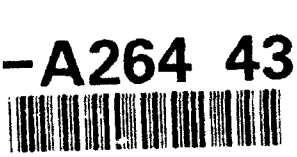

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

FRIEND OR FOE:

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN OPERATIONAL PLANNING

by

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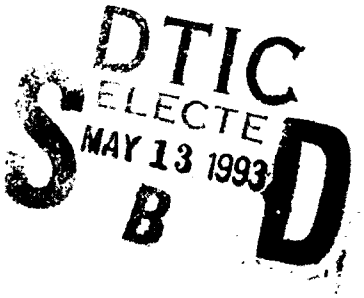
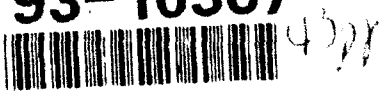
A paper submitted tothe Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: Laurie J. Van Buskirk

17 June 1993





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PREFACE

Over 150 years ago, Carl von Clausewitz identified the existence of a paradoxical trinity in war between the people, the military, and the government. He said the task was to ". . . develop a theory that maintains the balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets."[1] Within our democratic society, media provides this balancing link. The adversarial relations between military and media which have existed in the past must be overcome.

Benson's View[2]

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the media has had a growing impact on the conduct of military operations, particularly those involving the conduct of war. As technology improves, this role will continue to expand. Effective media planning can provide a powerful tool to the operational commander.

The current National Military Strategy is focused on creating a New World Order based on American democratic ideals. The 1993 National Security Strategy provides a vision for the future. It charges us with responsibility for leading the world into the 21st Century, and "the Age of Democratic Peace." Future employment of military forces will likely differ from traditional warfighting with overwhelming force. An increase in non-traditional roles such as recent humanitarian assistance operations in Somalia, peace-keeping operations, and other efforts designed at nation building will be seen. American and world public opinion will increasingly play in how and when we use military forces. In a democracy, media plays a key role in shaping this public opinion. Ensuring media representatives understands U.S. policy in the theater can influence reporting in such a way as to reinforce and supplement diplomatic efforts. Demand for media coverage will be driven by the political nature of military involvement, and media portrayal of military

operations will have a direct relationship to our success. Operational commanders must not only understand the impacting inter-relationships of public opinion, media, and military operations, but plan for them as well.

Explaining why we commit forces is the responsibility of policy-makers and strategists. Media accounts on employment of those forces is a concern of the operational commander. Policy guidelines advocate open reporting, and technological developments have provided media the ability to report independently of military support. The objective should be a military-media relationship which minimizes potential adverse effects on operational plans, while providing information necessary to ensure understanding and acceptance of the mission. As with any type of interoperability effort, this relationship should be developed and exercised in peacetime so it will be capable of effective operation in conflict.

In this paper I will discuss the evolution of rights and responsibilities of both media and the operational commander, then look at the relationship between them and the bearing it has on the conduct of war. I will conclude with a discussion of media planning concerns for incorporation into both peacetime and contingency planning, and recommendations designed to improve military-media interoperability.

CHAPTER II

RIGHTS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proclaims "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press. . . ." These words provide a potential conflict of interest between military operations and media coverage, which has often resulted in an antagonistic relationship between the military and the media. This ever-widening chasm was perhaps best summed up by General Eisenhower in 1944, when he said, "The first essential in military operations is that no information of value shall be given to the enemy. The first essential element in newspaper work and broadcasting is wide-open publicity. It is your job and mine to try to reconcile those sometimes diverse considerations."[1]

American democracy is based upon a government which serves the interests of the people. Media advances this democratic principle by keeping the public informed. "The media", a conglomeration of individuals and agencies with varying agendas, have become the self-appointed protector of the people's "right to know", desiring that they, not the government, determine what constitutes news. Their justification is based on the First Amendment guarantee of free speech and freedom of the press. The dilemma lies in determining the difference between what the public has a right to know, and what they do not. The media believes they should be the judge, not the military. This

principle is difficult enough in peacetime; in war it becomes next to impossible.

