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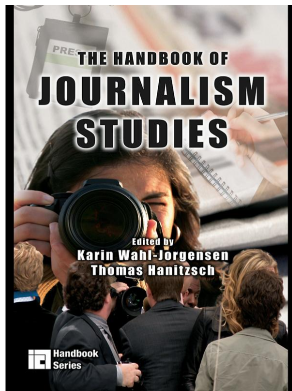

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Covering War and Peace

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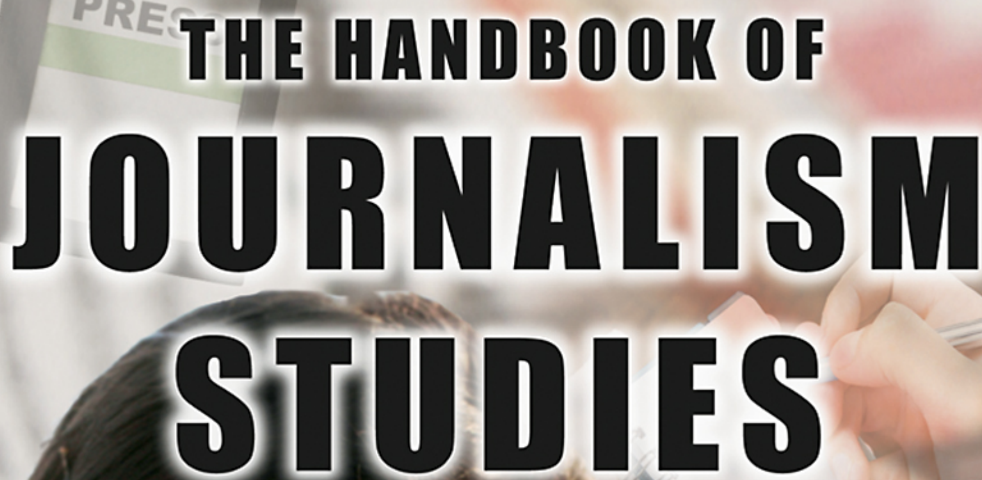

THE HANDBOOK OF JOURNALISM STUDIES

Edited by

Karin Wahl-Jorgensen

Thomas Hanitzsch

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Covering War and Peace

Howard Tumber

The reporting of war and peace has been of unique importance and fascination to communication, media and journalism scholars. This is due in part, to the dramatic nature of war and conflict, its importance to states and its publics, and the amount of time and money devoted to it by media and news organizations. The examination of media and conflict has spawned many important theoretical and conceptual debates within the academy that have implications for other aspects of communications analysis. These debates include: definitions of war and (more recently) terrorism, conflict resolution, the public sphere, political economy, information management, definitions and role of media sources, the occupation of journalism, and objectivity.

In modern times, from the Napoleonic wars in the mid-eighteenth century onwards, reporting from the frontline of conflict became less of a rarity. The British *Oracle and public Advertiser's* John Bell visited the front and sent back reports of the battles. The mid nineteenth century saw a larger transformation of conflict reporting with the start of cooperative news gathering, field reporters and new technologies especially the telegraph and the railway. Previously to this, the only information from the front came from soldiers' letters home and military dispatches from commanders in the field. Undoubtedly, the most famous reporter of the time was the Irish journalist William Howard Russell. He reported on the Crimean War for the *London Times* for nearly two years. He is regarded as the first of the modern war correspondents and his dispatches from the front enabled the public, for the first time, to read about the reality of warfare. The public outcry resulting from his reports led the British Government of the time to reassess the treatment of soldiers in the battlefield and eventually led to the downfall of the Government of the day and the resignation of the Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen. Russell was seen by some as a traitor for denigrating Britain's competence in its conduct of the war and he was also accused of providing secrets to the enemy. Antagonism from the military to Russell's reports led to some British commanders and officers refusing to speak to him. Phillip Knightley (1975) in his book about the rise of the war correspondent as hero, propagandist and mythmaker describes Russell as "the miserable parent of a luckless tribe."

