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**THE REVOLUTION IN MEDIA AFFAIRS:
REINVENTING US STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
IN THE ERA OF SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC**

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***The Revolution in Media Affairs:
Reinventing US Strategic Communications in the Era of Slobodan Milosevic***

If a single drama raised the curtain on what military modernizers call the *revolution in military affairs* -- or RMA -- it was the war theater of Desert Storm. CNN transmitted nightly fireworks from bombs dropped just-on-target, and the world marveled at the apparently instant outcome of Information Age combat. Optimists argued that by equipping troops to gain "information superiority" from the growing synergy of orbital satellites and digital technology, America and her allies would quickly resolve the coming century's conflicts. A decade later, the contest over Kosovo has tempered post Gulf War optimism with renewed attention to the roles that other national institutions -- political, economic, and socio-cultural -- play in winning wars. An air campaign intended to deter Serbs from attacking ethnic Albanians, but portrayed on local media as unprovoked aggression on Serb civilians, seems to have solidified support for the architects of ethnic cleansing.

In this light, NATO's battle with Serbia may focus the American public and policymaking community on the national security implications of a second digital transformation -- the global *revolution in media affairs*. The US private sector proudly leads this revolution, reaping profits as *Dallas* and *Baywatch* become worldwide hits, and dispatching reporters with satellite phones to wherever a story unfolds. Emerging from the Cold War, the West's international shortwave broadcasters find that satellite feeds also create new options for them, by

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permitting long distance partnerships with proliferating local FM and TV stations. However, authoritarian regimes can thwart this maneuver, as Slobodan Milosevic demonstrated in the run-up to Yugoslavia's war with NATO.

In October 1998, NATO commander General Wesley Clark visited Serbia in the wake of a pledge that President Milosevic made to Richard Holbrooke the previous week. On October 20, as Clark warned Belgrade's leaders to fulfill their promise to withdraw military forces from Kosovo, or face the possibility of NATO airstrikes,¹ the Serb Parliament passed a draconian "Public Information Law." The new legislation imposed fines large enough to bankrupt any publication or broadcaster found guilty of "offending the dignity and reputation of a person" or of publishing "untruths." It also prohibited local broadcasters from the common practice of rebroadcasting foreign programs, in effect removing Serbian radio and television programs produced by the *Voice of America (VOA)*, *Radio Free Europe (RFE)* and the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* from local airwaves.² Sufficient Yugoslav troops and tanks subsequently withdrew across the Serb border to permit a temporary OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission. In the mean time, Milosevic had consolidated one of the most powerful weapons of previous nationalist Yugoslav wars -- state-controlled monopoly media.

With hindsight, the Serb leader's cynical move to prepare his country's media environment for war, as he bought time to plan a new ethnic cleansing campaign, is clear. Less obvious, but critical to America's future national security posture, is how for over a decade, the media policies of President Milosevic

exacerbated ethnic tensions and created the climate for violence. In making an argument that US national interests require a new mandate for *US strategic communications* -- defined here as *government-sponsored international broadcasting and new (Internet) media, and the use of media by American diplomats and policymakers* -- this essay pays particular attention to the example of Serbia and her neighbors. Second, it explores how a revolution has transformed the global media environment, and proposes a set of operational concepts as guidelines for US international communicators. And finally, it outlines a handful of initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of US communications with overseas audiences.

MASS MEDIA AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

Mark Thompson's book, *Forging War*³, presents a detailed study of how ultra-nationalist leaders like Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic and Franjo Tudjman skillfully exploited the potent Communist legacy of state-controlled media -- especially monopoly television -- to orchestrate violence and shatter Yugoslavia. Where Communist broadcasts once condemned "class enemies" and "capitalism,"⁴ successor propaganda machines stigmatized neighboring ethnic groups with inflammatory terms like "Serb terrorists", "Ustashe hordes", and "Muslim fanatics." The demonized groups were incessantly accused of crimes -- past and present, real and imagined. Films portraying the partisan heroes and savaged victims of battles from the Middle Ages to World War II

were constantly replayed, making implicit comparisons with today's armies battling for Greater Serbia or Greater Croatia.

In addition to popularizing ethnic insults and reinforcing historical grievances, the region's authoritarian regimes also use television to stage events and distort facts. The famous 1987 speech in Pristina, when Slobodan Milosevic forged his political identity as an uncompromising Serb nationalist, is an apt example. His bellow to an enraged Serb crowd, "No one shall beat you again!" was played and replayed on nationwide TV, coining a modern Serb rallying call.⁵ Both the event and the one-sided reporting were carefully orchestrated. TV Belgrade had installed a tough nationalist correspondent in Kosovo's capital, rather than relying on TV Pristina's customary coverage. Local Serb activists then stationed a truck of stones nearby, to use in pelting the police.⁶ The nationwide network was thus positioned to publicize only the police pushing the demonstrators, not the crowd provoking them with rocks.⁷

A decade later, President Milosevic lost no time mounting a propaganda war as NATO's promised air campaign unfolded. His politically powerful wife, Mirjana Markovic, explained to an American visitor that her nation was simultaneously engaged in two wars. a bombing war and a media war⁸ (she added that her husband would be well advised to become more engaged in the media fight). The government quickly crushed Serbia's few remaining independent media outlets. Belgrade's renowned FM radio station, B-92, was first taken off the air -- and then severed from the Internet⁹ Print journalists

were ordered to submit reports to government censors before publication, and a prominent publisher who refused was assassinated.¹⁰ With competing messages suppressed, Serbian TV news was virtually unchallenged in its assertion that the main aim of criminal NATO attacks was to harm civilians¹¹ No images of mass Albanian refugees were aired and the Kosovo humanitarian disaster was described only as "made up" or "overemphasized" by Western propaganda. NATO opponents were described as fascists, dictators, killers, death disseminators, criminals, gangsters, bandits, barbarians, perverts, lunatics, scum, trash, vandals, and vampires.¹²