The Espionage Act of 1917 made any type interference with U.S. war efforts in World War I a crime. Media reports considered unpatriotic fell under this umbrella and brought cries of outrage from the American media. Legal battles went all the way to the Supreme Court, and such censorship was eventually considered unconstitutional. Congress then passed even stricter legislation with the Sedition Act of 1918, making it illegal to publish anything that scorned, abused, or showed contempt for the government, the flag, or the military.[2]

During World War II a system of voluntary censorship guided media practices. A "Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press" was issued, designed to deny Axis Powers information which could assist enemy wartime planning. For the most part this system worked well, and press cooperation was good. Media understood governmental concerns and did not want to risk official imposition of censorship.[3]

Freedom of the press carries potentially grave risks for the military. Unfortunately, the media is oftentimes not even aware of the potential damage a report could have. Multiple pieces of information, when consolidated, can provide significant intelligence data to the enemy. In 1940, before Germany and the United States were at war with one another, a

German agent in the U.S. produced an extremely accurate report on America's potential air armament production capabilities. He gathered his information from newspapers, magazines, and books. His report to the German high command on American aircraft production potential for 1941 through 1943 was, in fact, more accurate than the U.S. War Production Board's report for the same years.[4] A critical aspect of the military-media relationship is a clear understanding of what should not be reported, and why it should not be reported. Given voluntary guidelines with definitive supporting rationale, the media tends to agree to certain limits of censorship. **It is when these reasons are either vague or not understood that problems arise.** A clear understanding of the purpose and task of the mission is as important to the media as it is to the military.

Although law governs what may and may not be printed, no law authorizes the government to classify information, nor does one prohibit classified material from being published. The basis for classification rests in Executive Orders, and by definition, these apply only to members of the Executive Branch. There are laws which cover disclosure of certain types of classified material, but application of these laws to media disclosure is marginal at best. Current espionage laws offer a typical example. For prosecution to be successful, properly classified information must be transferred to a foreign power with the **intent to injure the United States or aid a foreign power.** An Association of the Bar of the City of New York study

on espionage laws stated, "Other uses of the statutes, such as prosecution of the media or those providing information for the sake of public debate, are inappropriate."[5] Technically, a journalist breaks no law by divulging classified material to the public forum.

The operational commander is tasked with the responsibility of providing for the safety and security of forces under his command. What rights does he then have to protect these forces from irresponsible media reporting jeopardizing military safety and security? Various court decisions have debated this issue, resulting in the "clear and present danger" doctrine first described by Justice Holmes and supported by subsequent court rulings. This doctrine prohibits disclosure of information that the government can prove "will result in direct, immediate, and irreparable damage to our nation or its people."[6] Beyond that, much depends upon the operational commander and his relationship with the media in determining what is and is not reported. Success depends upon the operational commander's application of personal insight into media planning, and his incorporation of that planning into the operational art of war.

Media concerns of the operational commander were perhaps summed up best by General Eisenhower when he, as Supreme Allied Commander of European Forces during World War II, said, "Complete wartime coordination and cooperation can never be achieved between the press and military authorities. For the

commander, secrecy is a defensive weapon; to the press it is an anathema. The task is to develop a procedure that takes into account an understanding of both viewpoints."[7] This task was undertaken in early 1984. The aftermath of media protests surrounding information handling of military operations by the British in the Falklands War and the U.S. in Grenada concerned many officials. The problems arising from those limited conflicts in relatively controllable theaters led to queries of what would happen in a protracted or general war scenario. Remembering the U.S. legacy of military-media relations of Vietnam, General John H. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, convened a Military-Media Relations Panel. Headed by Major General Winant Sidle, USA (Ret.), the panel was composed of both civilian and military members with significant military-media relations experience. This panel (often referred to as the Sidle Panel, after its Chairman), was asked to make recommendations on the question, "How do we conduct military operations in a manner that safeguards the lives of our military and protects the security of operations while keeping the American public informed through the media?" In an effort to develop viable recommendations for successful future reporting of military operations, they interviewed numerous senior media industry representatives and top Army, Navy, and Air Force public affairs officers.[8]

The Sidle Panel's final report, issued on 23 August 1984, was based on the panel's statement of principle which said,

> The American people must be informed about United States military operations and this information can best be provided through both the news media and the government. Therefore, the panel believes it is essential that the U.S. news media cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and the safety of U.S. forces.[9]