During World War II, journalists wrote stories about soldiers' experiences in battle and about the more mundane tasks soldiers undertook during their time at the front. Similar stories were a feature of the reporting of some embedded journalists during the recent Iraq War. The prominence of radio as a medium was another feature of World War II. The public was kept informed about events happening from the front through reports from correspondents stationed in the battle zones, and governments used radio for public information announcements on the home front.

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World War II also witnessed the beginnings of the "cult" of the journalist. As the war progressed, many journalists became famous with the public through their dispatches and some, such as Ernie Pyle, became highly esteemed by their readers. Many journalists who reported from the front during World War II returned to "action" for the Korean War.

War reporting has always been regarded as a glamorous specialism of journalism. Journalists who cover war and conflict relate exciting stories about their dangerous work and life in memoirs and autobiographies providing poignant and interesting reflections (see Pedelty, 1995, pp. 29–30; Tumber, 2006). However, the work of the frontline correspondent is getting more difficult and dangerous. Boundaries between combatants can be vague, journalists can be on the receiving end of friendly fire, and are often targets for kidnapping and death. Despite news organization cuts in foreign coverage in recent years and the closing of foreign bureaus, many journalists congregate in conflict zones equipped with lightweight technologies enabling them to transmit via satellite with immediacy unimaginable in past conflicts. Through use of the Internet, larger audiences than ever before can easily access their reports. They can be challenged almost immediately by critics elsewhere and even by the subjects on whom they are reporting. Despite the dangers, journalists are still motivated to report from conflict zones in dangerous places.

Conditions in Iraq for journalists, for example, deteriorated so dramatically after the fall of Baghdad in April 2004 that they found it virtually impossible to work. Veteran journalists found conditions in Iraq some of the worst they had to face in decades of foreign affairs reporting, with only Chechnya rivaling it for risk. Journalists are regularly becoming targets making the job harder than ever to complete. The situation remains so dangerous that journalists no longer feel able to do a proper reporting assignment, with many of them unable to travel inside the country, walk in the streets or look for stories (see The Committee to Protect Journalists, 2007). There is huge reliance on local journalists, fixers, translators and drivers to get any kind of story. This was the major reason why, when the US assault on Fallujah took place in November 2004, there was hardly any independent reporting. Reports came only from the handful of journalists embedded with the Marines (themselves in hazardous circumstances), and they were highly constrained in what they could report. Consequently, it was several weeks after the event that the scale of physical destruction of Fallujah began to be made known—and the numbers and identities of Iraqi dead and injured were never reported (Tumber & Webster, 2006, p. 21).

DEFINITIONS OF WAR AND CONFLICT

After World War II, the emergence of a number of smaller conflicts led to the questioning of the conventional categorization of conflict (Gray, 1997, p. 156). The concept of "total war," more adequate for the characterization of World Wars I and II since they involved the mobilization of entire national populations both civilians and military, seemed inappropriate for describing later conflicts such as those in the Falklands, Bosnia and Kosovo, Rwanda and Somalia, and the two Gulf wars. Whilst civilian populations are not mobilized in the same way as they were during the two world wars, the development of communications technologies has led the public to become witnesses to war.

There is a distinction between the terms "our wars" and "other people's wars." The media coverage of "our wars" involving "our troops" fighting alongside "our allies" against the enemy and "other people's wars" where conflicts that do not involve our armies or are not involved as allies of one side of the conflict, is different in relation to the degree of engagement (Taylor, 1997, p. 130). In the first case, the media coverage supports "our" side and the audiences' emotional involvement is much greater. In the second scenario, the coverage and the media involvement is

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more detached. In many instances, the dividing line between "their conflict" and "our conflict" can be blurred.

One reason for the increasing attempts to place any military action within the political discourse of one's nation is the increasing realization that political preparation and political justification at home play an important role in winning over public opinion. The important decisions that define the outcome of any war action are not only taken at the field of battle but increasingly in the political arena (Gray, 1997, pp. 169–170). The reporting of "other people's wars" may be less engaged until the dominant political discourse is transformed and "their war" becomes "our war."