Building on its success manipulating national mass media, the Serbian Ministry of Information set its sights on international audiences, turning in particular the world's increasing Internet traffic. Its official Web site at www.serbia-info.com was largely in English. Each day of the conflict, stories were posted for the international journalists, policymakers, and wider publics who seek news from the information highway. The site repeated the same messages delivered to Serb TV audiences: that NATO aggressors were intentionally and unjustly targeting Yugoslav civilians; that Serb military measures in Kosovo were solely designed to deter Albanian terrorists, that NATO policymakers were fumbling and fractious; and that Russia was a strong ally of Yugoslavia. The Web stories had titles like "NATO aircraft continue shooting at civilian targets all over Serbia," and "Albanian terrorism after Milosevic Holbrooke accord." Sections on international reaction quoted widely from the Western

press with headlines like "*The Washington Post*: NATO Frustrated Due to a Fiasco" or "*New York Times* on Clinton road to hell."¹³ Serbia's home page linked the popular bull's eye image, symbolizing resistance to NATO, to another page called "These are NATO targets," a photo essay of newborn babies, elderly dead, schools, factories and other non-military enterprises harmed in the bombing.¹⁴

The conflict over Kosovo is only one facet of much wider regional instability, and Serbia's neighbors face similar challenges, stemming from exceptionally powerful state media that support nationalist leaders and attack their perceived enemies. Next door in Bosnia's second entity, the Republika Srpska, the hard-line Serb SRT TV channel became so inflammatory that the UN Office of the High Commissioner intervened in 1997 to insert an international administrator.¹⁵ The Tudjman government of Croatia frequently harasses independent journalists with legal prosecution. In 1998 some 900 journalists were charged, often with criminal offenses, under Croatia's 1992 Law on Public Information. The Croatian Government's official Web site harshly criticizes Serbs in Croatia.¹⁶

THE REVOLUTION IN MEDIA AFFAIRS

The severe media laws and polarizing messages common to official Serb and Croat media echo Communist era journalism. Yet these governments also exploit sophisticated video techniques to communicate with television viewers, and mount multilingual Web sites to attract and inform, if not always persuade, Internet consumers. They enter the twenty-first century as practitioners of

what, to borrow from the thinking of military analyst Andrew Krepinevich, might be described as a media revolution. Paraphrasing his frequently cited definition of a military revolution, a *revolution in media affairs* occurs when the application of new technologies into a significant number of media production and distribution systems combines with innovative formats and new types of media organizations to fundamentally alter the character and conduct of mass communications.¹⁷ Because authoritarian regimes in Serbia and elsewhere find mass media such an effective tool for maintaining power and fostering ethnic nationalism, and because US national interests are served when government-funded media fills gaps left by private media in communicating US values and policies overseas, it is useful to explore the nature of the ongoing media transformation in some detail.

The Krepinevich framework proposes that a combination of four elements produces a genuine RMA: technological change; systems development, operational innovation; and organizational adaptation.¹⁸ Combining to produce the media version of a "system of systems," these equate to innovations like geostationery and low-earth-orbit satellites (GEO's and LEO's) and portable video uplinks; Internet news and the upcoming "Internet in the Sky"; talk radio, niche programming, and multi-channel cable networks; myriad FM radio outlets, global and regional satellite TV networks, and mammoth media conglomerates. A quartet of questions adapted from another expert on revolution in warfare, Eliot Cohen, help define the sea change underway in the character and conduct of

mass communication. To wit, how is the appearance of media transformed? How is the structure of media organizations changing? What new media elites are emerging? How do new media formats and organizations alter national power positions?¹⁹

How is the appearance of media transformed? Since the close of the Cold War, digital technology, affordable equipment, and liberalized regulatory policies have collectively altered both the qualities and quantities of mass media. Slick production values like stereo FM and flashy video graphics are virtually universal. FM radio stations mushroom from Bosnia to Benin, and migrate to the Internet from Belgrade. Urban audiences with access to a range of FM radio are increasingly disinclined to accept the relatively low quality of shortwave transmissions. Call-in shows and e-mail make interactive programming de rigueur: President Clinton hosts talk radio in Shanghai; disc jockeys announce e-mail song requests in Nairobi. Multimedia Web sites forge an entirely new format from the fusion of text, photos, streaming audio and video, and search engines to access archived material. The multiplication of media formats drastically sharpens competition for foreign broadcast audiences

New digitized ways to organize program distribution render time and distance less relevant to media consumers. Direct-to-home (DTH) satellite services have enough channel options to replay a program at multiple times. If an early evening "pay-per-view" film is inconvenient, I can catch the next showing a few hours later. If I miss a live play of a radio show -- or my address

is outside the transmitter footprint -- I can turn to the Web for a *RealAudio* rendition.