The report's major impact came from a panel recommendation that the Secretary of Defense establish a standing national media pool which could be deployed on short notice to any area with military forces. Neither media nor the military particularly liked this compromise plan, but both accepted it. The report also offered eight specific recommendations (Appendix I) which have guided Department of Defense (DoD) public affairs policy decisions and led to joint deliberate planning requirements for operational commanders.[10]

Based on this recommendation, the Secretary of Defense established the Department of Defense (DoD) National Media Pool in 1985. Initial exercise activations resulted in almost immediate leaks to non-pool media members, raising serious concerns about operational security. The first real-life test came with Operation Just Cause, and more problems surfaced. In a message to all unified Commanders in Chief (CINCs), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Colin Powell, commented on this lack of success and reminded commanders that, ". . . military actions in Grenada and Panama demonstrated that otherwise successful operations are not total successes unless the media aspects are properly handled. Both

operations, although successful, produced some unfavorable and often incorrect news stories, which detracted from the operation. . . . media aspects of military operations are important, will get national and international attention, and warrant your personal attention." The message provided additional media pool planning guidance for consideration in operational planning and reminded the CINCs that media pool planning is a requirement for all contingency plans.[11]

DoD Directive 5122.5 provides current public affairs policy for the operational commander. The "Principles of Information" (Appendix II), state DoD policy on release of information to the public, Congress and the news media. Also included is a "Statement of DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations" (Appendix III). These principles identify that "Open and independent reporting will be the principle means of coverage of U.S. military operations," and that media pools will only be used if they are the only feasible means of providing coverage. These principles also offer some operational security to the military commander by requiring journalists in combat zones to be credentialed and to abide by military security ground rules or face expulsion from the combat zone. These requirements work relatively well with American media representatives, but have no basis in international law for application to foreign media. The **operational commander must plan for media reporting over which he has no control.**

CHAPTER III

LOOKING BACK: WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

Earliest recorded history provides accounts of wartime reporting. Even in Thucydides' "The Peloponnesian War", reporting was slanted to the perspective of the individual recounting it. This bias has become the basis for much of the antagonism in military-media relations. The military commander, intent upon accomplishing his mission, views with disdain anything which, in his mind, detracts from that effort. The media view as their responsibility to report what is happening, whether it helps or hinders the war effort, and allow the public to decide whether that effort should continue. Accounts are often dependent upon the reporter's level of sophistication and military expertise. This military-media divergence of purpose has been handled in varying ways and with varying levels of success throughout recent American history.

In 1916, the Secretary of the Army appointed then-Major Douglas MacArthur to deal with newsmen at the War Department. President Wilson understood that victory depended significantly on sustaining the people's will to sacrifice and support the war. He established a Committee on Public Information to do everything possible to strengthen national support for the war effort. This committee evolved into a massive effort, with offices in every neutral and allied country. It fed information to the media, produced films and foreign language publications,

and had over 75,000 "patriotic speakers" across the nation. This massive propaganda effort stressed the barbarism of the German army and the "justness" of the American cause. "The war thus became in the eyes of many Americans an effort to end all wars and a crusade to make the world safe for democracy."[1]

Though the administration understood media's importance in maintaining public support for the war effort, the military had not come to the same level of awareness. Censorship, concerned with protecting every aspect of military operations, was often to the detriment of public understanding. Though censors allowed the general facts, and even some unpalatable news to pass, reporters had little choice but to cooperate while the fighting was in progress.[2] Existing technology provided the reporter little autonomy and he was totally dependent upon the military to be able to file his reports. Censorship became an issue raised, not during the war, but vehemently so in its wake. After the war, newsman Frederick Palmer, chief American censor for the U.S. Army in Europe, expressed the feelings of most critics, when he described his role as ". . . a public liar to keep up the spirit of the armies and peoples of our side."[3]

World War II brought an increased sophistication in military-media public affairs. The advent of electronic broadcast media significantly impacted wartime reporting in two ways. First, the potential for broadcast of information that could be of operational and strategic value was significantly

increased. Second, the ability of nations to broadcast across borders meant that news, both good and bad, would become public knowledge. Censorship of adverse news, used during World War I to maintain public support, could no longer be effective.