Following September 11, 2001, a further characteristic evident of modern-day war has been the increasing blurring between terrorism and war. Despite the "smart" weapons and the "distant" targets, terrorism brings war back home. As a dominant form of international conflict, terrorism rejects civilian immunity and agreed warfare conventions, thus accelerating emotional responses (Carruthers, 2000, pp. 163–164). The September 11 attack, due to its aim and proximity for the Western World, put the traditional conceptions of warfare under question. In the twenty-first century, political violence has become the primary means to communicate political messages, and terrorist attacks have taken a leading position in world news since the beginning of the new millennium. As early as the end of the 1960s, the concept of "international terrorism" became a common currency. During this period, the common method of looking at international terrorism was through trying to connect the phenomenon with the Soviet Union and the left in general, leading to the simplification of the terrorist objectives. In the early 1980s, the US government adopted this view as the main orthodoxy, while at the same time, violent repressive and authoritarian regimes that were deemed friendly to the United States and Western interests were not associated with terrorism.

Terrorism has now become a major issue in the post-cold war era for a number of reasons. First, the collapse of the Soviet Union has fostered anti-American political violence whereas previously it was able to restrain countries that belonged to the Eastern bloc or were affiliated to it, thus keeping terrorism beneath a certain threshold. Second, the end of the old world order unleashed a number of religious and nationalist forces emerging from the new states that were formed following the breakdown of the Soviet Union. In particular, the religious groups engaged in political violence are prepared to engage in terrorist attacks not bound to the moral imperatives of previous groups like the Italian Red Brigades or the German Red Army Faction (Nacos, 2002, pp. 21–26).

New communication technologies delivered to larger audiences provide new avenues of publicity for terrorist groups. New media markets and concentration of media ownership has created the possibility of international and global coverage as well as national. The "news media have become unwitting accomplices of media savvy terrorists" (Nacos, 2002, p. 29). Extensive news reporting and public attention, even if the actual identity and the motives of the terrorist remain unknown, has already made cases of "propaganda of the deed" highly successful (Nacos, 2002, pp. 8–10; Tuman, 2003, p. 120). As the demand for increasingly more dramatic and "bloody" events guarantees increased coverage, the threshold for a successful terrorist attack is also raised (Tuman, 2003, pp. 119, 135–136; Nacos, 2002, pp. 28–29). The centrality of communications for terrorism has also lead to increased sophistication on the part of the terrorists. As a deviant branch of political communications professionals, terrorists try to by-pass the journalists by actively engaging in their own broadcast production. The Bin Laden tapes, for example, although amateur by Western standards, are relatively sophisticated in terms of their rhetoric targeting an Arab as well as a global audience (Tuman, 2003, pp. 136–137). Furthermore, the choice of Al Jazeera as the outlet indicates a logic that operates on the "exclusivity" lines that Western political can-

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didates have capitalized on for decades. The bypassing of traditional media by terrorist groups reached an apotheosis with the use of internet broadcasts to show the beheading of hostages in Iraq (see Tumber & Webster, 2006).

PROPAGANDA AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

The Vietnam War fought in the 1960s and early 1970s set the tone for all the subsequent scholarly debate regarding the media coverage of conflict. Hallin's (1986) study of the US media and the Vietnam War was a key work in analyzing the way that the government and military behaved during the conduct of a relatively long conflict. Hallin challenged the "radical" political economy or propaganda model espoused by Herman and Chomsky (2002) in their analysis of US foreign policy as being overly deterministic. He argued that the way the media report events is closely tied to the degree of consensus among the political elite, the "sphere of consensus." Hallin's (1986, p. 11) view also contrasted with the conservative analysis of the media at that time as "anti-establishment" institutions which were "undermining the authority of governing institutions." Hallin's (1986, pp. 63–69) explanation for the media's "volte face" in its support for/rejection of the war was that the media was grounded in its "commitment to the ideology and the routines of objective journalism." From the beginnings of the Vietnam conflict up to 1967, there was relatively little disagreement among the policy elite and reflecting this official viewpoint for the media did not "seem to violate the norms of objective journalism" (1994, pp. 52–53). However, during the period 1963–1967 reporters in Vietnam itself were given accounts of the war by serving officers in the US military which were not compatible with the largely optimistic accounts coming out of Washington. This gap between the realities of the position on the ground and the official line emanating from the US capital lead to stormy news conferences particularly in Saigon. During this period, both versions of the state of the war were reported (1986, pp. 38–39).

