

American journalists, Summers mentioned, are among the 42 U.S. civilians still missing in action and unaccounted for in Indochina, including NBC News correspondents Welles Hangen and Time photographer Sean Flynn, both of whom disappeared while covering the war in Cambodia. Although some media personnel did not measure up to such high standards, he said that they were few in number. Summers suggested that both unprofessional reporters and unprofessional military officers were the exception, not the rule.

Despite a number of staunch critics of media coverage of the war in Vietnam, he said it now appears that many of the problems were not really the fault of the war correspondents in the field but of the newspaper and magazine editors and radio and television producers back home. He pointed out that the war correspondents, by and large, accurately reported what they saw. "The editors and producers, however, were not always able to keep their own political agendas and their awareness of shifts in American opinion out of the editing process," he said.

Summers did offer one criticism leveled against the war correspondents which is also true of previous wars--that they concentrated on American operations and virtually ignored those of our allies. This imbalance, he said, may have "created the false impression that the South Vietnamese--who

suffered the overwhelming majority of allied casualties during the war--were not pulling their share of the load."[104]

War correspondents present in Vietnam at that time have offered other criticisms of media efforts in Vietnam. Some individuals have even asserted that biased and sensationalized media coverage of the war resulted in American defeat. David Elegant. a foreign correspondent and commentator of the Vietnam War from 1955 to 1975, covered the war for Newsweek and the Los Angeles Times/Washington Post News Service. Opposed to U.S. intervention in Vietnam until 1965, he changed his mind when he saw a need to "contain the potentially aggressive Chinese expansionist foreign policy."[105]

In a book edited by David Bender, The Vietnam War, Elegant presented his reasoning for stating that his fellow journalists were to blame for the defeat of South Vietnam. This veteran war correspondent proclaimed, "For the first time in modern history, the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield but on the printed page and, above all, on the television screen."[106]

Elegant stated that when the Vietnam War became a big story in the early 1960's, most foreign correspondents wrote articles to get the approval of their audiences, editors and peers. He cited his own personal experience of correspondents wanting to talk chiefly to other correspondents to confirm their own vision of the war.

Elegant described newcomers to Vietnam as being precommitted against the war and most correspondents anxious to please editors who controlled their professional lives. Most reporting, he argued, veered far from fundamental political, economic, and military realities of the war because these facts were not spectacular.

In those years, he said, American journalists were against the government and, in a sense, for the enemy. According to Elegant's account, the media became the primary battlefield during the last half of the American involvement in Vietnam. Elegant characterized news reporting as a self-proving system which concentrated on self-justification. He indicated that television, an emotionally moving medium, was employed to support the media's "crusading fervor."[107]

Television, according to Elegant, was used as a shocking device because of its immediacy. He mentioned that TV crews were aware of this fact and preferred the dramatic to the commonplace. Instead of seeing farmers peacefully tilling their fields, the American public was led to believe that almost every Vietnamese farmer was threatened by the Vietcong, battle or indiscriminate shelling by U.S. bombers.[108]

Elegant also offered instances of staged incidents by news correpondents and cameramen. He cited footage of a burning village appearing on the news which was in reality a deserted village used in a Marine training exercise. No

mention, he criticized, was made of the fact that a television correspondent had handed his Zippo lighter to a soldier and suggested that he set fire to an abandoned house. More shocking was Elegant's revelation that the sensationalized story of an American soldier cutting the ears off a Viet Cong corpse resulted when a television cameraman offered the soldier his knife and dared him to take a souvenir.[109]

Elegant described correspondents as being moved by a conviction of American guilt rather than evidence which pointed to another reality. According to him, the media defeated South Vietnam in Washington, New York, London and Paris and made the ultimate defeat in Indochina inevitable. Most journalists, however, do not admit their role in the outcome of the war, he said. Elegant contended that few correspondents today want to acknowledge errors or distortions that may have helped bring tens of millions under totalitarian rule.[110]

Additionally, he points to the fact that the media has not "trumpeted Hanoi's repeated expressions of gratitude to the mass media of the non-Communist world" or Hanoi's affirmation that "it could not have won the war without the Western press."[111] Elegant concluded that Vietnam was the first major loss of a war by psychological warfare at such a great distance from the actual battle.[112]

Elegant has been criticized for his assertions about media impact on the Vietnam War. In Media Unbound, Stephan

Lesher related how Morley Safer of CBS's 60 Minutes" branded Elegant "as a Nazi, a Communist, and a Judas" because his view of history was different from his and many of his colleagues.[113]

Lesher also provided support to some of Elegant's arguments regarding misrepresentation by the media. The most startling example he used was the coverage of the Tet offensive by the major news networks. He cited news reports by Cronkite, McGee, and Braestrup, which described events in terms of substantial failure for South Vietnam and the United States. Consequently, he said, that is how most Americans remember Tet.

That is, however, historically incorrect. Historians agree that Tet was a serious military and political defeat for the Communists. In his book, Tet, written three years after the event, Don Oberdorfer described Tet as a "grievous military set-back."[114] Lesher blamed many of the inaccuracies about Tet on the competitive nature of journalism and the pressure to be first with a story. He said that correspondents during Tet "lapped up available statements like thirst-crazed desert wanderers at a water hole."[115] Lesher maintained that the desire to meet deadlines and expectations of editors resulted in reporters taking the gravest view of circumstances.

Others blamed the inaccurate reporting of Tet and other Vietnam battles on the inexperience or ignorance of war corresponents. In his book, The Military and the Media, Alan

Hooper stated that whenever the military is in the news, it attracts a number of general reporters with little or no previous knowledge about the military. Of the myriad correspondents that went to Vietnam, the one thing they shared in common, he said, was their inexperience of the military. Since tours for reporters were between 12 and 18 months, they had little opportunity to learn much either. The gap of understanding between the military and the media resulted in confusion, and sometimes inaccurate reporting, about the progress of the war.[116]

Media coverage of Vietnam marked the beginning of a new era in media-military relations. This undeclared war in Asia, complicated by grisly jungle warfare, resulted in media coverage that differed markedly from previous combat engagements in several respects. Phillip Knightley aptly described the Vietnam War:

> It became a war like no other, a war with no front line, no easily identifiable enemy, no simply explained cause, no clearly designated villian on whom to focus the nation's hate, no menace to the homeland, no need for general sacrifice, and therefore no nation-wide fervour of patriotism. It was a vicious war in which military succes had to be measured in numbers--numbers of incidents, of destruction, defection, weapons lost, weapons

> captured, villagers relocated, areas searched, areas cleared, and that new American statistic, the body count...[117]

The absence of formal censorship in Vietnam, coupled with on-the-spot coverage of rising casualties of American soldiers, contributed to the image of the media as an adversary. Misleading government reports about the actual situation in Vietnam-- deliberate downplaying of casualties, inneptness of South Vietnamese allies, and successess of the Viet Cong--created further tension and distrust between military leaders and media.

Television also emerged as the primary medium for news and brought the deadly reality of the war into the American home every day. Accounts of media coverage of the Vietnam War and arguments over the political impact of that coverage continue today. Whether or not the media played a key role in America's defeat in Vietnam, news reporting in that country promulgated a "cold war" between the media and the military that has continued for almost two decades since the end of the Vietnam War.

Media-Military Relations During the Grenada Invasion

The consequences of this media-military "cold war" have never been more obvious than during the invasion of Grenada. On Tuesday, October 25, 1983, President Ronald Reagan announced that a rescue mission was underway in Grenada. For the first time since the Dominican intervention of 1965, U.S. troops had been ordered into combat in the Caribbean.