A key aspect of changing broadcast formats is the increasing number of niche radio and TV channels "narrowcasting" to restricted demographic and interest groups rather than packaging a wide range of programs in a single program stream. Cable and satellite audiences grow accustomed to all-news, all-sports and all-comedy channels. Language and ethnic groups -- including political exiles -- produce a Kurdish satellite channel from London and Tamil channels from South India. *CNN* expands its market by creating a 24-hour Spanish channel. The 500-channel universe segregates consumers into smaller groups as it offers individuals a greater variety and volume of information options.

How is the structure of media organizations changing? Paradoxically, the new media environment favors both individuals and huge multinational conglomerates. Tiny "micro-stations" may reach only a few blocks,²⁰ but Saudi tycoons underwrite satellite TV for viewers across the Arab world. The apparent contradiction occurs because successful programs are produced and packaged for well-defined target groups. Depending on program cost and intended audience, broadcasters aim for areas as small as a university neighborhood, or as broad as the global sweep of *CNN International* and *BBC World TV*. Media conglomerates, from *Time Warner* to the *Times of India*, realize economies of scale by tapping a single, digitally compatible resource base to produce multiple

products. Small organizations benefit from their ability to appeal to the specific interests of a few people. Big organizations leverage huge investments into a variety of attractive products targeted wherever they detect a market. The Internet, of course, capitalizes on both these trends, with space for both idiosyncratic amateurs and mass media professionals.

The structure of media delivery systems is also changing rapidly, thanks largely to satellite transmissions. Where erratic shortwave radio signals were once the only practical option for leaping national borders, satellites now deliver studio-quality video anywhere in the world. But with increased competition, reaching satellite TV viewers often depends on what industry insiders describe as being "in a good neighborhood." Households with individual satellite receivers seldom buy more than one dish system. Even cable distributors, who downlink and feed a wide range of channels to cable subscribers, prefer to keep their dish collections to a minimum. Since a single dish usually points to a particular satellite, good neighborhoods in the sky, like those on the ground, mean that your channel sits next to other highly attractive programming. DTH subscribers or cablecasters are then likely to own a dish aimed where you live. And just as homes in neighborhoods with good services are expensive, it costs more to rent frequencies on popular DTH satellites. Signals strong enough to be downlinked by small dishes require more power than transmissions to bigger, less convenient dishes. For a program not to be isolated, like a hard-to-find house outside city limits, it helps to be located on a channel next to like-minded neighbors. In the

sparse media environments where shortwave thrives, a single frequency commonly carries programs in many languages. But most modern consumers expect to find familiar material whenever they tune to their favorite channels.

What new media elites are emerging? The current media revolution, like its military counterpart,²¹ races forward when better technology is matched with trained and talented people, not on the basis of technical progress alone. Some emergent media elites are the experts of cutting-edge technologies and systems. These include digital studio technicians, cable entrepreneurs, and Webmasters. Others arise because they grasp the revolution's operational and organizational potential. These are the visionaries and entrepreneurs responsible for implementing the most profound innovations, from Africa's first national radio networks to the planet's first satellite Internet systems. The world's new media elite -- from TV station managers and on-air talent to Internet "digerati" -- are often young, both because the young adapt more easily to new technology and because, outside the aging West and Japan, global audiences are increasingly youthful.

The media transformation benefits policymakers, as well as celebrities, who master new modes of communication. Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura used JesseNet, a list of 3,000 e-mail subscribers, to organize much of his low-budget campaign.²² Nigeria's outgoing president, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, got worldwide publicity as a guest on *BBC's* weekly Webcast talk

show.²³ US foreign policymakers who communicate effectively on air and online expand support for both their ideas and actions.

How do new media formats and organizations alter national power positions? The media revolution is a major factor in the shift from industrial to information-based economies. Mass media also underlie what experts like Joseph Nye call soft power, "the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion which depends largely on the persuasiveness of the free information that an actor seeks to transmit."²⁴ This is because radio and television, movies and magazines, e-mail and the Internet are the most effective way for national leaders and peoples to communicate their ideas, intentions -- and commercial innovations -- to other leaders and peoples. Dissenters may have destroyed the Berlin Wall because they resented Soviet domination and repressive regimes. But they clamored to create nations based on Western models in part because mass media, including the *Voice of America*, *Radio Free Europe* and European television, convinced them that Westerners live well.

The flip side of gaining power with compelling mass messages is deterring the efforts of competitors. For all its diversity, this plethora of new media formats and program-providers has not fully defeated government censors. They often grow more sophisticated, permitting non-threatening entertainment programs, while restricting information likely to challenge incumbent regimes and ideologies. Profits are made, but propaganda protected. China forbids cable

companies to directly distribute foreign satellite channels; India bars independent radio from producing live news or using non-government transmitters; virtually no independent broadcasters are licensed in the Middle East. Citizens in these nations are often the very publics with whom the US would like to communicate. Understanding the nature of today's international and regional media markets is the first prerequisite.

THE MEDIA REVOLUTION AND THE CONDUCT OF COMMUNICATION

Like radical military shifts, media revolutions create new strategic contexts. Armies and navies re-equipped, re-organized and re-trained to exploit revolutions in artillery, sail and shot, and land warfare. Similarly, mass media was reinvented to pursue the possibilities of the printing press, radio, and television. Just as the essential Clausewitzian definition of war, as an act of force "to compel our enemy to do our will,"²⁵ remains constant despite technological transformations, the essence of media as a means of communication to share information and persuade target audiences is unchanged. However, the integration of digital technology across telecommunications and information systems used by new kinds of organizations fundamentally alters the character and conduct of mass media. One important difference is that audiences everywhere -- not just in the media-surfeted West -- are shifting from an era of information scarcity to one of information overload. They have more media choices, but only limited time and attention. In addition, the ability to shape and send messages is increasingly decentralized

This decentralization is related to what may be the most intriguing shift in media: mass communication, like individual conversations, is increasingly interactive, blurring the role of sender and receiver. Modern media consumers demand information tailored to their specific needs, and they seek to play an active role in the communication process. This is the new battlefield on which media producers compete. What principles guide the new winners?