Another realization was the importance of keeping the fighting service members informed. America and the Allies worked to keep both the troops and the public apprised of general trends at a minimum. Although there were still cries against censorship, the Army provided enough information to keep the press reasonably satisfied.

Military commanders began to understand the importance of media relations. Though General George C. Marshall initially kept reporters at a distance, he eventually learned to deal with the media, and encouraged subordinate commanders to cultivate relations with the press. He held on-the-record briefings with media representatives, and provided Army public affairs officers continuing input on how best to portray the Army's position. By the time Operation Overlord began, Marshall was openly meeting with the press, discussing Army problems and supporting his commanders, some of whom, such as General Patton, were the subject of controversy. Marshall's candor established a basic relationship of trust and confidence with the media and served him well. He felt ". . . dictatorships had the advantage in marshalling men and materiel to battle . . . but well-informed democracies were stronger. . . . Dictatorships fell to pieces

completely when weakened leadership could no longer enforce conformity. But democracies . . . were more resilient, tending to solidify in the face of adversity."[4]

General Eisenhower, as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, had perhaps the most comprehensive understanding of the media's role. He believed that people, and Americans in particular, ". . . either will not or cannot fight at maximum efficiency unless they understand the why and wherefore of their orders."[5] Eisenhower considered good relations with the press critical to maintaining public support and *unity among Allies*, and made public affairs a command priority. He went a step beyond most military leaders towards building a credible relationship with the media and directed censors not to cut any criticism of him or his actions. This relationship was put to the ultimate test prior to the Sicilian campaign. ". . . because of an inborn hatred for unexplained censorship and, more than this, because of the confidence I had acquired in the integrity of newsmen in my theater, I decided to take them into my confidence."[6] In an effort to stop speculation on future intentions by seasoned theater war reporters, General Eisenhower detailed the outlines of the entire campaign plan. In his words,

> Success was complete. From that moment onward . . . nothing speculative came out of the theater and no representative of the press attempted to send out anything that could possibly be of any value to the enemy. After the operation was completed many correspondents told me of the fear they felt that they might be guilty of even inadvertent revelation of the secret.[7]

Korea was a different type of war, but American military leaders did not recognize that this would have any bearing on military-media relations. The military expected the same type of cooperation encountered during the two World Wars. An initially successful system of voluntary guidelines was established for reporters. General MacArthur reported back to Army headquarters in September 1950, that with no imposed censorship, the press had reported almost complete coverage of the war ". . . without, as far as I know, a single breach of a nature to provide effective assistance to the enemy."[8] This changed quickly with the setbacks following China's entry into the war. Media was given no clear guidance about what would and would not aid the enemy. Security violations became a common occurrence, driving MacArthur to institute strong censorship restrictions. Fierce competition for news spawned bitterness between correspondents and military authorities. Enterprising reporters discovered they could avoid censorship by traveling out of country to file their stories. A vivid example of the adverse impact created by antagonistic relations is the 18 June 1951 issue of *Newsweek* which published a detailed map of the entire U.S. 8th Army order of battle.[9]

Korea was only a precursor of things to come in political wars. The war in Vietnam was originally accepted as an effort to stem the spread of communism. Though the political aim was supported, the military goals and objectives were unclear. The American way of war historically was one of decisiveness and

overwhelming force aimed at achieving victory in the shortest possible time. Vietnam did not fit that picture. No clear measure of effectiveness existed to identify success or failure. Media chose body counts. Accurate reporting of facts vice emotional and biased editorializing is important, but even more important is ensuring the reporter *understands* that upon which he is reporting. As E. L. Pattullo stated in his article "War and the American Press",

> I do not doubt that most war correspondents report the truth as they see it. The root problem is that in a war zone one sees only the part of the truth that makes rational men and women abhor war--the awful fact of humans preparing to kill, killing, and being killed. Excluded from the picture is the chain of events that has persuaded the nation to resort to force. . . . Uncontrolled reporting, however truthful and unbiased, necessarily distorts the larger truth about the enterprise. What reporters see at the front is the misery and confusion of war; unless each dispatch is to include an editorial on the background of the war, an adequate perspective can be maintained only by regulating reports from the field.[10]