The President stated that the main reasons for the operation was "to ensure the personal safety of between 800 and 1,000 U.S. citizens on Grenada, to forestall futher chaos, and to assist in a joint effort to restore order and democracy there."[118] He also strongly emphasized that the effort had been mounted in response to "an urgent, formal request" from several eastern Caribbean states.[119]

Early that morning, a combined force of 7,000 troops from the United States, Jamaica, Barbados, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) states of Antigua, Dominica, St. Nevis/Kitts, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, landed on Grenada by sea and by air. U.S. reporters seeking to accompany the Marines and airborne troops in the landings on the island were denied permission to do so, and were given no assistance in getting to the island. Reporters arranging to get to Grenada on boats they had chartered were warned away.[120]

Military leaders pointed to the need for secrecy and the difficulty of safely transporting reporters to the battleline as justifications for media exclusion. Enraged members of the news media charged that the restrictions were unprecedented and intolerable.[121]

When the first journalists, 15 U.S. citizens, were allowed to go to Grenada, they went under heavily armed guard late on Thursday, two days after the initial invasion. Twenty-four followed on Friday but none were allowed to move out of the vicinity of Point Salines. That same day, U.S.

forces and allies secured all significant military objectives and defeated the People's Revolutionary Army and Militia, which included 784 Cuban construction workers. Forty-five Grenadians (including 24 civilians), 24 Cubans, and 18 U.S. personnel were killed.[122]

The first reporters who were ferried in from Barbados were shown the large stocks of weapons and ammunition found by the invaders. A week after the attack, however, virtually any journalist who wanted to visit Grenada was able to board one of the three daily flights which linked the island with Barbados and space was found for reporters bitterly opposed to the U.S. strategies. The change was due to pressure from Congress which came in the wake of furious lobbying of Reagan and of legislators by the executives of those media which did not have their own men on the spot.[123]

Several reasons were given as to why the U.S. military worked so hard to keep the press away from the first days of combat. One argument was that the U.S. military commanders in the Grenadian operation excluded the press to protect their civilian superiors by keeping the U.S. public from knowing more of the facts. Such action was purported to protect the jobs of all involved and avoid threatening the re-election prospects of President Reagan.[124]

Admiral Joseph Metcalf, the overall commander of the Grenada operation, said that a "baser part of the hostile relationship between military and the press may have stemmed from a more general simple dislike."[125] He said that many

U.S. military officers who had seen duty as colonels and Navy commanders in the Vietnam War blamed the press, in part, for their defeat in the war.

Although some competition between professions can be regarded as normal, the tone heard during the Grenada operation was very hostile. Military men accused journalists of publication-enhancing irresponsibility, and the military was accused of launching a police state and trampling on freedom of the press and the First Amendment.[126]

At that time, the military's standard argument against total press access to the scene of military operations was military secrecy. Military officials contended that the enemy could read information in our newspapers that might allow him to surprise us or which would keep us from surprising him. This argument would have excused some censorship and possibly some limiting of military cooperation with the press in any war in the past. However, it is also an argument which would have persuaded the press to submit to some forms of censorship and to accept limits of access to the battlefield.[127]

In the days following the Grenada invasion, editorial pages of many of the nation's leading daily newspapers featured criticisms of the Reagan administration's news blackout. One week after the invasion, ABC's David Brinkley, NBC's Chancellor, and CBS News president Edward Joyce appeared before a congressional subcommittee to enter formal protests of the press ban. Eventually, the American

Newspaper Publishers Asssociation, a conservative grouping within the journalism business, declared itself against the administration's action.[128]

As a result of the conflict about access during the Grenada invasion, relations between the media and military were strained. Some of this tension remains today. Lieutenant Colonel James O'Rourke, a military-media advisor in the United States Air Force, addressed this concern in the 1989 summer edition of the Military Media Review.

In the article, he pointed out that members of an armed force committed to the defense of our society should "appreciate the values that society holds dear".[129] Near the head of the list was the idea of free expression. Though not unlimited, he said, this right is crucial to a democratic society.

Unfortunately, distrust between the media and military precluded a good working relationship. According to O'Rourke, "Left to the general desires of a military planning staff, a free press would probably not only not be held dear, but might in fact suffer deliberate harm, particularly in wartime".[130] He asked how the U.S. can strike a balance between the public's perceived right to know and the military's desire to carry out its activities in secret.

O'Rourke stressed that the military's right to exist is dependent on the consent of the governed in this country. He cited the determination of the people to remain informed about what their armed forces are doing. He also indicated

that the military needs the informed consent and support of the people it defends in order to do its job properly.

The ability to keep the people informed about the Grenada invasion, a matter considered to be of great significance to the public, was the right championed by the press. In testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice, John Chancellor, senior commentator for NBC News, said the men who died in Grenada were representing values in American life. One of those values, he said, was the right of the citizens to know what their government is doing, and to learn that from a free and independent press.

David Brinkley, senior commentator, ABC News, said during the same hearing, "It seems to me that in a democratic society, it is essential that the people have access to information regarding the intentions and the actions of their government. This is particularly true in the case of military operations when men and women are asked to support or at least to understand a policy that may lead to the loss of their own lives or the lives of their loved ones".[131]

When the news media filed suit against the government for press exclusion, U.S. courts ruled in favor of the military commanders' authority to exclude the press. The press, however, continued to express their outrage. Journalists protested that war correspondents had covered American military activities from the Boston Tea Party through the U. S. Army's withdrawal from Saigon, Vietnam. One editorial in

News Media Law indignantly stated that, "It was not until the excursion into Grenada that the government decided to curtail media access to military events".[132]

William F. Buckley, a nationally syndicated journalist, attempted to answer the question of whether it was a good idea to keep the press away during the first day of the invasion. He observed:

> It would appear to me that there are two reasonable positions on the question. The first one would have press representatives saying: The safety of our reporters is our problem, not the Pentagon's, and if we choose to risk their lives that's our business, not theirs. The second would have the Pentagon people saying: Look, that's all very well, but it is in the nature of things that our military would seek to provide protection for the press, and we simply do not want that kind of distraction. Both points of view are defensible. They do not draw a line between those who favor and those who oppose the First Amendment to the Constitution.[133]

Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News, suggested that the problem of media exclusion in Grenada was the product of mutual suspicion on the part of two large institutions, the military and the media. "We (the media) don't trust the generals, partly because of the Vietnam war, partly because of El Salvador and Nicaragua.[134] Friendly,

however, offered an argument for the Pentagon's expression for concern for secrecy as one of the reasons for denying the press before-the-fact information regarding the Grenada invasion. He contended that if a group of 10 military affairs writers were invited by the Pentagon to accompany a secret mission on condition they maintain strict security, that some would assign their reporters to the job of learning the secret and would "report the whole thing."[135]

Other leading media representatives appealed to Congress, the American public, and the President to condemn the restrictions imposed on them by military commanders during the Grenada invasion. The issue of press coverage in past and future military conflicts was addressed by prominent members of the media, government, military, and a panel consisting of both. Much to the chagrin of the media, however, cries of First Amendment violations and censorship aroused very little sympathy.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and General John W. Vessey, Jr., chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, defended military actions by stating that secrecy was necessary to ensure the invasion's success and to avoid the need for military leaders to be concerned with journalists' safety.[136]

Military public affairs officers cited critical security problems at Grenada regarding the possibility of television crews beaming pictures, in real or close to real time, to a satellite from an earth station located on or near the battle

zone. U. S. Navy Captain Brent Baker, Assistant Chief of Operations in the Navy, noted that during the Grenada operation, ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN hired a C-130 in Barbados to transport a portable station to the airport at Port Salinas on Grenada. The military, however, denied the plane permission to land.[137]

Congressional support for constitutional provision for press access was not forthcoming. In a hearing before the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services (1984), Fred C. Inkle, Under Secretary for Policy, Department of Defense, formally presented the government's rationale for media exclusion at Grenada. Mr. Inkle testified that:

> access for the press was not arranged during the first hours and couple of days of the operations because of the very compressed planning time for the operation and the important need of maintaining secrecy. It was decided not to burden the planning and preparations effort and burden combat elements with the additional task of providing access for media at the very outset.[138]

Congressman Dickinson, who served on the Committee, applauded the decision not to let the press go in initially:

> I think it is ridiculous for the press to run the country, to run military operations, and to make military decisions or political decisions. Nobody elected them. One of the nicest things, warmest glows I got out of the whole thing was to see Dan

Rather squirming and squawking. He felt that the press had been ignored. I think we in the Government and in the military tend to overreact every time the press frowns.