Facing a military battlespace reshaped by the digital RMA, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shalikashvili responded with a set of operational concepts laid out in the self-described "conceptual template," *Joint Vision 2010*. National security strategists who focus on America's need to communicate values and policies with rapidly changing international audiences would be wise to formulate the mass media equivalents of *JV 2010*'s "dominant maneuver" and "precision engagement." Their corresponding template might include such concepts as *credible content*, *compelling context*, *competitive quality*, *ready accessibility*, and *interactivity*.

Goals like credible content and ready accessibility are longstanding objectives of expert communicators. But just as the pinpoint accuracy of precision guided weapons redefines the phrase "precision engagement," the impact of new media systems redefines traditional media concepts. Another similarity between the cluster of military concepts outlined in *JV 2010* and the media counterparts discussed in more detail below is that they overlap. Precision engagement facilitates dominant maneuver, and both are increased by

the standoff capability of laser-guided weapons. Similarly, credible content, compelling context, and competitive quality are mutually reinforcing. Moreover, the interplay of digital circuits, satellite feeds, and niche broadcasters helps redefine all three factors.

This very complexity, stemming from modern media's "system of systems," is precisely why US strategic communication needs reinventing. Incremental change suits bureaucracies in gradually evolving environments. Radical restructuring is required for a media world where a Ugandan broadcast colleague initiated this writer to e-mail -- because, he explained, communicating from Kampala was so much cheaper by Internet than by phone or even fax. How then does the media revolution redefine operational concepts for successful international mass communication?

- ❖ *Credible content*: US strategic communications must ring true in order to attract and convince international audiences. Credibility is established incrementally over time, not instantly in the midst of a crisis or conflict. (*CNN* does not disappear between crises; viewers multiply when big stories break thanks to the network's slowly established track record.) Believable content is not just a matter of *fact*. The messenger's trustworthiness, the resonance of surrounding messages, and the external context can influence a media consumer more than specific facts. (Recall the *Washington Post* reporter in Belgrade who discovered that local TV

viewers dismissed *CNN* and *Sky TV* images of refugee streams from Kosovo as equivalent to propaganda on their own national TV network.)²⁶

- ❖ *Compelling context:* US strategic communications must communicate through contexts that enhance the credibility and accessibility of information. It is easy for cross-cultural messages to be distorted between sender and receiver. Choosing culturally popular formats and credible media partners creates a context of common interests, making messages more persuasive. Entertainment, not just news programs, conveys important information.
- ❖ *Competitive quality:* US strategic communications must keep pace with rapid international innovations in program quality. Substance counts, but state-of-the-art production values make messages more attractive. Highly variable media environments determine what's competitive in a local market, from shortwave radio in Ethiopia to stereo FM in Estonia. Competitiveness in new media often stems from combining familiar media forms -- print, photos, graphics, audio, and video -- in new ways, and from adopting standardized Internet formats as quickly as they evolve.
- ❖ *Ready accessibility:* US strategic communications must be easy to find. With greater media choice, convenience counts. Consumers gravitate to favorite media "neighborhoods," whether these are local FM and TV channels, a popular TV satellite service, a preferred cable company, or a popular Internet gateway site.

- ❖ *Interactivity:* US strategic communications have the opportunity to engage with international audiences in new ways. The use of mass media is evolving from passive consumption toward active engagement. The ability to phone a talk show host, send e-mail to a journalist, or personalize a Web site lends individual and local perspectives to mass communication -- even when sender and receiver live far apart. Media consumers become invested in messages that they help shape.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES FOR THE INFORMATION AGE

Operational concepts are most useful when they help policymakers generate and prioritize concrete activities. In response to the principles just outlined, new media initiatives should include television, Internet, and FM radio, and increased media activities by US diplomats and policymakers. Each endeavor should be designed to exploit the synergies of credible content, compelling context, competitive quality, ready accessibility, and interactivity, as defined by a specific target audience. Together, the following projects hold promise to better communicate American values and policies with important overseas audiences:

Television: television is an especially potent medium because its fusion of sound and moving images creates a sense of reality that viewers perceive as highly credible, especially about aspects of life they experience only through media ²⁷ US government-sponsored international broadcasting needs a clear mandate and enhanced resources to produce and distribute foreign language

television for key strategic markets. The issue is urgent because TV is the medium of choice for many rural dwellers and virtually all urban residents in a world that is rapidly migrating to cities. Cable TV is carpeting China, reaching some 88% of urban households.²⁸ In spite of Saudi Arabia's ban on satellite dishes, 64% of the population watches satellite TV and 45% have individual household dishes.²⁹ Nine of ten Croatians say that the national television network is their chief source of news.³⁰ Scores of local-language satellite channels beam into India and Pakistan.