Later, according to Hallin, the media coverage reflected the gradual breaking down of the national security consensus and the cold war ideology amongst the political elite together with concern over the conduct of the war. The media was able to respond to the growing strains and divisions within the foreign policy elite by producing far higher amounts of critical news coverage "without abandoning objective journalism for some activist and anti-establishment conception of their role." As opposition to the war moved into the mainstream, the news media reflected this movement of debate into "the sphere of legitimate controversy." The media reflect the prevailing pattern of political debate: "when consensus is strong, they tend to stay within the limits of the political discussion it defines; when it begins to break down, coverage becomes increasingly critical and diverse in the viewpoints it represents, and increasingly difficult for officials to control" (1994, pp. 53–55). As the policy debate moves from the "sphere of consensus" to the "sphere of legitimate controversy," governments and administrations become concerned at the possible loss of control over the news agenda. Censorship and attacks on the media consequently become prominent features of their response to the increase in media activity as journalists begin to question government statements and become more sensitive to other official and non-official viewpoints (Hallin, 1994, p. 71; see also Morrison & Tumber, 1988, p. 228).

Mermin (1996) suggested a further development of Hallin's thesis. During the period of the "sphere of consensus" the major media try to maintain the illusion of fulfilling the journalistic ideals of balance and objectivity "by finding conflicting possibilities in the efforts of officials to achieve the goals they have set" (Mermin 1996, p. 191). When there is no policy debate in Washington, "reporters offer critical analysis *inside the terms of the apparently settled policy debate*, finding a critical angle in the possibility that existing policy on its own terms might not work" (p.

182). Focusing on this "critical angle" helps to explain the perception among politicians and business leaders that journalists are overly independent and critical of government, and to illustrate that there is a significant element of present-day conflict in the news. Some journalism can find conflicting possibilities in the effectiveness of the government of achieving its own goals while still not presenting "the policy decision that set those goals in the first place as open to critical analysis and debate" (p. 191).

INFORMATION POLICY AND MILITARY MEDIA RELATIONS

William Russell's efforts at the frontline of the Crimean War and those of other reporters who followed him later in the nineteenth and then twentieth centuries provoked governments and military to adopt strategies for restricting media access to the frontlines and managing the flow of information. The United States government attempted to censor and manage the flow of information during the Civil War and the later Spanish-American War—although on both occasions these efforts were largely unsuccessful. The British government proved more adept at controlling information flow during the Boer War through the ruse of turning reporters into commissioned military officers and hence making them subject to military regulations. The government also restricted publication of information that could be valuable to the enemy. It was from the twentieth century onwards though, that war was experienced as a mass phenomenon. The French and British governments restricted access for journalists to the frontlines at the beginning of World War I. This strategy changed once these governments realized that morale at home was detrimentally affected and that the German government encouraged correspondents from neutral countries to visit the frontlines. The general consensus regarding the reporting of World War I was that reporters, out of a sense of patriotism, generally cooperated with the military and offered little criticism of the official "line." The media coverage during World War II saw a sea change in a number of ways. Journalists often lived with the troops with the consequent inevitability of identification and attachment—a problem analyzed in more recent times following reporters' reliance on the military for access during the Falklands Conflict 1982 (see Morrison & Tumber, 1988) and in discussion of the embedding of journalists with the military in the Iraq War 2003 (see Tumber & Palmer, 2004).

Despite the formulations devised by scholars of the media and conflict, for governments and military, the lesson of the Vietnam War was that the media and television in particular, was to blame for the United States defeat in South East Asia. Commanders and politicians were convinced that the years of uncensored reporting, unrestricted access, and the mismanagement of military briefings in Saigon (known as "Five o'clock Follies"), were directly responsible for providing information and succor to the enemy, for lowering morale at home and for losing the battle for public opinion. It was a scenario that they believed must not be repeated in future conflicts. Since then they have experimented with different methods of "controlling" and "managing" the media with stricter controls imposed on the media in order to contain information and ultimately win the battle for the hearts and minds of the public.