Congressman Spence, also a member of the House Armed Services Committee, was very critical of the press in their complaints about the government's initial denial of a planned invasion of Grenada:

> You cannot let your opponent know what you are going to do. Then you lose all kinds of people, the students involved and everyone else....You cannot go out and play this game like you do football, blow the whistle and kick off. You jeapordize your whole operation ...
>
> This press business. I remember when the press was so upset because I think, as I remember, somebody asked Larry Speakes at the White House, "Are you going to invade Grenada tomorrow? Is that right?" And you said no, and that was all right. But, if he had known, they expected him to say yes, and then everybody runs down there--the Cubans and Russians and everybody else, and gets on the beach ready to oppose us when we are coming in. Do they really expect us to tell them ahead of time and jeopardize more American lives in the doing? If so, you should tell those people in the press, "You are irresponsible for even asking that type of

> question."...Grenada was one of the military's finest hours. It points up the point very vividly--if you keep the press out of an operation that way, the chances of success are enhanced immeasurably.[140]

The overwhelming support of press exclusion by the Committee on Armed Services was echoed by the American public. NBC's John Chancellor was astonished by an avalanche of mail opposing his view, characterized by one note that said, "What do you think we elected Reagan for? It's damn sure you were never elected".[141] Another letter from a Methodist minister in the South said, "I was sure no one would take offense if in a sermon I defended the Constitution and its guarantee of freedom of the press. I was wrong".[142]

According to ABC News anchor Peter Jennings, 99% of his mail on the subject sided with the administration. White House Correspondent Sam Donaldson, said his mail was more evenly balanced--70-30. Another article in Time magazine offered a description of journalists:

> They are rude and accusatory, cynical and almost unpatriotic. They twist facts to suit their not-so-hidden liberal agenda....They are arrogant and self-righteous....To top it off, they claim that their behavior is sanctioned, indeed sanctified, by the U. S. Constitution.[143]

Whether the Government was justified in excluding the media during the invasion of Grenada, the outcries of the media did not go unheeded. To reconcile differences between the military and media, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, John W. Vessy, Jr., organized a panel of military officers and journalists to investigate the Grenada curbs and to formulate guidelines for press coverage of future actions.[144] Retired Army Major General Winant Sidle, former top press officer for the U.S. Mission in Vietnam, was named by the Pentagon to head the 14-member panel in establishing guidelines for press access to military operations.[145]

All of the media representatives on the panel, with one exception, said that American news organizations can be trusted to keep secrets and observe ground rules designed to assure security. The experiences of the Vietnam War, when only a few cases of security violations were recorded despite the absence of censorship, was cited.[146]

At the conclusion of the Sidle panel discussion, eight specific recommendations were offered:

1. That public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning.

2. When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should provide for the largest press pool that is

practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary before "full coverage" is feasible.

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

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

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

6. Planners should carefully consider media communications requirements to assure the earliest feasible availability. However, these communications must not interfere with combat and

combat support operations. If necessary and feasible, plans should include communications facilities dedicated to the news media.

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

8. To improve media-military understanding and cooperation by:

- Periodic meetings with the Secretary of Defense and news organizations.
- Enlarging programs in the service schools in public affairs instruction.
- Improved understanding through more visits by commanders and line officers to news organizations.
- The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should work out security arrangments with news media for real-time coverage of operations.

The bitter battles of the "cold war" between the media and the military during and after the Grenada Invasion did achieve some positive results. Both the media and the military were forced to review their policies and rights governing access during combat situations.

Hindsight indicates that the military was overly cautious and restrictive in dealing with the press after the invasion. Conversely, the press learned that the courts, Congress and the American public did not support their

"inalienable right to report" breaking combat news, especially when doing so might endanger American lives.

National Media Pool Concept

One positive outgrowth of the Sidle Panel was a Department of Defense National Media Pool to permit coverage of breaking news events involving deployment of U.S. military forces to anywhere in the world. Since April 1985, the national pool was activated nine times before its first actual use during the Panama Invasion.

According to established guidelines, representatives participating in the media pool, as well as their products, are subject to a security review by senior military public affairs escort officers and local operations experts. If a review results in suggested changes or deletions, any request for change would be made solely to avoid endangering national security, operational security, or troop safety.

Sinces its inception in 1984, the consistency of the national media pool has changed. The pool may have more or fewer people, depending on the circumstances, but in general, 11 people participate:

- One wire-service photographer
- One wire-service correspondent
- One network television correspondent
- Two network television technicians
- One network radio correspondent
- One national news magazine correspondent
- One national news magazine photographer
- Three newspaper reporters

Media-Military Relations During the Panama Invasion

The first real test of the National Media Pool took place during the Panama Invasion on December 20, 1989. For two years prior to the invasion, the U.S. government had unsuccessfully tried to oust Panamanian dictator Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. The U.S. tried economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and even indicted Noriega in U.S. federal court on drug trafficking charges.

After a bloody national election in Panama, where Noreiga put down his opponents with iron pipes and rifle butts, members of his own military lauched an unsuccessful coup to oust the strongman from power. Noriega finally went too far in mid-December 1989. He declared a state of war between Panama and the U.S. The next day his loyalists shot and killed an off-duty U.S. Marine Corps officer, injured another, and beat a Navy officer and threatened his wife.

President George Bush declared that Noriega's "reckless threats and attacks" had created "an imminent danger to the 35,000 American citizens in Panama", and dispatched American troops to Panama to overthrow his government.[149] The invasion, known in military channels as "Operation Just Cause", had four objectives: to protect American lives, maintain the security of the Panama Canal, restore democracy, and bring Noriega to justice.

The largest U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War, "Operation Just Cause" involved 26,000 troops. A combined force of about 13,000 Army, Navy, Air Force and

Marine troops were sent from the U.S. to join another 13,000 Southern Command troops already stationed in Panama. Just before 1 A.M. on December 20, the U.S. troops began an assault on Panama.[150]

On December 19, 1989, the Secretary of Defense issued an invitational travel authorization and orders for a DOD Media Pool to "travel aboard military conveyance, including air, sea, and ground transportation, during the period 19 through 25 December for the purpose of gathering information for publication and broadcast."[151]

The DOD Pool consisted of a reporter and photographer each from the Associated Press(AP), Reuters and Time magazine, a photographer from United Press International (UPI), a reporter from ABC radio news, one reporter each from the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Post and the Dallas Morning News. NBC News sent one correspondent, a cameraman, a sound man and two satellite technicians with 25 hundred pounds of gear.[152]

The DOD Media Pool coordinator began the call out for media representatives at 7:30 P.M. and problems occurred almost immediately, including a breach of national security. Fred Francis, an NBC News representative and member of the Panama pool, levied criticisms on both the military and the media for the difficulties encountered initially:

> The media can be faulted almost as much as the Pentagon for poor planning and execution of the pool. Though the number of transgressions was much

fewer, the one single lapse in security far out-weighed all the Pentagon's fumbling. There is no excuse for being ill prepared for pool duty or careless operational security. Time magazine was both. It was notified at a Christmas party that the pool was activated. In the course of finding a correspondent to go, the entire staff of Time magazine learned that the invasion was imminent. In a news town like Washington, the Pentagon might as well have made a public announcement.