Unfortunately, General William Westmoreland built his public affairs policy around traditional warfare, and trusted media to support the military's efforts in spirit and in fact. To avoid the potential problems of implementing censorship in a country whose government was unsympathetic to American ideals of freedom of the press, Westmoreland instituted a system of daily briefings and 24-hour availability of knowledgeable public affairs officers. This was initially successful, but as it became apparent that American military efforts were not winning the war, media coverage became more negative. Daily briefings were viewed as insufficient and not an honest portrayal of the

overall situation. They became known as "The Five O'Clock Follies". The press accused the military of trying to mislead the American people. The argument has been made that the media lost the war in Vietnam, but this is not a fair statement. Media was not responsible for a strategy incapable of victory. Journalists reported what they considered newsworthy--growing discontent among Americans for the war effort, and stories which supported that discontent. The media cannot be held blameless however. U.S. media reporting of battles during the Tet Offensive, especially the takeover of the American Embassy Compound in Saigon, left an impression in American minds that the war effort was a losing proposition, thereby severely undermining public morale and resolve to continue. ". . . they misled the public themselves by sacrificing depth and analysis to color, while failing to make the most of the legitimate news within their reach."[11] Vietnam left the military with bitter feelings toward the media.

Desert Storm, as the first major commitment of military troops since Vietnam, presented a challenge to military planners. Remembering the lessons learned from the impact of negative press, media relations were a major concern. Not only was media support important to the war effort, but through technology, media's role as an intelligence concern had grown as well.

The Gulf War presented the media their first opportunity to

bring war live into American households. Satellite technology made war coverage a real-time event. This unique aspect added a new dimension to military-media relations. Now more than ever before, what was reported had not only strategic and operational implications for the war, but tactical as well. The first news on the POWs came from the media, not the government. Saddam Hussein used the international stage of CNN to broadcast his side of the story to the world, attempting to gain support from the Arab world and disrupt the coalition. Baghdad was able to watch CNN and get immediate feedback on SCUD missile strikes in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Guidance to media members on what was and was not important to the enemy became critical. When one reporter in Israel identified his location and how a SCUD missile had just nearly missed it, news agencies were quickly instructed that such information gave immediate targetig data to the Iraqis. Needless to say, with their own safety at stake, media representatives clearly understood why they should not report this type of information.

Face-to-face exposure between military leaders and the public provided a great deal of credibility to the U.S. military. General Colin Powell and General Norman Schwarzkopf became household words and faces. Senior military commanders and briefers talked directly with the media, not through public affairs officers. General Schwarzkopf cultivated open access with the media which allowed the forcefulness of his personality to become visible. Schwarzkopf had resolved to never allow the

lack of regard for casualties he had witnessed in Vietnam to be duplicated.[12] His personal integrity and concern for the welfare of individual military members was apparent to the public and they liked what they saw. The public began to feel that they knew the operational commander, and this generated an exceptionally high confidence rating for the military. Schwarzkopf's commitment to truth in reporting the war added to this confidence. His policy was simple--that which was known to be fact would be reported, and that which was not known was not reported. This led to a tendency for the military to under-report the results. Though the media initially did not trust these accounts, Schwarzkopf's insistence on verifiable accuracy eventually won even their confidence, which in turn leant greater optimism to the impact of the briefings.[13] Public confidence in the military rose significantly.[14]

This direct public access also allowed Schwarzkopf to ensure his perspective was accurately portrayed. Capitalizing on real-time aspects of Gulf War reporting, the military permitted media to report extensively on U.S. Marine amphibious assault exercises in the Gulf. Reporters speculated that these exercises were a prelude to an actual planned amphibious assault on Kuwait. The reporting was not lost on Saddam Hussein, who deployed troops to defend against this perceived threat. When media cried "foul" after discovering their coverage of U.S. Marine amphibious assault preparations was part of a deception plan creating a diversion to the planned sweep attack, the

public wasn't listening. In his post-operation briefing General Schwarzkopf detailed campaign strategy, commenting on how press coverage had aided in the deception plan. The American public recognized a legitimate need for deception in time of war, and appreciated the fact that countless lives were probably saved by this ruse. The military had been very careful to not divulge the intended use of the Marine forces. Media were simply allowed to arrive at their own, albeit erroneous and uncorrected, conclusion.[15]