It was these sentiments that governed Britain's attitude to the media during the Falklands/Malvinas conflict. The information policy adopted by the British government and the military during the Falklands was poorly organized and lacked planning. There was an absence of agreed procedure or criteria, no centralized system of control and no co-ordination between departments. But whatever seemingly "on the hoof" measures the British introduced were based on the "myth" of Vietnam. During the Falklands conflict, the battle for public opinion was fought under the guise of "operational security," an all-embracing term used as an excuse for delaying

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and censoring information and disseminating misinformation (see Morrison & Tumber, 1988, pp. 189–190). But whatever the outcomes of the reporting, it was not due to astute planning by the British. The news was controlled by the very location—a windswept archipelago eight thousand miles from the UK in the South Atlantic. Journalistically speaking, it was in the wrong place. There were no means for the journalists to get their reports back to their news organizations in London other than through the military's communications network. Copy had to be taken to one of the ships that possessed a Marisat satellite system for transmission. Although it was not known if the Argentineans possessed the capability to access the Marisat system, it was not totally secure, even though some of the journalists considered it so. Twenty-five years on, today's mobile personal satellite communications systems make it impossible to control the flow of information, as it was possible then.

Military and defense officials in the United States noted with alacrity the experience of the Falklands. The uses of both military and civilian minders, the stationing of reporters in military units, and pooling arrangements were all adopted in various guises in future conflicts. In the 1980s, discussions took place between news organizations and the United States Department of Defense in order to establish some ground rules for co-operation. The first "test" of this new détente occurred in the invasion of Granada (known as operation "Urgent Fury") in 1983. However rather than setting a tone for harmonious relations between the military and the media, it provoked an outcry from news organizations as over six hundred reporters were left stranded in Barbados unable to report what was occurring in Grenada. It was two days later, when the initial assault was over, that fifteen reporters and photographers selected as pool reporters were allowed onto the island. The military had been logistically unresponsive to the needs of news organizations. The intense criticism that followed led to the setting up in 1984 by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff of a commission headed by General Winant Sidle to look into future media operations. One of the main recommendations proposed that a national media pool should be created to cover future operations where full media access was not available. These proposals were implemented during the operation to maintain freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf in 1988 (known as Operation Earnest Will) and then in Panama (1989) when US troops were engaged. This latter operation proved a disaster for the "new" pooling system because Dick Cheney, then Secretary of Defense, obstructed the mobilization of the pool and journalists were unable to cover the engagement. The sixteen-member press pool arrived in Panama four hours after US troops invaded and were only allowed to send their first reports after ten hours. Sidle was critical of the exercise and the manner in which his recommendations were implement. Further discussions between military commanders and news organizations followed the Panama fiasco and eventually led to all future battle plans containing a section on dealing with the media. To some extent, this worked reasonably well in the military engagements in Somalia in the early 1990s and in Haiti in 1994 although the pool system remained unpopular with the news organizations.

By the time of Gulf War I in 1991 (known as Operation Desert Shield), reporters covered military events via organized pools and formal briefings. Journalists were restricted in their travel movements and had to subject their copy to formal security review. The problem for the military became a logistical one of how to cope with hundreds of reporters flocking to the region. Ad-hoc press pools were organized but many journalists decided to ignore them and instead to move about independently. The outcome was frustration on behalf of news organizations and continuing bewilderment on behalf of the military about how journalists operate.

Coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 revealed especially effective perception management, since it achieved massive media attention yet was antiseptic in substance (Bennett & Paletz, 1994; Kellner, 1992; Mowlana, Gerbner, & Schiller, 1992; Taylor, 1997). As one *New York Times* reporter reflected some years later,

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> The [1991] Gulf War made war fashionable again […] television reporters happily disseminated the spoon-fed images that served the propaganda effort of the military and the state. These images did little to convey the reality of war […] It was war as spectacle. War as entertainment. (Hedges, 2002, pp. 142–143)

Military-media relations went through a further downturn during the Kosovo campaign in 1999, a conflict where journalists had little access to the province and relied on the military for information about the bombing campaign. For the invasion in Afghanistan (2001), many editors, bureau chiefs, and correspondents regarded the Pentagon's reporting rules as some of the toughest ever (see Hickey, 2002). The main grievances consisted of the lack of reasonable access to land and sea bases from which air attacks on Taliban positions were launched, and the restrictions on access and information emanating from the Pentagon.