Some pool members showed up at Andrews Air Force Base without passports and without the proper gear. Even my NBC News team had to call back to the bureau for a vital piece of transmitting equipment. That raised the number of staffers privy to the invasion to an unacceptable number.

Furthermore, only a few members of the pool had any combat experience and fewer still had ever covered a military event. A good reporter ought to be able to cover any story, but combat is not the time for on-the-job training. Troops expect seasoned professionals, not reporters who have to be looked after.

Pool members departed from Andrews Air Force Base at 11:26 P.M. and were briefed about the operation aboard the military transport. Upon arrival in Panama at 5:30 the next morning, more difficulties ensued. Francis blamed some problems on the composition of the pool. He pointed out that

in the evolution of the DOD Media Pool, the Washington bureau chiefs insisted on a broad representation of professionals if the pool was ever activated. As a result, he said, the pool required two helicopters whenever it moved. He stated that it was difficult enough to get one helicopter for news coverage from a reluctant military.[154]

Col. Ron Sconyers, director of public affairs for the Southern Command, stated that "Operation Just Cause" posed some unique public affairs opportunities which were "challenged by the fog and friction of combat."[155] He said that although there had been adequate planning for such an operation that no amount of planning can adequately prepare for all the contingencies.

Sconyers said that the public affairs effort to support the command and the DOD Media Pool was accomplished initially with existing manpower assets: three permanently assigned active duty officers and one non-commissioned officer (NCO); two recently assigned active duty augmentees and one NCO; two reserve component officers; and one civilian for a total of ten personnel. Seven additional reserve component personnel were made available and immediately put to work.

The military public affairs mission was considered two-fold. First, the intent was to inform the American public, through the national media, of the situation in Panama as it developed. Secondly, there was a requirement to keep the internal military audience informed of the developing situation as it affected them. In order to

accomplish these missions, five intermediate objectives were established. These included:

1) Prepare for and support the DOD Media Pool

2) Facilitate news gathering of the resident media in Panama

3) Logistically support what was anticipated to be a minimal number of incoming media

4) Keep the local military community of soldiers, dependents, retirees, and civilian employees fully informed of the situation

5) Be responsive to senior command and congressional requirements

In his after-action report, Sconyers describes the difficulties encountered by the military public affairs personnel in trying to accomplish these objectives. In the first place, he stated, the Southern Command's position was that the DOD media pool was unneccessary because there was a sufficient number of media representatives already present in Panama.

When DOD elected to use the pool over the recommendation of the Southern Command, the public affairs staff decided to use a pre-established plan for media pools. Since there had been experience with three previous media pools, the staff felt comfortable with its intial preparations, Sconyers said.

Sconyers cited the late arrival of the pool as a serious degradation of the pool. The initial assault was essentially completed when it arrived and combat actions were geared to

quick reaction, making media coverage more difficult. He said that it was difficult to know when and where the remaining sporadic fire would occur. As a result, the media pool felt they had "missed the war."[157]

Hostilities also severly degraded the lines of communication and the logistical support planned and in place for the pool, according to Sconyers. Sniper fire and diversion of transportation created other problems for the media and the military. The planned destination for the media pool upon arrival was the media center at Quarry Heights.

Because that position was under heavy fire, it was decided to take the pool to the Southern Command Network (SCN), an affiliate of the the Armed Forces Radio and Television, until safe passage to Quarry Heights could be arranged. There the pool watched President Bush's announcement of the invasion, a briefing by the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and coverage of the invasion on Cable News Network (CNN).[158]

Berta Thayer, a CNN correspondent located in Panama, learned about the invasion on SCN. Lt. Col. Bob Gaylord, commander of SCN at that time, said the military network aired an announcement about the invasion at 12:34 A.M. and urged viewers to stay in their homes. According to Gaylord, only 15 minutes after hearing the SCN announcement, Thayer was broadcasting by a telephone uplink to the United States. Although video coverage of the fighting was not possible at that time, CNN used a series of slides of Panama City and

voice-over narration by Thayer which created the appearance of on-the-ground coverage of the invasion.[159]

Pool members were frustrated because they were watching on TV what they thought they should have been covering. They did receive a briefing from John Bushnell, Charge d'Affairs at the U.S. Embassy on how he had briefed Panama's President-elect Guillermo Endara on the pending U.S. operation during the previous weekend.

While waiting for a helicopter, Francis told military public affairs staff that he was going to recommend that NBC pull out of the pool because the pool was not getting the story. He said that NBC was not getting a return on their $25,000 satellite uplink. Francis contended that NBC had the story before the attack, held off anticipating the pool, but would not "hold their tongue in the future."[160]

During the first two days, the pool experienced excessive delays waiting for transportation by helicopter, aircraft which were at a premium in Panama and frequently needed to directly or indirectly engage with the enemy. Serious decisions had to be made by commanders whether to use helicopter support for combat or media pool support.

Col. Sconyers offered another concern expressed by the media. The pool contended that there was an unwillingness, lack of trust, and lack of cooperation by commanders to support the media pool. They also accused the military of subjecting them to a public relations agenda designed to meet the command's political purposes.

Sconyers offered reasons why the pool had that impression. Although the Southern Command issued guidance indicating full commitment to support the pool, that was not always understood at the field command level. He said, for example, that Rangers had allegedly been ordered not to talk with the media. When pool members attempted to interview Rangers and other troops after the invasion, the soldiers refused to talk because of those orders.

Other special operations personnel and equipment were off limits. When members saw damaged helicopters being repaired in a hanger, they asked to photograph them and were denied permission because of special aircraft present on the flight line.

More complaints about access to information resulted because of on-going debates in military channels over the issues of interviewing wounded and detainees and granting access to specific areas. The media wanted to see the wounded and were informed that it was not appropriate and was a violation of the Privacy Act. Pool members were able to speak to Panamanian detainees, but only after the onsite commander received permission through his chain of command. According to the pool, this was a situation often encountered regardless of what event had been arranged for them.

When speaking with his superiors in New York about the conditions in Panama, Fred Francis reportedly stated that it was the most messed up operation (profanity omitted) he had ever seen. Listening to the conversation, Sconyers said he

assured Francis (whom he said was a personal friend of his) that if he thought things were that bad he could have him on a plane back to the states within 30 minutes. Francis reportedly laughed and said, "Ah, things aren't that bad here."[161]

The second objective, assisting the local press in Panama, was more difficult than expected as well. At the time of the invasion, there were between 50 and 100 resident members of the media. Many of these were permanent while others had come in after the shooting of an American Marine officer, Lt. Robert Paz, in expectation of some form of retaliation by the U.S.

These news media had covered Panama for several years and were aware of the situation, the likely targets, and facilities available to them. Unfortunately, many of these media were part of the initial group of hostages held in the Mariott Hotel and were out of action the first 24 hours. Others could not move within the city because of the on-going hostilities and lack of transporation.[162]

Sconyers pointed out the irony of this situation during an interview. He said that if the Southern Command had been able to form a regional pool from resident media, then these individuals probably would have been working with his staff at the time they were taken hostage. When asked if there was resentment on their part because they were displaced by stateside media, he replied that they were just grateful to be released and out of danger.[163] Many of the local media

who did eventually come to the military media center were looking for refuge and a place to work.