Operation Restore Hope provides an example of what happens when military-media coordination breaks down. The Public Affairs Annex (Annex F) of the operation order required that "Consistent with operational security, news media representatives will be provided access to U.S. military operations from their very first stages through completion and subsequent post-operation activity."[16] According to Ed Turner, CNN Vice President for News, DoD encouraged media presence for the Marines' amphibious landing to cast the mission in a positive light. "No one should have been surprised that there was a crowd of journalists on the beach, because they were told what time and where, and encouraged to be there in briefings at the Pentagon and the State Department." CBS Vice President Joe Peyronnin said he ". . . received no requests not to put the lights on. It was a public beach open to anyone. It was not advertised as a covert operation. In effect, it was a photo op." Then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney said, "It was

aggravating for our people to come in over the beach to find an army of photographers with their bright lights. . . . We would have preferred to have the press back at some distance to cover the event. Some did, in fact, respond to our request."[17] In this case, not only did coordination break down between the military and media, but within government channels as well. At the national strategic level, the landing was recognized as a "media event" worth reporting live to promote U.S. military participation. This was not coordinated at the operational level though, and created a situation in which media presence increased risk to American troops, because media did not have proper guidelines for covering the operation.

If the military can learn anything from a study of the historical relations between the military and the media, it should be that credibility is the key, both with the public and with the media. Coordination between the operational chain of command and media is critical to establishing and maintaining that credibility. Those military leaders who understood this and worked to develop a viable relationship found that media and the public supported them, and gave them the benefit of the doubt when unsure. Those who failed to learn this basic lesson found that the power of the press is equally, if not more, powerful than military might. Without support from the American people, any prolonged military effort stands little chance of success. Without positive reporting, it is difficult to maintain that support.

CHAPTER IV

LOOKING AHEAD - APPLYING LESSONS LEARNED

Planning for media involvement in military operations must be part of an operational commander's over-arching strategy for his theater. Military-media relations should be exercised during peacetime to provide a basis for withstanding the strains of war. The more each understands one another's mission, the greater the opportunity for success of both. Officers on major staffs need to understand how to deal with media. Journalists need to be educated on the various theaters, not only American journalists, but those from the international community as well. The operational commander needs to be concerned with how media coverage will affect American forces and public opinion, as well as how it impacts coalition members and war termination aspects.

The changing nature of warfare and media requires a new look at how the operational commander plans for military operations. New media technology allows real-time communication of audio and video reports from virtually anywhere in the world. Digital photography permits photographs to be electronically transmitted with equal ease and immediacy. Future technological evolution will bring even more sophisticated capabilities. A world-wide cellular telephone system supported by deployment of 77 low-orbiting satellites is planned by 1996. Cellular telephone services will be available globally, without switching towers or relay stations.[1]

Neither media theater access nor information transmission can be successfully controlled by force. Regulation depends on media's voluntary cooperation. The working relationship developed between the operational commander and media is part of the operational art of war. Much guidance exists for development of military-media plans, but it is the commander's artistic abilities that determine the picture painted to the world.

The "nuts and bolts" of media planning are contained in numerous directives, but they provide only the basic guidance. The Joint Operational Planning and Execution System (JOPES) requires all OPLANs to include a public affairs plan (Annex F). Although this annex provides the framework for media support if military operations become necessary, the planning should not end there. Operational planning must transcend the boundaries of conflict and be firmly embedded in the peacetime planning process of any theater. Careful coordination with Country Teams and media representatives during normal operations provides a baseline for the unity of effort necessary in time of conflict. If the operational commander waits until the crisis is at hand, he may lose the initiative. In today's technology, public opinion is often won or lost in the opening round of media reporting. Galvanizing both domestic and world opinion for military action begins with how the media covers the mission.

Peacetime coordination and training between major staffs and media representatives will facilitate cooperation during crisis. Working and training together is a basic tenet of joint and combined operations. By transferring this philosophy to media relations, operational security concerns can be coordinated. Staffs can learn how the media operates, their deadlines, logistic requirements, etc., and media can become familiar with operational constraints and concerns for the battlefield. Training together in peacetime can provide a solid basis for military-media interoperability in conflict.

