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Information Wars:
The Government, the Military, the Media,
& the People, 1941-1991

by

Matthew Andrew Thompson

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2000
ABSTRACT

Information Wars:
The Government, the Military, the Media, & the People, 1941-1991

by

Matthew A. Thompson

This study examined the tensions between the military and the media; the need for governments to articulate clear war aims, win public, and international support; and the public's power to hold a government accountable in a democracy for actions during wartime in a fifty-year period. The long view of history demonstrated the complex and multidirectional interactions among the government, the military, the media, and the people of a democracy during wartime. In the past, historians and scholars have focused almost exclusively on the relationship between the military and media during wartime. Taking that approach as a starting point, this thesis expanded upon those earlier studies and moved beyond technical disagreements between officers and journalists to examine the broader context of national unity during times of conflict.

By looking at the level of national unity during the major conflicts that the United States was involved between 1941 and 1991 -- and examining the British experience during the Falkland Islands War -- the interaction between government leaders and the
public overshadowed the relationship between the military and the media. Government leaders were most successful in building and sustaining public support when they clearly articulated war aims and maintained those aims throughout the period of the conflict. This study also suggested a correlation between the successful building of domestic support for war and the government's prior acquisition of the international community's support for its actions.

These findings showed that the relationships among the government, the military, the media, and people have been very nuanced and complex during times of war between 1941 and 1991. The struggles on the homefront and in the international community have been just as heated as clash of armies on the battlefield. While not always victorious, democratic nations have fought and re-fought battles to build and maintain support for during times of war -- an element essential for any hope of victory in modern warfare.
Acknowledgments

Many individuals contributed to this work. While a complete listing of those who assisted me during my work would certainly double the length of this manuscript, the services of a few demands recognition. First, I would like to thank Professor Ira Gruber who has served as my advisor throughout my graduate work and proven himself to be a man of immense knowledge, understanding, and compassion. He introduced me to the academic world of military history and has offered encouragement throughout my studies. Professor Richard Stoll has given me more of his time than I have deserved. As a visitor to his world of political science and its quantitative analysis, he showed a traditional historian the merits and uses of social science methodologies. Although I am not, nor will ever claim to be, a political scientist, because of his efforts I have a richer understanding of how history and political science complement each other. I would also like to acknowledge Professor Allen Matusow who agreed to become a member of my committee at a late date.

Other individuals from the Rice University community also have assisted in the competition of this work. Professor Gale Stokes, as Chair of the Department of History, has been most generous with research and travel grants. Without this financial assistance I would not have been able to visit the archives and libraries that were essential to my research. Ms. Paula Platt and her predecessor as History Department Coordinator, Mrs. Nancy Parker, guided me through the often complicated bureaucracy of the university and helped me through many trying times as a fledgling academic. My fellow graduate
students created and sustained an environment that was intellectually challenging. I would like to especially thank Professor David Dillard (Rice, Ph.D. 1999) for his patience in explaining the workings of the U.S. military during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. He listened and answered many questions that should not have needed answering. Mr. Charles Israel, Graduate Student Representative and friend, also assisted me in many intangible ways. During innumerable basketball games in the gym and over coffee, Charles encouraged me to continue with my work when I was ready to abandon it.

Away from the academic departments of Rice University, I had the pleasure to work with many skilled and knowledgeable individuals. Although not directly connected with my period of study, the staff of the Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Journal of Southern History gave me encouragement, technical expertise, and friendship during my entire term as a graduate student. Lynda, Mary, Ken, Patti, and Evelyn -- thank you. Similarly, the staff of the Woodson Research Center provided me with the occasional use of a computer and a never ending wealth of knowledge about the workings of archives and records depositories. At the Library of Congress, Mr. David Kelly assisted me as only an excellent reference librarian could. Also in Washington, D.C., I had the benefit of meeting with Professor William Hammond of the Center of Military History. Professor Hammond and his colleagues at CMH shared their knowledge and their resources during my several trips to Washington. Mr. David Keogh, of the United States Military History Institute at Carlisle, PA, helped me locate important documents and collections that made this work possible. Many other reference librarians and archivists at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, TX,
also assisted me as I sifted through the large number of documents that pertained to my research.

In addition to archival records, I had the good fortune to interact personally with several individuals who played key roles in the story I have told. President George Bush took time from his busy schedule to personally share his views on my subject. Several former members of his administration also made themselves available to answer my questions. James A. Baker III, Richard Cheney, Colin Powell, and Pete Williams all agreed to sit down for an oral history interview. Likewise, Mr. Sam Donaldson of ABC News put off an interview to speak with me about the nature of the media and his experiences as a reporter. The information gained from these individuals enhanced the written records and illuminated many things that otherwise would have remained unseen.