US international broadcasters make modest efforts to participate in this TV explosion, but vast opportunities remain untapped. The US Information Agency's *WORLDNET Television*, which helped pioneer the interactive possibilities of satellite television in the 1980s, originates many *Dialogue* programs where international journalists query American experts and policymakers. But the video is only one-way, and the programs seldom receive regularly scheduled slots on overseas stations. US international radio broadcasters, which include the *Voice of America (VOA)*, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)*, *Radio Marti*, and *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, remain rooted in a proud tradition of piercing the Iron Curtain with shortwave radio, although several *VOA* language services, including Mandarin, Serbian, Croatian, and Farsi, produce radio-television simulcasts, a relatively low-tech hybrid of the two media

The radio broadcasters and *WORLDNET TV* are understandably cautious about treading on the territory of US commercial TV broadcasters. However,

profitable markets are by no means a perfect overlap with public information imperatives. *CNN* has a global English service, but is not among the top ten satellite services regularly watched in the Persian Gulf, where Arabic channels are preferred.³¹ No Arabic TV broadcaster is based in the United States.

Because television is relatively more expensive to produce than radio, fewer languages would be candidates for major government-sponsored television initiatives than the more than sixty existing radio language services. Key regional languages -- Mandarin, Arabic, Russian, and Hindi -- are logical candidates. Less widely spoken languages in areas where the US has unusually strong interests are also likely choices. The sub-region in Southeast Europe that encompasses Serbia and her neighbors is an obvious choice. This example is illustrative in describing how a major new television project might be tailored to a specific media context.

The time is ripe to consider a regional satellite channel in the dialects that were collectively described in Tito's day as Serbo-Croatian. Despite government censorship of terrestrially transmitted television, about 12% of Serbians have access to satellite television,³² with a corresponding figure of 18% in Croatia.³³ Similarly, there are reports that up to 15% of Bosnians had dishes, often locally manufactured, before the recent war.³⁴ In addition to being downlinked by dish-owning households, the direct-to-home (DTH) channel could be fed through cable systems, and selectively rebroadcast by conventional terrestrial stations where this is permitted. *Voice of America's* half-hour Serbian and Croatian radio-

TV simulcasts are available on satellite, but they are not part of a round-the-clock program stream and thus surrounded by other locally targeted material to attract viewers to their broadcast neighborhood. The production values of the current programs are rigorously modest and should be upgraded to a competitive level for the local market (a former Bosnian television station manager joked to this writer that her colleagues describe the format as "newspaper-on-television").

In addition to the sub-region's political turmoil and troubled media history, another reason to support a full DTH channel, is the extensive investment that the United States and European Union already make in local independent broadcasters. In tandem with their military commitments to combat ethnic cleansing, NATO countries believe that civil society underpins nations based on citizenship, rather than on ethnic identity. Private sector media contributes to civil society by holding governments to account, expressing diverse views, and generating a local media industry. This is why donors fund journalism training and offer other kinds of support to emerging media throughout the former Yugoslavia. A multi-donor coalition could channel much of the funding allocated for media projects into local program production for use on a satellite channel. Monies would also be needed to lease a frequency on an already popular DTH satellite.³⁵ A multiethnic regional production center could be established, possibly staffed by some of the journalists who have received long-term training in the West.

Apart from being available on a locally popular satellite, program quality would be the most important factor determining the success of such a regional channel, since it would compete with both local and international television. In addition to spreading costs, multi-donor underwriting could lessen the likelihood of producing the often boring fare of official media. Ideally, the channel should create a brand identity closely associated with the viewers and issues of the sub-region. Soap operas might handle sensitive subjects like refugee resettlement. Animated satire, well known in this part of the world, is another possible format for dealing with controversy. If all parties were fair game, a cartoon version of *Saturday Night Live* could well prove popular across national boundaries. Call-in programs, game shows, and programming for children and teenagers are just a few of the many possibilities.

One reservation sometimes voiced about a multiethnic media endeavor is also one of the best reasons to contemplate the project. This is that regional broadcasters, including Bosnia's independent outlets, increasingly insist on programs produced in distinct Bosniak, Croatian, or Serbian dialects of what remains a mutually intelligible language. This form of political correctness segregates local audiences. Although satellite viewers could still select individual programs from a regional channel, local broadcasters would not make the choice preemptively as they do now. If programs, some of them featuring multiethnic hosts and casts, are sufficiently attractive, they are likely to draw a diverse audience, exposing them to ethnically integrated perspectives.

If a donor coalition concurs that foreign assistance to independent media is a logical element of a regional communications strategy -- and should extend to underwriting programs for a regional satellite channel -- it should remember that sustainable media endeavors must be viable businesses. International media expert Gene Mater of the Freedom Forum offers an important critique of Western aid when he notes that it focuses almost entirely on program content, not on media-related business skills. Even award-winning organizations like Belgrade's *B-92 FM* and Sarajevo's *Oslobodjenje* newspaper must learn to price and sell advertising, or they will collapse without outside assistance.³⁶ Funding for TV program production should carry requirements that recipients have viable business plans and provide technical assistance to design and implement such plans.

A final concern about DTH television is that it might be jammed. Although it is technically possible to interfere with a satellite broadcast by uplinking on its transmission frequency,³⁷ the practice specifically violates Article 35 of the International Telecommunication Convention. This treaty provision specifies that space radio telecommunications must not cause harmful interference with the radio services or communications of others.³⁸ A country willing to be labeled a rogue state might ignore its UN obligations to the International Telecommunications Union, but the ITU could presumably respond by sanctioning the perpetrator's access to telecommunications from space. While

not impossible, the practice of co-channel interference, also known as jamming, seems likely to remain extremely rare.