On the routine planning side, logistics problems created when the National Press Pool is activated can be significant. Aside from normal concerns such as escorts, special purpose clothing, transportation, transmission of news items, security, briefings, etc., there are numerous requirements which can create unique problems. For example, even though women in the military are not allowed in certain combat situations, there is no such restriction on media members. Female media pool members cannot be denied access to any area a male media representative is allowed. How a reporter is received in-theater can impact the nature of reports filed. Additionally, each media pool member traveling in-theater drains transportation and support assets otherwise available for combat forces. These and other concerns should be addressed during the deliberate planning process, not in the heat of battle.

From the defense dollar perspective, media coverage can have ramifications on aspects of the budget and acquisition process. Favorable reporting on military capabilities helps to justify the expenditure of tax dollars to maintain a strong defense. Although this does not impact immediate operational concerns for the theater commander, it certainly holds long-term implications for future military force structure, and down-stream theater strategies.

Incorporating peacetime media considerations into a theater strategy allows the operational commander to focus media attention on issues in consonance with his overall strategy. This is especially critical in an environment where military operations will more likely be multilateral rather than unilateral. Future military operations, especially in a coalition environment, will require dealing with more than just American media representatives and the commander must consider not only what is reported, but who the target audience is.

The "spin" on a media report has significant potential ramifications. It can serve to build or alienate potential allies. How potential coalition members are portrayed in the press may strengthen or weaken the operational commander's position with those forces. For example, the reporter who believes he is simply evaluating the potential for victory may identify aspects of other forces as "less capable" than those of the U.S., rather than reporting them as force multipliers of

American strengths. Identifying allied forces as weak may embarrass them in the international community and create ill-will among coalition forces operating in a combined environment. In Desert Storm, maintaining the balance of the coalition was a critical concern. Reporting of various members' actions needed to be carefully orchestrated to avoid upsetting that balance.

Host nation and third-party country concerns may also impose constraints impacting media reports. Although U.S. media representatives enjoy First Amendment rights in the United States, these rights do not necessarily apply in other countries. Host nations or coalition members may desire to impose censorship on some aspects of media coverage. This will undoubtedly influence the relationship between the military and American media, and the media's reaction depends on how the operational commander handles the situation. If he works with reporters to provide them information needed to accomplish their mission, an atmosphere of harmony can exist. If media is left to their own devices to cover a situation, they will come to their own conclusions without the benefit of the military commander's perspective. Vietnam is an ugly reminder of what this type of reporting can do to public support of a military effort.

Portrayal of the enemy is another aspect which the operational commander has some ability to influence. In World Wars I and II, media focused much reporting on enemy atrocities.

This type of reporting was viewed as contributing to the war effort, and indeed it did at that time. It produced the environment necessary for victory, galvanizing American and Allied unity of purpose and willingness to sacrifice. "Not only was there ostensible necessity for representing the enemy as the antithesis of any and everything being fought for, but the equal necessity for attempting to reconcile the ideals of the members of the same camp."[2] The Allied policy of unconditional surrender allowed this level of enemy "demonization". In today's scenarios, we are unlikely to see unconditional surrender. The basis for successful war termination must be considered before the conflict is even begun. The operational commander must work to tailor media coverage in such a way that it will not be at cross-purposes with the end-state desired. The portrayal of Saddam Hussein in Desert Storm very nearly impacted American ability to pursue a cease-fire when we did. To this day, many Americans feel that we should not have stopped until Saddam Hussein was no longer in power. The theater commander understands the problems created when a government is changed and the legal problems involved with removing an individual from power; the average American does not. The operational commander's rapport with the media can influence both how and what is reported.

War is a fluid environment. Its planning, including media coverage of theater operations, must provide for this fluidity. When planning his campaign, the operational commander factors

enemy capabilities into decisions on own courses of action. This same level of planning must extend to media coverage. The operational commander must consider how his media strategy will be affected by campaign tempo and enemy actions.