The third objective of providing logistical support to incoming media became one of the most difficult problems for the military. An early agreement had been made to let a minimal number of media arrive through Howard Air Force Base in Panama since the Tocumen/Torrijos International Airport was closed down during the initial assault. The arrangement would allow three aircraft from Costa Rica and three from Miami to come in.

Because of confusion over this agreement, the expected minimal number of flights soon escalated into 20 flights, including one large flight with 220 media personnel and 30,000 pounds of equipment aboard. As a result, Sconyers claimed that his public affairs mission was degraded and converted into a logistical operation.[164] He said that he and his staff faced a logistical nightmare. The DOD had agreed to support news coverage by members of the media, but was overwhelmed when that number grew to 1190 before the invasion ended, Sconyers said.[165]

The Officers Club at Quarry Heights had been previously designated as the site for establishment of a Media Center and had been used for this purpose during previous crises such as the May election. Previously used equipment and administative supplies had been left in place. There were four phone lines, one fax machine, one computer and printer, a television (featuring CNN and all network news shows) and

two typewriters. Seven telephone lines were activated and all other equipment was functional. The center was manned by one officer and one enlisted soldier.

The Media Center was prepared to accept the media pool about four hours after hostilities began. The pool members arrived about 10 hours later and began to file their stories. A photo transmission machine was installed and the ladies restroom was converted to a room for film development. The TV satellite crew installed an uplink dish and began sending video to the U.S. for the evening news on December 20.

The center was adequate when used only by the pool members, but when a second wave of media arrived, there was competition for use of telephone lines. This created a special problem for television new media because they required a dedicated phone line for satellite uplink technicians to use to confirm the quality of their transmissions.

While responding to queries, the Media Center began to register media who were already in Panama. Because of the chaos in the downtown area, many of the media who came to the Media Center were unable to return to the city. Media Center personnel did not have adequate resources to furnish security escorts for these personnel, so many remained at Quarry Heights. This location was considered safe and served as a source of information and filing center.

As the number of media increased, the entire club was eventually taken over. Food was available on the first day and blankets were distributed on the second. By the second day, approximately 65 correspondents were registered at the Media Center and the majority stayed there because no hotels or restaurants were open. Additionally, rental cars, taxis, buses or other public forms of public transportation were unavailable.

The seven telephone lines initially intalled were totally inadequate to handle the requirements for communication. Over half of the lines lines were tied up 24 hours a day by the Media Pool, two for video transmission, one for still photo transmission, and one for FAX of print stories to DOD. The Media Pool received priority use of all telephone lines.

Seven additional lines were pulled from offices and quarters on Quarry Heights, but 14 lines were still inadequate and the media stood in line to file their stories. Because of an unreliable Panamanian telephone system, the Media Center was able to arrange for the media to use the U.S. switch at Corozal to file stories. Unfortunately, there were only five lines to the U.S. and calls remained backed up.

More than 275 correspondents arrived at Howard AFB. Because of the lack of accomodations due to widespread combat in Panama City, they were held temporarily on the Naval Station Panama Canal. This huge influx of media posed a very sensitive problem. Although the public affairs staff could

not logistically or administratively support such a group, there was pressure from Washington to accomodate them as much as possible.[166]

Sconyers said that he told reporters arriving at the airport that he did not have food, shelter, or other accomodations for them and he would advise them to return home. He said that a large number of them came to him within an hour and said they were going to do just that. Moreover, many of them indicated that they were sent because they were available and were used to working in areas unrelated to military reporting.

They further stated that they had not wanted to come in the first place and would be glad to leave. Sconyers assisted them in arranging return flights, but received little credit for his efforts. According to his account, as soon as these media members arrived back at their job sites, they told their superiors that "Col. Ron Sconyers had thrown their asses out of Panama."[167]

Over 100 opted to return to the U.S., but the remainder with equipment were transported to the Media Center. According to Sconyers, over 180 of the media present were now working and living at the Media Center. Two cooks who worked for the officers club came in and served hot meals. As conditions stablized, some media were able to obtain accommodations in the city. When the media began to move into the downtown area, most stayed at the Holiday Inn because it was across the street from the Papal Embassy where Noriega had taken refuge.

To maintain liaison with all of the TV networks and major print media outlets that were represented in Panama, a second Media Center site was maintained there. Both locations remained in operation 24 hours a day until January 20, 1990.[168] Trying to adequately support more than 500 correspondents and maintain 24 hour operations in two locations with minimal personnel illustrated the enormous logistical and administrative burden of the military public affairs staff.[169]

Meeting its objective of keeping the command informed was more successful, according to Sconyers. Both the Tropic Times and the Southern Command Network (SCN), provided maximum coverage of the operation. The greatest difficulties cited also resulted from internal controls over combat information gathered by other military sources. The one severe degradation of command information was that the combat documentation teams were ordered not to share their products with SCN.[170]

Beginning on December 21, an operational update was given at the Media Center at 7:30 each morning. The daily briefing consisted of a summary of all military activities conducted in the theater during the past 24 hours as well as updates on casualty figures of both U.S. and Panamania Defense Forces (PDF), number of captured weapons, number of detainees, number of refugees, and an update on the total number of U.S. military in Panama. This briefing was broadcast live over

SCN to keep the press, the military, and the U.S. civilian population informed on current activities in Panama. These morning updates continued until December 31 when they were replaced by a daily written report.[171]

Tropic Times continued its daily publication and increased the number of copies to 75,000 to get copies of the paper to both the troops and Panamanian citizens. Military personnel assigned to the psychological operations section began publishing a Spanish-language paper. The distribution of Tropic Times into Panama City was terminated and the paper almost shut down for lack of newsprint. To enhance the command information effort, a military media center was established with 16 journalists who produced more than 100 stories for local use and transmission back to home installations.[172]

The final objective, responding to senior command and congressional requirements, required three separate initiatives. First, there was a requirment to respond to official queries not associated with the media. Most of these efforts were aimed at preparation for various press conferences held in Washington.

The second responsibility was to orchestrate media opportunities for VIPs ranging from the Secretary of Defense to several congressional delegations.[173] This effort was hampered by itinerary planners and security presonnel who did not give adequate consideration to the merits of having the media pool provide thorough video and photo coverage. This

was unfortunate since both the media and congressional members wanted the coverage.

The primary problem turned out to be the use of helicopters to transport official delegations. There was no room provided for the media pool and public affairs staff were constantly scrambling to get the media to predetermined locations.[174] The Media Center arranged for two buses with armed guards and one 15-passenger van to transport media to events.[175] Often, however, the itinerary was off by as much as two hours and opportunities were lost.[176]

The third mission was to conduct major press conferences, to include announcements by the Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Command regarding the pursuit and eventual turnover of Noriega.[177] There were several associated problems. Some press conferences were sceduled too late in the day to make the evening news. This often negated the impact of the information.

Another hazard of war, rapidly breaking events, also affected the quality of press conferences. Some conferences were put together very hastily, which made getting word to the media difficult at times. Sometimes there were several news stories breaking at one time. While Secretary of Defense Cheney was holding his initial press conference upon arrival in Panama, the Scuthern Command commander, General Maxwell Thurman, announced that Noriega had turned up at the Papal Nunciatura. Members of the press rushed to the scene and only a few remained to hear Cheney.[178]

Despite the glitches that occurred, the public affairs staff of the U.S. Southern Command concluded that the DOD National Media Pool functioned as well as could be expected in a combat situation. The military said that the media pool was successful in keeping the American people informed. By the time the pool was dissolved, pool print reporters had filed 45-50 stories, wire photographers had transmitted 150 still photo images, the radio reporter filed many stories, and the pool TV crew had provided continuing reports to all the major networks for use on morning news shows, evening news shows and other telecasts.[179]

Accounts of the media pool's success by some pool members were not as favorable when released. Fred Francis, NBC News representative in the pool, provided a written evaluation of the DOD Media Pool in which he cited the major flaws of the pool. According to Francis, the pool was a failure in that it failed to function during the onset of the military operation. The media arrived after the fighting began and were not permitted near U.S. troops who were still involved in action, he said.