The US bombing campaign of Iraq in 2003, consciously and accurately titled "Shock and Awe," and the lack of an Iraqi air force to offer any resistance, led to a victory inside four weeks, with few allied casualties and unknown and unreported Iraqi military deaths. When asked about Iraqi casualties, the US Commander Tommy Franks observed that "we don't do body counts" (of the enemy). Not surprisingly, then, estimates of Iraqi losses varied widely, most suggesting between 15,000 and 35,000 military deaths (Conetta, 2003), though a cluster analysis undertaken in September 2004 by a team of researchers from Johns Hopkins University, based on death rate measures, suggested 100,000 excess Iraqi deaths due to the war (Roberts, Lafta, Garfield, Khudhairi, & Burnham, 2004). Securing the occupation for the United States, though, has been much more problematic, and American casualties escalated through 2003–2005 as the occupying troops faced the Iraqis on the ground rather than from the air.

The mythical legacy of Vietnam still leads to apprehension on the part of the military and government that the public will react badly to pictures of casualties. Commanders and politicians are anxious about the effects of displays of bloodied bodies of civilians rather than ones of "precision strikes on legitimate targets," or the media reproduction of photographs showing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib being abused by American guards as occurred in April 2004. In the United States, there remains a particular fear that body bags containing dead servicemen from Iraq or Afghanistan would sap domestic support for the war. This explains why the US military transported home in secrecy the bodies of those killed while on duty, with no photographs allowed throughout 2003–2004. It also explains the military's acute embarrassment when pictures were obtained by newspapers of flag-draped coffins in a cargo plane.

Inevitably, apprehension about domestic public opinion impels military leaders into careful rehearsal and management of information from and about the war, whilst at the same time making assiduous efforts to avoid the charge of censorship. Failing to do this would diminish the "free media" claim of the democratic state and undermine the persuasiveness of what is reported. Perception management has to combine methods of ensuring a continuous stream of positive media coverage that is ostensibly freely gathered by independent news organizations.

EMBEDDING AND OBJECTIVITY

An important feature of the Falklands War, unusual among recent conflicts, was that it involved an intense closeness between journalists and troops. There were no journalists present from countries not party to the conflict who might have offered a more "removed" perspective. This was not a war zone where the journalists might accompany troops or insurgents and then leave them to file their copy down the line from a hotel. Instead, it involved living with the troops day in and

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day out for months, sharing a common discomfort, and depending upon them for protection. It was a shared world, and as with all shared worlds, the meanings attributed to it came to be held in common. In reporting events in Northern Ireland, which some of the same journalists had done, the definition given to what was happening and the deaths and injuries witnessed came through civilian perspectives. This was not the case in the Falklands, where civilian understanding of reality was exchanged for a military one. As the journalists gained more insights into the military world, they became more sympathetic to it, expressing admiration for the professionalism of the British troops. The reporting of the Falklands War saw a tension develop between two competing sentiments. On the one hand, the journalists carried with them the occupational ideology of impartiality and objectivity, whilst on the other they faced a situation in which they passed from the traditional role of journalist-as-observer to that of journalist-as-participant (see Morrison & Tumber, 1988, chapter 6). The result was that journalists not only shared the moods of the troops through collective experience, but also began to identify with them by being part of the whole exercise.

> Consequently, although some of the journalists disagreed with the decision to send the Task Force to the South Atlantic, once it seemed that conflict was inevitable, they felt an affinity with the troops, a shared determination to see the venture through to the end. (p. 97)

The Iraq War of 2003 was the most heavily covered war in recent times. Over three thousand journalists were assigned to the region. Of these, five hundred were embedded with various military units and the other “independents” scattered over the area working for news organizations as staffers or freelancers. Attempts by the US government and military to control and manage news during the invasion phase of the 2003 Iraq conflict involved a number of different measures and procedures. Using familiar techniques of censorship, misinformation, obfuscation and psychological operations to varying degrees, the United States was able to frustrate journalists and news organizations in their search for information. But it was the process of embedding journalists with military units that became the topic of intense discussion.