Internet: if television is today's dominant mass media, the Internet is tomorrow's. Some computer "hosts" will be wired to the Web by satellite and others by fiber optic cable, but one way or another, opinion makers will be connected. Over 43 million hosts, stretched across 214 countries and territories, are already linked to the Net, with 100 million expected in 2001.³⁹ Nearly as many urban Chinese own a computer (10%) as regularly listen to the radio (11%). Double the number use the Internet (3.5%) as listen to major international radio programs (1.2%).⁴⁰ Observers concerned that such statistics come from cities, not the countryside, should recall that *Teledesic*, which promotes itself as a "global, broadband *Internet-in-the-Sky*" expects to have a network of 288 low-earth-orbiting satellites in place by 2004.⁴¹ This project and a handful of competitors will create two-way connectivity independent of land-based phone and cable systems. Successfully implemented, the plans would make broadband Internet services as accessible from the sands of Namibia as from the sidewalks of New York.

Serbia's conclusion in 1999 that it needed an English Web site to battle NATO is reminiscent of America's decision in 1942 that it needed German shortwave broadcasts to support its World War II campaign. US international broadcasters have begun to tap the possibilities of the Internet to communicate with Serbs and Russians and Asians,⁴² but a significantly larger investment holds

the promise significantly larger success. The *BBC World Service* Web site, developed by the reigning peer competitor of all international broadcasters, suggests the unique possibilities opened by this still-emerging media form.⁴³ Print, photos, audio and video clips, and a variety of live and archived broadcasts are intermixed, conveniently organized by news event and program category -- from headline news stories to sports and English-teaching. Page formats are consistent and attractive throughout the site. Links from the *World Service* home page to other *BBC* Web pages change often, depending on news events. (In the midst of the Kosovo crisis, Balkan language links were prominently displayed, including a joint *Red Cross-BBC* Albanian project to unite Kosovo refugees through radio or Internet broadcasts.") A Web surfer can instantly connect to any one of 43 language services.

BBC Webmasters and programmers make special efforts to exploit the interactive possibilities of Internet media. Site users are invited to e-mail their opinions on subjects discussed in the weekly *Talking Point ON AIR* program, and to vote their views. Their comments, along with those of debating policymakers, are posted following the program. The live call-in show is broadcast over radio, and simultaneously Webcast in both audio and video versions. A search engine combs archived BBC texts by headline or word-by-word. Internet links to related Web sites are conveniently posted, with the caveat that BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites (i.e., sites from NATO, the Kosovar News

Agency, and the Serbian Ministry of Information which are each part of a list related to the Kosovo conflict).⁴⁴

Although commercial US media have similar Web sites, government-sponsored international broadcasters have yet to exploit the multimedia and interactive potential of the Internet for non-English-speaking audiences.

Establishing a multilingual news site so reliably credible, frequently updated, and attractively presented that international "netizens" want to bookmark it for their browsers would extend US information to an important and growing community

In addition to reaching individual users, a competitive news Web site attracts foreign journalists. The Internet is gradually replacing the function of newswires. In February 1998, this writer visited the newsroom of *Radio Dunya*, a popular radio channel in Dakar, Senegal. There, the news editor proudly demonstrated how he downloads and distributes news reports from Web sites like *CNN* and French *TV 5*. His staff rewrites the stories and reads them at the top of the hour. The station owner is delighted with the new system because it allowed him to cancel all wire subscriptions. He no longer needs to pay for information the Web provides for free.

FM Radio: with large parts of their shortwave audience migrating to local FM, *VOA* and *RFE/RL* responded by recruiting over 1,000 FM partner stations -- or *affiliates* -- to rebroadcast satellite transmissions of their programs on local airwaves. This process of providing programs to local affiliates is known as broadcast *placement*.⁴⁵ This is an especially welcome arrangement for start-up

FM stations facing the relatively high cost of news production. Placement is especially effective in increasing audience size in places like Tanzania, where only 19% of the population regularly watch television, but 87% are habitual radio listeners. Between 1995 and 1998, VOA increased its regular listenership in Tanzanian from 3% in 1995, to 16% in 1998, due in part to a successful affiliation with a local FM network.⁴⁶

Such partnerships thrive in many broadcast markets, but placement remains dependent upon local stations as gatekeepers. Most affiliates are commercial stations and must balance the generally higher profits of entertainment against news and information programs, especially during prime time. And viable affiliates are sometimes difficult to find or barred from rebroadcasting by government regulation. These reasons prompted both the *BBC* and *Radio France International (RFI)* to aggressively pursue 24-hour FM licenses in important cities. The case of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, demonstrates the potential of this tactic: in 1992, before FM licenses were available, *RFI*, *BBC*, and *VOA* earned 37%, 22% and 13% audience shares respectively. In May 1998, with *RFI* and *BBC* 24-hour FM relays in place -- and no VOA affiliate available -- regular audience size has leapt to 47% each for *RFI* and *BBC*, and slipped to less than 2% for VOA.⁴⁷ VOA is now pursuing an FM license in Abidjan, but the case underlines the wisdom of funding 24-hour re-broadcasting arrangements in key radio markets. The cost varies by market, but for much of Africa, where radio remains king, annual license fees run in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Policymakers in the Media: a final suggestion for adjusting America's public information strategy to the aftermath of the media revolution is to improve the media skills of all international agencies and policymakers. Modern politicians know that the television age requires television skills; modern leaders whose mission includes persuading public opinion in international arenas have similar needs. They and their staffs should routinely conduct coordinated media campaigns for specific audiences. They should select whatever forms of media the group they want to reach finds most credible, compelling, accessible – and often interactive. The trend toward two-way media exchanges suggests they should appear more often in interactive formats, from press conferences to radio and TV call-ins, to online chat forums. Policymakers, especially those with foreign language skills, should appear frequently in foreign language media.