"If it's news today, it's news to us," became the motto during the first 36 hours of combat, Francis wrote.[180] This quote was used by many of the major newspapers when editorials on the press in Panama began to appear.

Francis said the fatal flaw of the National Media Pool's deployment was that it was ignored in the first hours of operational planning. He pointed out that the decision to

use force in Panama had taken place at the White House on Sunday, but it was not until Tuesday, less than twelve hours before the invasion, that the Pentagon public affairs personnel were directed to ready the National Media Pool.

Moreover, Francis said, since the Pentagon's Public Affairs chief was given only a few hours to form the pool, most pool members were given less than two hours to report to Andrews Air Force Base. The resulting frenzy contributed to the leaks in security, he said. Francis said the continuing problems faced by the pool probably resulted because of two things, poor Pentagon liaison with Panama and a Grenada mentality on part of the on-scene commanders.

Francis contended that the pool was repeatedly denied or ignored when it asked for access to front line troops, wounded soldiers, picture opportunities at the base, senior commanders, and simple interviews with GIs who had seen fighting. Even a request to spend the night in the field with soldiers was turned down. He said that commanders either had no concept of what constituted news or deliberately tried to steer the media to events that supported the political objectives of the Panama Invasion.

Francis said that the pool was exposed to a steady stream of propaganda, which included greeting the returning U.S. Ambassador, being offered freed political prisoners, and scheduled for events with Panamanian political leaders. Francis said that when he returned from Panama, he determined that those were not the wishes of the senior leadership in the Pentagon.

He also mentioned the constant friction and confusion among the Pentagon's office of Defense Information, the staffs of Commander-in-Chief General Maxwell Thurman and Operation Commander General Carl Stiner, and the undermanned staff of the Public Affairs office of the Southern Command. He said that the commanders seemed not to care about what access the pool had and that host Public Affairs officers became caught in the middle.

Francis also agreed with Sconyers that there was no need to deploy the National Media Pool to Panama. He pointed out that the Sidle panel had said that a stateside pool should be used when that was the only way the American media could accompany the troops. He said that there were enough reporters already in Panama who could have been quietly gathered from hotels the evening before the invasion and sent out with the troops.

He concluded his evaluation by saying that if the DOD pool is to function to serve the needs of the miltary, the media, and a free democracy, fundamental changes are needed. First, he said, there must be clear and unequivocal political and military instructions to the commanders in the field to allow the involvement of the DOD media pool in the initial phase of combat.

Secondly, Francis suggested, the pool should be reduced to its absolute minimum of one print reporter, one television reporter, one radio reporter, one video cameraman and one still photographer. He said that producers, reporters,

photographers, and technicians could join the pool within 24 hours for expanded coverage.

As a third recommendation, Francis said that the pool should be exercised every three months so that pool members could interact with commanders of rapid response forces. He added that the pool members should be tested for quick reaction and operational security at least once per month during this cycle.

Fourth, he contended that a general or flag officer for the Joints Chiefs should be a pool escort. He said that senior officers should rotate the duty and drill with the pool.

Fifth, Francis said that at least a minimum standard of military experience should be expected of pool members. Conversely he said that senior military commanders should be familiar with media needs and methods. He further stated that the Pentagon public affairs office should organize the ways and means to achieve that understanding.[181]

Francis obviously did not see the double standard in his requirement for a general officer as an escort and formal training for senior commanders compared with reporters who need a minimum of military experience. Military leaders might in turn suggest that the pool members always be executive presidents or senior anchormen/women for the networks.

Finally, Francis said that the military and the media must begin to work on a "basic level of trust" in order to

ever have a working relationship. "It seems to me the Panama operation was only one step above Grenada," he said.[182]

Editorials in newspapers around the country echoed Francis' criticism of the military for its lack of cooperation with the media. Richard Harwood, in an article in the Washington Post, said that the media pool got a cold reception and was effectively muzzled throughout much of their stay. He said that the reporters already present in Panama were holed up in the Mariott Hotel and needed protection, transportation, and information from the military. Since these were not available to them, he stated that self-preservation became their first priority.

Harwood said that two lessons should have been learned from the Panama invasion. First, the press is virtually helpless without the cooperation of the military. Second, he said that military field commanders will not cooperate unless they are made to. Harwood made reference to the adversarial relationship that had existed between the press and the military since Vietnam. He said that hostility and misunderstanding resulted because some of the senior commanders in Panama had fought in that war and journalists had opposed it.[183]

An editorial, entitled "The Pentagon Pool, Bottled Up", appeared in the New York Times following the invasion. This article claimed that the pool not only failed, but that it was a joke. It suggested that the pool contributed little to the coverage of the invasion because it remained under tight

military control. The editorial once again raised the issue of comprehension and trust between the military and the media.

The editorial said that since goals of defending the nation and informing the nation often conflict, the media must accept limitations. The military, in return, should allow reporters to do their job by getting them to the scene of the action and providing means of communication. The editorial quoted General Sidle as saying the day after the Panama invasion began, "If you're going to let the media in, you've got to let them do something."[184]

Another article in the New York Times by Eric Boehlert, "Panama Coverage: "One Big P.R. Job", said that the media only highlighted the highs and subordinated the lows of the invasion. He said that the fighting shown was severly restricted and that the pool pictures were "nothing short of an Army recruiting film."[185]

Boehlert also commented that there was an absence of violence and that newspapers and networks were willing to downplay negative aspects of the invasion. Boehlert concluded by saying that the invasion enabled the media to show the country that they liked a "splendid little war", and that the media indeed "helped make it a splendid little war."[186]

The Washington Post also addressed the issue of news management and propaganda in an article. Patrick E. Tyler wrote about the Pentagon denying a petition by the major

networks to release combat footage shot during the Panama invasion. He contended that the news media covered the invasion poorly and wanted to see an index of combat footage for its news value.

Some of this footage had been released by the Defense Department, but other material was reportedly classified. Tyler quoted David Martin, CBS Pentagon correspondent, as saying that combat tapes are released very quickly when they tell the story that the Pentagon wants told.

Tyler said that Bob Hall, a Defense Department official, said that each of the four military services shot combat footage to help with training, intelligence, and after-action reporting. He also said that the videos were not indexed and that a lot of the material was junk. Hall also contended that the Pentagon should not get too deeply involved in producing images for the news business, because then it would again be accused of controlling or managing the news.[187]

An Editor and Publisher editorial also criticized the military regarding its dealings with the media. The article said that "incompetence was a pseudonym for the typical animosity of military brass for the press."[188] Lower echelons of the military will not give any priority to the press, especially during combat, according to the editorial. The editor said that, judging from media protests, that the pool arrangment was no longer acceptable to print and broadcast journalists. The media and the military would have to go back to the drawing board, according to the editorial.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Pete Williams, held a DOD press pool meeting with members of the Panama media pool and other media representatives on January 19, 1990. Most of the discussion was on points Fred Francis had made in his written evaluation. There were, however, additional suggestions by other members of the media on how the National Media Pool could be improved. A member of the Newhouse Newspapers suggested that all the reporters selected for the pool be required to undergo a brief military-type training, which might include a day of classroom training and a day of field work at a training site such as the National Training Center or Fort Irwin.