I also would like to thank those who have provided me with strength and support as I have worked on this project. My parents, Michael and Paula Thompson, showed me the importance of learning and ceaselessly encouraged me to work hard and accomplish all that I could. Geoffrey Thompson, my brother and good friend, took time away from his family to discuss things completely unrelated to my work and in the process helped me remain as sane as possible. The other members of my family, both immediate and extended, have all been most supportive and encouraging. They always at least acted interested in my work and have only occasional asked what one does with a doctorate in history. I hope that I have finally answered that question and alleviated some of their concerns. Without them I could not have begun or completed this journey.

Finally, I must acknowledge the one person who has contributed most to this work
— my wife, Jennifer. She endured many days and nights without me as I traveled across the country to conduct research, to talk with individuals important to my work, and to present preliminary drafts of my work at professional conferences. On too many occasions, I have asked her to put aside her own wishes to help me. Throughout, she has been my toughest critic and most faithful supporter. It is impossible to describe all that she has done for me, but she has always been ready to provide me with inspiration, motivation, and determination. Without her none of this would have been possible. As a small measure of my gratitude and love I dedicate this story, and any and all future ones, to her.

These and many others have assisted me as I produced this work. They are largely responsible for the story that follows. Any errors that remain, are mine alone.
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Introduction

In reflecting on war, Carl von Clausewitz observed that "when whole communities go to war -- whole peoples, and especially civilized people -- the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of policy... War is merely the continuation of policy by other means."¹ The primacy of policy during war has been most important to democratic nations, with their need to draw upon the will of the people to sustain and support military action during times of crisis. According to Clausewitz, to wage war successfully three parts of a society -- the government, the military, and the people -- must all work toward a single goal. Each member of the Clausewitzian trinity contributes differently to the winning of a conflict. The government establishes war aims, the military devises means to achieve these aims, and the people furnish the manpower and resources necessary for victory. If any of the three fails in its role, the successful completion of the war is doubtful.

Although Clausewitz described this interaction over one-hundred fifty years ago, modern warfare has shown that it is still very important that the government, the military, and the people act in unison during times of war. However, had he lived a century later he would have noticed the power of a fourth institution that could greatly influence national unity -- the press. Although leaders like Gustavus Adolphus and Napoleon had used newspapers, pamphlets, and speeches to communicate with their peoples, it was not until

the middle of the nineteenth century that newsmen began independently to exert their power over public opinion during wartime. William Howard Russell, described as the father of war correspondents, reported on the British Army’s blunders during the Crimean War, turning public opinion against their government and encouraging reforms in the army. Since the days of Russell, the media have grown in power, and by the twentieth century, governments and military leaders have sought means to control and manage the press while attempting to maintain public support for military actions.

Historians have been well aware of the role of the press in wartime and of Clausewitz’s emphasis on the political nature of war. Yet in studying the wars of the twentieth century -- especially those between World War II and the Persian Gulf War -- historians have rarely brought together studies of the press with those of Clausewitz’s trinity -- the government, the military, and the people. No one has studied systematically the relationships among the government, the military, the people, and the press over an extended period. This dissertation attempts to do just that for the wars of the United States (and, in one instance, of Great Britain) from the beginning of World War II in Europe through the end of the Persian Gulf War.

During that half century, the United States waged no less than seven wars and the United Kingdom took part in an eighth. The following chapters examine why in some wars, military and political leaders have been successful in building national unity and harnessing the will of the country to work toward the accomplishment of the country’s war aims and in other cases have been unable to build or sustain public support for war. It will investigate each of the four components of society necessary for the waging of war --
the government, the military, the media, and people — and study the complex interactions among these groups. The need for unity between the four segments of society contributed to the success or failure of each of the wars and it is important to understand how two democracies have attempted to build unity during times of the gravest trials.
Chapter 1  
"Only by the Willing Cooperation of the General Public Can We Be Successful":
Building the Unity Necessary for War, 1 September 1939 - 7 December 1941

In the early hours of 1 September 1939, German forces crossed the Polish border and rapidly advanced eastward. Several hours after the first Wehrmacht soldiers entered Poland, General George C. Marshall took the oath of office as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Two days later, when Great Britain and France honored their pledges to come to the aid of Poland and declared war on Germany, newsmen reported that Europe was at war. Although few realized at the time that the war in Europe would become a global conflict -- World War II -- the new Chief of Staff was aware that his country was woefully unprepared for war if it should eventually involve the United States. The U.S. Army and Army Air Corps had fewer than 200,000 men at the beginning of 1939. Marshall knew that his main task as the leader of the U.S. Army would be to establish an adequate national defense program that could counter the dangers of a world at war and that he would have to begin while the United States remained at peace. He was well aware of Germany's previous aggressions against Austria and Czechoslovakia and the Nazi-leader Adolph Hitler's desire to develop a vast German Empire as part of the Third Reich. But the new Chief of staff had doubts that he would be able to prepare the country