The embedding of journalists with the military was different to the situation during the Falklands conflict when journalists were “embedded” with the British Task force almost by accident. This time there was a deliberate plan set out by the US Department of Defense in consultation with news organizations for journalists to be “situated” with various parts of the military. The thinking behind this “innovation” had been developing for some time. A number of briefings took place in Washington between Pentagon officials and news organizations to discuss the process and journalists began attending military training courses in November 2003 in preparation for the impending invasion. Neither the military nor the news organizations relished the idea of a return to the pool system or the sole reliance on official briefings employed in previous wars. Some journalists expressed concern about the embedding process, particularly about the ability to maintain their impartiality. Others embraced the opportunity to go to the front line whilst the news organizations looked forward to continuous live broadcasting. A second concern to emerge in the days following the invasion was that the embedded journalists were only providing a snapshot of the war. Both US and UK governments complained that the public was receiving a distorted picture of the conflict (Tumber & Palmer, 2004, p. 7).

The organization of the embedded process was based on a plan of allocating places to news organizations, rather than individual reporters. This made it difficult for freelancers to gain accreditation unless contracted to a news organization. It also enabled the US Department of Defense to “control” the process more easily through possible sanctions on news organization for “misbehavior” on the part of their correspondents. The journalists embedded with the troops

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were given special procedures and guidelines for how they could operate. Journalists and news organizations were required to sign documents complying with the rules set out at the beginning about what they could or could not report. For example, they could not report on details of future operations, hold private satellite telephones or cell phones, travel in their own vehicles whilst in an embedded status, take photographs showing level of security or ones showing an enemy prisoner of war or detainee's face, nametag or other identifying feature. Reporters also had to agree to honor news embargos that could be imposed to protect operational security (Tumber & Palmer, 2004, p. 16).

The initial enthusiasm by news organization editors for the embedded reporters program was very marked since the process allowed reporting in virtually real time with no censorship from the military, although sandstorms and rapid troop movements had caused a few delays. The Pentagon's agreement to allow large numbers of journalists to be embedded with the troops enabled news organizations and outlets not normally on the Pentagon's top priority list to gain access to the war. It gave smaller locally based newspapers a presence in the conflict and a prestigious—"we were there"—with their audiences, something which was rare in previous conflicts (Tumber & Palmer, 2004, p. 19).

Whilst the process of embedding started with a wave of enthusiasm from both the military and the news organizations, it was not long before tensions began to emerge. Some journalists were frustrated that they were embedded with units that were not seeing any action. Consequently, some left their units or were told to leave by their news organizations. For the larger news organizations who had other journalists working independently of the embedding process, this was not as great a problem as it was for some of the smaller ones who did not have the resources to base reporters all over the conflict area. Some journalists complained about their reliance on military communications for sending their copy back. Another major issue to arise was the safety of the journalists. Those embedded with the troops could rely on the protection of their units with the risk, like their military protectors, of injury or death. But there was also the potential problem of capture and if that happened whether they would be regarded as prisoners of war under the protection of the Geneva Conventions or treated as spies and therefore not entitled to the same protections. For those operating independently of the military ("unilaterals," as they came to be called) the dangers were all too obvious. Not only did the military often treat them as second class citizens compared to the embeds by refusing access, transport and communications but many of them were killed or injured in the conflict (see Tumber & Palmer, 2004, p. 7).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE JOURNALISM

Over the last ten years or so, scholarly and journalistic attention has shifted towards an interest in developing new concepts and paradigms of conflict coverage. Books and articles devoted to "peace journalism" as opposed to "war journalism" have emerged. Much of the literature deals with how the media and journalists can play a "more" constructive role in reporting and resolving conflict. Other interesting literature has looked at the media's role in public diplomacy and conflict resolution.