According to their suggestion, this brief training would enable the pool to "demand quicker and more immediate access to combat action as it is happening" because "it would give the combat commanders confidence that the pool is seasoned and professional and can be placed in risky situations."[189] This two days of training would also supposedly give the pool reporters a new understanding and sympathy for combat troops. There were also several comments regarding dislike and distrust of the media by senior commanders who had been junior commanders in Vietnam.

Fred Francis said that he found most of these ideas ludicrous. He said that reporters did not need to be combat ready or to gain the trust of commanders. This argument was in conflict, however, with his previous recommendations concerning how the pool should function in the future. He

indicated earlier that the military and the media must begin to work on a "basic level of trust" in order to ever have a working relationship.[190]

At the press pool meeting, however, he argued that the way to correct the problems with the pool was through proper planning and backing of the pool by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. He contended that a professional Army would take orders when given and that personal prejudices of commanders would not be an issue.[191]

Other comments at the press pool meeting dealt with the sharing of news stories and photographs, and other products by the various news services, print media, and radio and television networks. Williams indicated that it was the intention of the Defense Department that all products from the pool be shared as agreed during the Sidle panel meetings. He agreed to work with representatives on individual problems they reported.

To ensure that all issues addressed by both military and media representatives were examined objectively, Williams ordered an assessment of the DOD Media Pool by Fred Hoffman. A 35-year veteran of the Associated Press (AP), Hoffman covered both the Pentagon and Vietnam and served as a principle Deputy of Public Affairs of the Pentagon under then Secretary of Defense Weinberger. He was brought back to do a thorough and independent review of the pool by interviewing the top people involved in handling the media pool arrangments.

Traveling to Panama and around the country, Hoffman interviewed the major commanders during the invasion to include Generals Thurman and Stiner. He spoke with members of the media pool and to other media representatives as well. Hoffman cleared military officers of most responsiblity for the pool's problems. Civilian Pentagon officials, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Pete Williams, were blamed for much of the DOD Media Pool's failures."[192]

In his 19-page report, Hoffman agreed with many of Sconyers' and Francis' assessments about difficulties with the pool. He began by discussing problems with planning. He said that Cheney's "excessive concern for secrecy prevented timely planning for the pool's coverage of Operation Just Cause"' and "prevented the Defense Department's media pool from reporting the critical opening battles of the U.S. invasion of Panama."[193]

Hoffman also confirmed that Defense Department officials decided not to heed the suggestion to use a local pool which was made by Col. Ron Sconyers, the U.S. Southern Command's Public Affairs Officer. He quoted Cheney as saying that he used the pool "to avoid being criticized for not using it."[194]

Hoffman offered other criticism of the military establishment:

> - Some U.S. military concern for the safety of pool members impeded coverage. This concern, while

understandable, should not have been allowed to limit the pool's reporting opportunities. Newsmen and women cover wars at their own risk.

- The 16-member pool produced stories that were of essentially secondary value.

- Southern Command Public Affairs Officer (PAOs) had little success in getting the pool to any remaining newsworthy action...

- Overall, there were important instances of less than effective leadership and performance in the Office of the the Assistance Secretary of Defense Public Affairs and among some of the senior PAOs in Panama...

- PAO's hauled pool members to some events that had nothing to do with the fighting they so badly wanted to see.

- Malfunctioning fax equipment and understaffing at the Pentagon, plus communications problems at the Southern Command Media Center, caused serious delays in getting out print pool pictures and still

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photos.

The former AP correspondent did defend some of the actions taken by the Defense Department and also suggested that senior military leaders were more supportive of the pool's presence than may have been indicated by the pool members. Some comments he made were:

- I could find no evidence--except for standing orders governing Special Operations troops,

including the Rangers-- that any senior civilian official or military commander had issued written or verbal instructions to refuse interviews or other contact with news personnel. The restrictions on the Rangers were eased on the second day of the operation.

- In my discussions with the top generals involved in Operation Just Cause, I heard only expressions of support for the pool concept and regret that it didn't work as it should have in Panama.

- General Maxwell Thurman, who heads the Southern Command, said, "I think we made a mistake by not having some of the press pool in with the 18th Airborne Corps so they could move with the troops."

- Army Lieutenant General Carl W. Stiner, who commanded all the combat troops in the invasion, said he could have received a smaller pool at Ft. Bragg, N.C., and taken it with him to Panama ahead of the paratroop deployment. It could have been briefed, sequestered, and positioned to witness the opening day of the attack, said Stiner...

- Photograpers and reporters were incensed when they were told they could not interview or take pictures of American wounded. This bar was ordered by Williams' office out of concern that pictures or identification of wounded might appear on TV or in print before next-of-kin were notified officially.

> -In this case, I (Hoffman) feel the bar was supported, to avoid the possibility of causing shock and pain to relatives who might not yet have been reached.[196]

Following his review of the Panama DOD Media Pool deployment, Hoffman made 17 recommendations to make the pool function correctly in the future, several of which were accepted in principle:

> - The Secretary of Defense should issue a policy directive...stating explicitly his official sponsorship of the media and requiring full support for it. That policy should make it clear to all that the pool must be given every assistance to report combat by U.S. troops from the start of operations.
>
> - The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs should monitor public affairs planning to assure they fullfill requirements for pool coverage...those plans should be briefed...along with operation plans.
>
> - ...The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should send out a message ordering all commanders to give full cooperation to the media pool and its escorts...the pool must have ready access to the earliest action and that the safety of the pool members must not be used as a reason to keep the pool from action.[197]

After the release of Hoffman's report, the Public Affairs Chiefs of the military services released messages to all major commanders regarding DOD National Media Pool planning requirements. These messages stated that the Grenada and Panama operations revealed the media's need for and access to information.

Commanders were reminded that military actions in Grenada and Panama had demonstrated that otherwise successful operations were not total successes unless the media aspects were properly handled. They were informed that problems associated with the pool's Panama deployment were being evaluated and that a DOD Directive would be forwarded once solutions were found.

In order to handle the next deployment of the National Media Pool in either an exercise or real-world contingency operation, interim guidance was issued to provide the following support:

- Daily, comprehensive , unclassified operational briefings for pool personnel
- Access to areas of ongoing combat/exercise operations...The goal should be to treat reporters as members of the unit...without recklessly exposing them to hostile fire.
- Reasonable access to key command and staff personnel
- A senior officer, usually the command PAO, to coordinate media pool requirements...

- Itinerary planning that would enable media pool members to disperse througout the combat area in order to provide balance coverage of operations, and to regroup periodically to share information and file stories...
- Cooperation from all forces participating in the operation/exercise on a not-to-interfere basis...
- Logistical support for the pool and escort personnel to include:
    - Airlift from the U.S. to area of operations or exercise and return
    - Theater ground, sea, and air transportation
    - Messing and billeting on a reimbursable basis
    - Issuance of any gear appropriate to the situation such as helmets, canteens, flak vests, etc.
    - Access to communications facilities to file stories on an expedited basis
    - Medical support as required [198]

Whether the implementation of further policy will improve the operation of the National Media Pool during the next combat operation of U.S. military forces is questionable. The Panama invasion, did afford both the military and the media an opportunity to work together is an hostile environment with at least some degree of cooperation. Representatives of both sides were also able to agree on several points regarding the deployment of the pool in this instance and in future conflicts.

Military and media leaders contended that proper planning is essential to the effective operation of a pool. Of great importance is whether the pool should be used at all. The consensus of military and media representatives was that there was no reason for the deployment of a stateside pool during the Panama invasion. A sufficient number of resident media were on hand in Panama to cover the conflict.

Since the Department of Defense elected to employ a stateside pool, they should have notified pool members in a timely fashion so that the use of the pool was not negated. The Panama pool literally missed most of the war. Once in Panama, too many logistical problems resulted in further restrictions on covering what was left of the action.