Press complaints of censorship have historically been highest in wars of a static nature when reports can indicate not only what is current for the moment, but what can be anticipated to exist for some period of time. Investigative and speculative type reports can be injurious to the operational commander's strategy, especially when founded on reports coming from experienced field correspondents. If the campaign plan rests on speed and surprise, media will be following the actions. When the operational tempo of the theater is high, reporting is normally only on what has happened. Media is so busy covering the story they do not have time to consider what they do not know. When the tempo slows, the media strategy must be flexible enough to allow open access reporting without endangering operational security.

During the Korean War, General MacArthur's public affairs guidance was based on American control of the theater and tempo of operations. Voluntary guidelines were initially sufficient because of MacArthur's original campaign speed and technological limitations of the era. When that balance was upset by China's entry into the war, MacArthur's media policy was not capable of responding to the new requirements. As operations slowed, he

resorted to censorship rather than developing a new media strategy.

In Vietnam, American forces could not control when or where battles were fought. Media coverage reflected this lack of control to the American people. The public affairs strategy was as ineffective as the military strategy, and proved incapable of maintaining needed public support.

In Operation Desert Storm, initial operations were decisive and fast-paced. Coverage of the air war created few media problems. The sweep of the "100 Hour" ground campaign was so rapid that normal ground was media guidelines could be much looser than in a more static environment. Coupled with the established credibility of the military, this dove-tailed nicely with the desires of the media for open access reporting.

Campaign plans must include media requirements and a media strategy which promotes credible relations through the spectrum of conflict. That strategy must be robust enough to adjust to changes in operational tempo. It must allow the commander to meet operational safety and security concerns while providing media the support necessary to maintain favorable public opinion.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Our new national security strategy has shifted the focus of military operations away from the traditional global warfare perspective. As force employments change, so must the concerns of operational commanders. Theater strategy, developed in consonance with projected contingency requirements, must include media planning from the start. Military operations can no longer be protected by censorship. Advanced technology permits media to transmit stories independent of the military. Recognizing DoD policy guidance, operational commanders must develop a working peacetime relationship with the media which will transcend into a conflict environment. Future planning should incorporate media concerns from the beginning phases through termination of operations. Training oportunities should be sought for both military and media members to improve interoperability and develop clear operating guidelines which are mutually supporting.

Media reporting of military actions will have a direct impact on theater success. Though the operational commander is provided much guidance on the tangible aspects of media planning, how he and his staff interact with the media is even more critical. The operational commander has the ability to decide the nature of that relationship--friend or foe.

APPENDIX I

CJCS MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONS PANEL

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATION 3:

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

RECOMMENDATION 4:

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

correspondent(s) concerned from further coverage of the operation.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

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

RECOMMENDATION 6:

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

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Planning factors should include provisions for intra- and inter-theater transportation support for the media.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

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

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

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

d. CJCS should recommend that the Secretary of Defense host at an early date, a working meeting with representatives of broadcast news media to explore the special problems of ensuring military security when and if there is real-time or near real-time news media audio-visual coverage of a battlefield and, if special problems exist, how they can best be dealt with consistent with the basic principle set forth at the beginning of the report.

PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION

It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered in a timely manner. In carrying out this policy, the following principles of information will apply:

1. Information will be made fully and readily available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.

2. A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents.

3. Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.

4. Information will be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.

5. The Department's obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination within the Department and with other government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public: propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public affairs programs.

May 19, 1992
DODD 5122.5 (Encl 3)

STATEMENT OF DOD PRINCIPLES FOR NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF DOD OPERATIONS

1. Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.

2. Pools are not to serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations. Pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity -- within 24 to 36 hours when possible. The arrival of early-access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.

3. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be appropriate for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.

4. Journalists in a combat zone will be credentialed by the U.S. military and will be required to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules that protect U.S. forces and their operations. Violations of the ground rules can result in suspension of credential and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalist involved. News organizations will make their best efforts to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and to make them familiar with U.S. military operations.

5. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units. Special operations restrictions may limit access in some cases.

6. Military public affairs officers should act as liaisons but shoul not interfere with the reporting process.

7. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders should be instructed to permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible. The military will be responsible for the transportation of pools.

8. Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply PAOs with facilities to enable timely, secure, compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communications systems operated by news organizations, but electromagnetic operation security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions o the use of such systems.

9. These principles will apply as well to the operations of the standing DoD National Media Pool system.

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