If the Vietnam War was known as the first television war, Gulf War I was known for the arrival of twenty-four hour news, and in particular, the entrance of CNN to the world of news reporting, providing a challenge to the three established US networks. CNN scored a major coup by being the only broadcaster to broadcast from Baghdad during the initial American bombing campaign. It also made household names of journalists such as Peter Arnett and Christine Amanpour. CNN also has the distinction of having its name used to describe the phenomenon

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of twenty-four hour news effects. The CNN effect, a term used to describe the perceived impact of real time twenty-four hour news coverage on the foreign policy decision-making processes of states in the post cold war is thought to have been first coined by a Pentagon official. Saturation coverage of particular events is viewed as being strongly influential in bringing images and issues to the immediate forefront of public political consciousness and hence influencing Governments' foreign policy decision making (see Livingston, 1997; Robinson, 2002). The high emotional content of a news report or series of reports "may capture the attention of the public which may then put pressure on policy makers" (Seib, 2002, p. 27). Criticism leveled at the CNN effect is that it is unpredictable and is only one of many factors contributing to policy making. In most cases, the CNN effect will gain purchase only if a policy vacuum exists. Other concepts of the media's role provide greater insights into policy, particularly conflict resolution.

Wolfsfeld's (2003) political contest model, for example, concentrates on the role the media may play in the possible resolution of conflict. The ability of powerful sources to manage the news tends to vary over time and circumstance with the key variable being the degree of monopoly over the information environment. The "news media are more likely to play an independent role when the powerful lose control because it allows the weaker side a better platform for the promotion of its frame of the conflict and increase the probability for third parties to intervene" (p. 228). Wolfsfeld uses the analysis of sources to examine the extent to which the press becomes an active agent in a given conflict rather than a passive conveyor of political information (see also Wolfsfeld, 2004; Weiman, 1994; Gilboa, 1998). Peace journalism advocates, though, are suggesting a different kind of agenda—a manifesto rather than a theory.

Two of the advocates of peace journalism describe it as what happens "when editors and reporters make choices—about what stories to report and how to report them—which create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). They see peace journalism as "a fund of practical options for editors and reporters to equip readers and audiences to decode propaganda and produce their own negotiated readings, thereby holding power to account" (Lynch, 2006, p. 75). From this definition it is clear why peace journalism has been criticized for concentrating on individual and voluntary perspectives rather than structural ones (see Hanitzsch, 2007; Phillips, 2006; Tehranian, 2002).

The accepted norm for the individual journalist, based on their professional values, is that they should adopt a neutral role in reporting conflict, avoiding bias and striving for objectivity, thus refraining from advocating or defending the position of either side. This perspective, however, does not assist with understanding the reality and the dynamics of covering a conflict. Even unintentionally, the mere presence of the media may alter the behavior of conflicting parties. For example, in the case of Bosnia, it has been argued that the presence of reporters prevented or postponed some of the atrocities (Botes, 1996, p. 6) Others, though, have criticized journalists in Bosnia for being partial and embarking on crusades against Serbian aggression. The human rights perspective, adopted by sections of the media alongside calls for humanitarian intervention, was further in evidence in the lead-up to and duration of the Allied bombing of Kosovo (see Hammond & Herman, 2000, p. 124).

The danger for journalists is that they can become the third party, a role that is legitimately reserved for conflict mediators rather than reporters. Journalists' attempts to get to the "heart of the conflict" may lead to "reframing," a standard process in conflict resolution where the conflicting parts identify their shared problems that lead to the conflict. Within this picture, the media become forums of direct or indirect exchange of viewpoints and debate over possible avenues toward conflict resolution. Radio talk shows, television discussion programs and round tables all could play a peacemaking role as mediating forums (Botes, 1996, p. 7; Tehranian, 1996, p. 3).

However, unlike conflict mediators, journalists' professional aims and objectives are quite

different and subject to different constraints. As employees of news organizations, they produce a commodity that is supposed to generate profit. Conflict sells and the emphasis on violence, and simplification of the conflict, increases the value of their commodity. Media interest in conflicts focuses on the high points of the dispute, dramatic or violent incidents, events that can be interpreted as focal points in the course of the conflict (Botes, 1996, pp. 7–8). Peace journalism advocates believe that the news media over value violent responses and under value non-violent ones. They argue for "co-operative exchange and deliberation which is not based on claims to universal moral judgments, or even shared language and assumptions, but instead on a concept of impartiality which consists in a diversity of perspectives" (Lynch, 2003). Their view of impartiality rests on "giving peace a chance in national and international debate" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. xxi).

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