Turning to so-called new media, public information strategists should ensure that key statements of US international policy are translated for concerned audiences and posted on appropriate Web pages. Agency Web masters should aggressively link their sites to related sites worldwide, making US information easier to find. Investments made in compelling, informative Web sites will attract those at the forefront of the revolution in media affairs, the very elites and opinion makers that US policymakers often seek to persuade.

CONCLUSION

Concluding where this discussion began – with the shared framework of media and military transformations – recalls that the winners of combat

revolutions are the first to recognize and respond to new opportunities. Military revolutions profoundly change the conduct of war, argues Krepinevich, because they produce "a dramatic increase in the combat potential and military effectiveness of armed forces."⁴⁸ A revolution in media affairs similarly yields a dramatic increase in the potential to shape public opinion. Until they redesign US strategic communications to exploit the possibilities presented by new kinds of media, American national security strategists will, unlike Slobodan Milosevic, be neglecting a critical opportunity of their era.

¹ Jack Kelley, "NATO Warns Milosevic Again that He's Risking Airstrikes," *USA Today*, October 21, 1998, 8 (A).

² Gene Mater, "New Law Essentially Ends Serbian Press Freedom," *Free! The Freedom Forum Online*, October 23, 1998
<<http://www.freedomforum.org/international/1998/10/23/milosevic.asp>>

³ Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Great Britain. Article 19 International Centre Against Censorship, 1994)

⁴ Warren Zimmerman, "The Captive Mind -- Forging War The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina by Mark Thompson " *The New York Review of Books*, New York, February 2, 1995

⁵ Laura Silber and Allen Little, *Yugoslavia Death of A Nation*, rev ed (New York Penguin Books, 1997), 37-39

⁶ Silber and Little, 37-38

⁷ Thompson, 20

⁸ Ron Hatchett, "How Long Will He Last?" *The Lehrer Newshour*, April 30, 1999 Mr Hatchett is the Director for the Center of International Studies at the University of St Thomas He had been in Yugoslavia just before appearing on the program

⁹ Gene Mater, "Serbia's Radio B92 off air but still heard," *free! International, the Freedom Forum Online*, March 26, 1999, <<http://www.freedomforum.org/international/1999/3/26b92.asp>> and Gene Mater, "Serb government takes over Radio B92," *free! International, the Freedom Forum Online*, April 2, 1999 <<http://www.freedomforum.org/international/1999/4/2radiob92.asp>>

¹⁰ Michael Dobbs, "Sudden Death on Day of Resurrection Publisher Gunned Down as Belgrade Marks Holy Day," *The Washington Post*, April 12, 1999, 1 & 18 (A)

¹¹ This translation of a Yugoslav Serbian newscast is taken from an MSNBC excerpt replayed on the National Public Radio program *All Things Considered* aired April 12, 1999

¹² *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, April 12, 1999 The descriptions of NATO forces cited on the radio broadcast were quoted from a report issued by the European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media in London

¹³ The headlines cited were posted on the homepage of the Web site maintained by the Serbian Ministry of Information for April 14, 1999 <<http://www.serbia-info.com>>

¹⁴ Serb Ministry of Information, "These are NATO targets," April 7, 1999 <<http://www.serbia-info.com/news/1999-04/7/10600.html>>

¹⁵ US Department of State, *Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Report on Human Rights practices for 1998*, Section 2a, "Freedom of Speech and the Press (Washington D C 1999), p 10 of 18 <http://www.state.gov/www/global/hu_ghts/1998_hrp_report/bosniahe.html>

¹⁶ The Web site for the Government of the Republic of Croatia is found at <<http://www.vlada.hr/projekt/exer.html>>. In one chart "Serbs in the Republic of Croatia" are characterized by a "negative attitude toward Croatia" and "armed rebellion" In the contrasting column, "Croats in the FR (Former Republic of) Yugoslavia" are associated with a "positive attitude toward FRY" and pursuit of a "democratic struggle for their rights"

¹⁷ Andrew F Krepinevich, "Cavalry to Computer The Pattern of Military Revolutions," *The National Interest*, Fall 1994, 30

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Eliot A Cohen, "A Revolution in Warfare," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1996, 44

²⁰ Marshall Sella, "The Glow at the End of the Dial," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 11, 1999, p 69 Mr Sella notes that, if approved by the FCC, "micro-station" license-holders will need to buy only about \$1000 of equipment to go on air

²¹ Stephen Biddle dramatically illustrated this reality in his study of tank combat in the Gulf War The skill level of US tank crews, more than their sophisticated hardware, magnified American effectiveness against Iraqi armored forces See Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Technology, the RMA, and Future War," *Strategic Review*, Spring 1998, 68

²² Jon Katz, "The Net wins its first political election," *free! International, the Freedom Forum Online*, November, 24, 1998 <<http://www.freedomforum.org/technology/1998/11/24/katz.asp>>

²³ "Nigeria's President speaks," *BBC ONLINE NETWORK*, April 13, 1999 <http://news2.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/talking_point_on_air/newsid_312859.as>

²⁴ Robert O Keohane and Joseph S Nye, Jr, "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 77 No 5, September/October, 1998, 86

²⁵ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton Princeton University Press), p 75

²⁶ Michael Dobbs, "The War on the Airwaves. Serbs Ridicule TV Atrocity Reports," *The Washington Post*, April 19, 1999, 1 & 14 (A).