Although military planning and cooperation was less than favorable, the media can be faulted for their actions during the invasion as well. When pool members were unable to provide breaking news stories immediately, a barrage of media descended on Panama. The logistical havoc created by the hoards of media was counterproductive. When the small military public affairs staff tried to accommodate incoming media's food, shelter, and communications needs, they were unable to properly assist the media pool.

The deployment of the National Media Pool during the Panama invasion provided additional proof that the "cold war" between the military and the media has been detrimental to both sides. The reaction to media complaints during the

Grenada invasion resulted in paranoia on behalf of the defense establishment. What might have been a success in another scenario, went awry when the media was called out unnecessarily for the Panama invasion. Once assembled, the media pool was not allowed to do its job--report on the war.

Conversely, the irresponsible actions of a too-large contingency of media reinforced the idea that they interfere with a combat operation. Insistence on interviewing wounded soldiers before families could be notified also suggested a lack of sensitivity on part of the media. Since the policy used by the Defense Department during the Panama Invasion was the same as that issued by the major TV networks during Vietnam, the resulting complaints were also indicative of an inexperienced media.

The recent experience in Panama calls attention to the need for a mutual cooperation in military-media relations. A definative public affairs policy needs to be developed that will allow the maximum flow of information between the military and the media with due consideration given to the primary missions of both organizations.

Proposed Model of Public Relations for Future Combat Contingencies

The Department of Defense regulations state that the military services should not attempt to deny information to the media just because it may cause critism or embarrassment to the government. If disclosure of information does not adversely affect national security or threaten the safety of

privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces, then it should be made fully and readily available to the media. Conversely, the media should demonstrate appropriate concern and care for the operational security and physical safety of American combat forces.

Guidelines for coverage of combat operations should be based on the two-way symmetrical model of public relations, which provides a communication flow both to and from the media. Although the model may not change the attitudes or behavior of the military and media, it may help keep the sometimes adversarial relationship from getting out of hand.

Richard Halloran, military correspondent for the New York Times, says that the adversarial relationship between the press and the military is built into the structure of the Constitution.[199] Although the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of the military in almost all First Amendment controversies concerning right of press access during combat contingencies, there is still a need for cooperation in such situations.

Halloran provided one important reason why when he explained the military's difficulty in gaining public support for recruiting, budget, morale, and political support. He suggested that effective communication with the media could enable the military to gain that needed support.[200]

The military is acutely aware of the effect that public support has on its ability to accomplish its combat mission. As early as the 1930s, the Public Affairs Branch of the Army

attempted to divorce itself from the Intelligence Directorate. Information officers pressed for affiliation with an agency that represented a more flexible point of view. They contended that the Intelligence Directorate's exaggerated concern for secrecy hampered efforts to keep the public and Congress informed.

On the eve of World War II, the Public Affairs Branch was transferred to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army. World War II served as a test of the military's ability to work with the press to keep both the troops and the public informed. The ability of the media to broadcast news electronically impacted on media-military relationships.

Some correspondents complained that censorship was too stringent. There were also conflicts between the security-conscious military and civilian information agencies such as the Office of War Information, which argued for the release of everything known to the enemy as long as it did not give him aid.[201]

Important military leaders such as Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, were convinced that widespread popular support was essential for democracies to wage war. Considering good relations with the press necessary to gain support at home for the war, he made some newsmen quasi-members of his staff. He also instructed censors never to cut personal criticisms of him or his actions. As a result, reporters developed confidence in him and sometimes suppressed bad news they thought might be harmful to his efforts.

Relations with the media during World War II were considered well-maintained when the conflict ended. The consensus of most commentators has been that World War II, except for a few instances, was accurately reported by both the military and the news media. Unfortunately, the same can hardly be said for the Vietnam War.

The public affairs policy adopted by the military in South Vietnam was based on the belief that Americans could bring that war to a quick, clean conclusion. Based upon this fact, General William C. Westmoreland, commander of American troops in Vietnam, in consultation with agencies in Washington, decided on a policy of voluntary censorship.

He was aware that the South Vietnamese government was unsympathetic to the American idea of freedom of the press and might use censorship as a means to intimidate reporters who criticized them. Westmoreland also feared such actions might alienate the American people, who had not shown much interest in the war but whose support was important.

Supplementing voluntary guidelines with a program that attempted to keep the press informed, he provided regular background briefings, consultation by public affairs officers, daily press conferences, transportation into the field for newsmen, and a system of press camps throughout Vietnam. The media's respect for Westmoreland and the war effort remained intact until he became identified with President Johnson's public relations campaigns to justify the war.

Because the media had generally supported official policy in earlier wars, many military leaders expected similar support in Vietnam. They blamed the press for credibility problems and the press accused the military of trying to mislead the public. Although many military leaders still blame the press for failures in Vietnam, research by military historians such as William Hammond indicates that the casualties of the war, not the press, were responsible for the change in public sentiment toward the war.

When the Johnson administration attempted to use public relations programs akin to press agentry to manipulate the public and the news media, they failed to take into consideration the negative feedback that would occur when then truth emerged.[202] Attempts to present both sides of the Vietnam story resulted in lasting hostility between the military and media which has evolved into an on-going cold war. Ever since the Vietnam War, the military and the media have been at odds when it comes to covering and reporting military action.[203]

Still smarting from the negative relations during Vietnam, the military excluded the media from entering the combat zone during the Grenada invasion until the action was almost over. The press was quick to point out the tradition of front-line coverage in all prior wars, but often failed to mention the restraints that had been imposed by the government on those occasions.[204]

Although there was public and congressional support for exclusion of the press, the military leadership recognized

the need to establish guidelines that would allow coverage of future combat operations. In response to outcries about First Amendment violations by the media, the Pentagon convened a panel composed of military leaders and media representatives. The panel was dubbed the Sidle Commission after its chairman, retired Army Maj. Gen. Winant Sidle, former spokesman for the U.S. military in Vietnam.

The Sidle Commission decided on the concept of a National Media Pool. Composed of a minimum number of representatives from myriad media, the pool was developed to ensure full access to combat operations and freedom from pre-censorship.[205] Pentagon officials agreed to provide early access for journalists covering any future combat operations. They futher agreed that there would be no formal censorship of material before it is transmitted--only voluntary compliance with prohibitions on the use of tactical information that would threaten security or risk the lives of military personnel.[206]

The National Media Pool was tested for the first time during the Panama Invasion on December 20, 1989. The military did not fulfill its promise to provide the media pool with early access to the combat. Moreover, logistical problems resulting from a mass influx of media, interfered with adequate support of the designated pool members. Blame for the failure of the pool was evenly placed on both the military and the media for their lack of understanding and sensitivity to the other's position.

The military has both a right and an obligation to communicate its requirements to the American people and their representatives. There are times when military commanders must deal firmly with the news media, but they must do so with a keen awareness that the concept of a free press emerged from the very fiber of the nation.[207]

The conflict between the military and media stems from fundamental differences in values between two professional cultures. While reporters tend to be liberal, anti-authority, government watchdogs, the military see themselves as conservative, duty-bound, government servants. The media of today has changed dramatically from combat journalists such as Ernie Pyle during World War II. The possibility that media representatives today have had military experience is slight and so is the chance for a sense of shared experience.

Attempting to change the contending cultures of military and media would be futile, but it is possible to bridge the gap between them.[208] Military public affairs representatives can accomplish this endeavor by becoming brokers who attempt to reconcile the military point of view with that of the civilian world. They can be an integral part of the military, but also cultivate a perspective that is somewhat apart.[209] Adopting a two-way symmetrical model of public relations will enable representatives of the Department of Defense to serve the needs of the military while assisting the media in fulfilling its obligation to the American people.

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