²⁷ Doris Graber, *Mass Media and American Politics*, 2nd ed., (Washington. CQ Press, 1984), 3 & 15.

²⁸ The 88% figure comes from a sample done by the A C Nielson polling company between May and October 1998 The sample covered ten major Chinese cities with a total population of 45 to 46 million people

²⁹ Robert Goehrig, Office of Research, International Broadcasting Bureau, "Research Memorandum International Radio and TV in the Persian Gulf. Survey Findings from Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and UAE," March, 1999, pp 2 and 12 The survey was conducted by the Pan Arab Research Center, affiliated with Gallup International The sample size of 3,453 makes it accurate to within plus or minus 2% of the national population

³⁰ US Department of State, *Croatia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998*, p 10 of 24

³¹ Robert Goehrig, Office of Research, IBB, "Research memorandum International Radio and TV in the Persian Gulf, 13-14

³² The 12% figure is taken from unpublished records maintained by the International Broadcasting Bureau of Broadcasting, Office of Research, in Washington D C *Intermedia* conducted the field sampling of 2772 adults in Serbia and Montenegro in June, 1998

³³ Office of Research, IBB, unpublished results of a survey done in Croatia by *Intermedia* in October and November, 1997 See also *Cable and Satellite Yearbook, 1999* (London FT Media and Telecoms), which reports 400,000 dishes spread among 1.5 million TV homes

³⁴ International Broadcasting Bureau Multimedia Coordinator, Peter Vaselopoulos, recounts meeting an entrepreneur with the Elkor Company, who employed 30 people in pre-war Sarajevo to manufacture satellite dishes This manufacturer reported local dish penetration reached between 11 and 15% Interview by author on March 3, 1999

³⁵ The cost could run about \$6 million dollars per year for a channel on one of the most popular satellites such as *Astra* David Shiben, Satellite Specialist, International Broadcasting Bureau, Office of Engineering and Technical Operations, telephone interview by author, April 22, 1999, Washington D C

³⁶ Gene Mater, Media Consultant, the Freedom Forum, interview by author, interview, April 6, 1999, Arlington, Virginia

³⁷ David Shiben, Satellite Specialist, International Broadcasting Bureau, Office of Engineering and Technical Operations, telephone interview by author, April 22, 1999, Washington D C

³⁸ Major Jeff Rockwell, International and Operations law Division, Office of the Judge Advocate General Headquarters United States Airforce, "Public International Space Law and Military

Operations," (paper prepared for the FY 98 Legal Aspects of Information operations Symposium, Air Force Judge Advocate General School, Maxwell AFB, Alabama), p K-6

³⁹ Center for Next Generation Internet NGI.ORG, Matrix Information and Directory Services, Inc, "Internet Survey Reaches 43.2 Million Internet Host Level," Biannual Strategic Note, February 17, 1999, <<http://www.ngi.org/trends/TrendsPR9902.txt>>.

⁴⁰ The statistics are from a sample done by the A C Nielson polling company between May and October 1998. The figure for international radio is a combination of VOA and BBC listening rates, which are 0.9% and 0.3% respectively. The figure is likely to be conservative since some listeners tune into both stations. See note No 28 above.

⁴¹ John Keathley of *Teledesic*, interview by author, Friday, April 2, 1999, Washington D C. *Teledesic LLC* was founded in 1990. Principle shareholders include *Microsoft* Chairman Bill Gates, *The Boeing Company*, and cellular pioneer Craig McCaw.

⁴² For example, the US Information Agency established a special multimedia Web site on the Kosovo crisis, including chat sessions in Serbia; *RFE/RL* runs a comprehensive listserve of news about the FSU, Central and Eastern Europe, the *VOA* Mandarin Service similarly dispatches news updates in Mandarin via e-mail.

⁴³ The URL for the British Broadcasting Corporation is <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

⁴⁴ BBC Online Network, "Should Nato (sic) treat Slobodan Milosevic as a war criminal?" Internet Links, Thursday, April 22, 1999, posted at 0729 GMT, http://news2.thdo.bbc.co.uk/h1/english/talking_point/europewide/debate/newsid_3_/323823 as

⁴⁵ International Broadcasting Bureau, "The International Broadcasting Bureau, "Voice of America," <<http://www.ibb.gov/ibbfact.html>>. The number is conservative since it includes only the Voice of America numbers, not those of RFE/RL. Some European stations are affiliated with both US international broadcasters.

⁴⁶ Kenneth R Donow, Office of Research, International Broadcasting Bureau, "Research Memorandum Media Use in Tanzania," February 23, 1999. The nationwide Tanzanian survey, done in tandem with the *BBC*, involved a national sample of 2,000 adults. Research International conducted the survey.

⁴⁷ William Bell, International Broadcasting Bureau, Office of Research, interview by author, April 21, 1999. Mr Bell cited from unpublished research done in Abidjan in May 1998 and from earlier USIA research reports completed in 1992.

⁴⁸ Krepinevich, p 30