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for the war that threatened to escalate in the coming months. Would he be able to “gain
the support of the White House, the Congress, and the general public” in preparing for
war? And would the press support or hamper his efforts? Marshall correctly understood
that his nation’s only chance of survival lay in a unity, but he also knew that the American
people were far from united behind the president’s foreign policy or the country’s defense
planning. The months following the invasion of Poland were a time of intense debate over
the course of the nation’s future. Members of the military, the government, the press, and
the people all took part in the debate and the preparation for the war they feared would
come.

Germany’s swift advance through Poland shocked the United States and left Great
Britain and France alone to counter the Nazi aggression. Many in the United States had
believed that the European democracies would stop German aggression at the Rhine. In a
press conference held the same day that German forces invaded Poland, President
Roosevelt responded to a reporter’s question of whether the United States could stay out
of the war by saying, “I not only hope so, but I believe we can; and that every effort will
be made by the Administration to do so.” However, events in Europe caused some to
doubt whether it would be possible for America to avoid involvement in the latest

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European struggle. By the end of September 1939 Americans began to wonder if they might not have to defend London and Paris. Like France and Britain, the United States suffered from the twin ills of complacency and unpreparedness. Americans continued to believe they could rely on patriots, armed with little more than enthusiasm, to protect the nation from attack. Leaders in Congress and many members of the public had forgotten the hard-won lessons of the Civil War and World War I when lives were lost because of a failure to prepare for war before the fighting began. Because the United States continued to depend on its friends in Western Europe or the Soviet Union to serve as counterweights to Nazi designs, the nation delayed taking measures necessary to ensure hemispheric security. Despite the Congress' action in November 1939 allowing the Western Powers to receive arms on a "cash-and-carry" basis, the U.S. government failed to adopt long-range plans to modernize and expand its armed forces. Celebrities like Charles A. Lindbergh spoke out against any actions that might lead to American intervention in the European war. General Marshall watched as his country followed its historical pattern of neglecting the military until crisis forced it to start arming overnight. He placed much of the blame for the failure to prepare at the feet of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. According to Marshall, Roosevelt was reluctant to press Congress for larger military appropriations and delayed appointing a supervisory board with broad powers to direct war production in the early days of the new European war. However, the general understood that the president was limited in what he could do. Roosevelt, Marshall recalled later, was aware "that the

Middle West was so solidly against him that if he moved into a large military effort [in 1939] he would encounter such opposition he wouldn’t be able to manage [it].”

While General Marshall felt that he had to convince the president of the threat facing the United States in September 1939, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was well aware of the danger the war in Europe posed. Although domestic issues dominated much of Roosevelt’s first two terms, the president had watched with growing concern the rise of dictator states in Europe and the Far East. In his annual message to Congress in 1935, FDR stated, “I cannot with candor tell you that general international relationships outside the borders of the United States are improved. On the surface of things many old jealousies are resurrected, old passions aroused; new strivings for armament and power, in more than one land, rear their ugly heads.”

In 1937, President Roosevelt suggested during a speech in Chicago that something had to be done about the “reign of terror” and “international lawlessness” that existed in the world. He observed that recent treaty violations, the indiscriminate bombings of civilians, and the waging of undeclared wars were “wiping away the very landmarks of law, order, and justice which had characterized .

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5Ibid. Marshall’s harsh assessment of Roosevelt was in some ways unfair. The president repeatedly had asked Congress for additional funds to increase national defense readiness. Even before war broke out in Europe, Roosevelt sought increased appropriations, but the president directed most of his efforts in building a modern air force and navy because he, like many others, believed that future wars would focus less on ground forces and depend more on the power projection capabilities of naval and air forces. See Roosevelt Papers, #8, “The President Urges the Congress to Pass Additional Appropriations for National Defense,” 12 January 1939, 70-73; Roosevelt Papers, #21, “The President Asks for Funds to Expand the Air Force of the United States,” 26 January 1939, 103-4.

Roosevelt proposed that the peace-loving nations of the world impose a system of quarantining aggressors, isolating such nations from the normal commercial and cultural intercourse with the rest of the world. The president’s attempt to turn public attention away from domestic issues toward the growing international crises failed. He had not prepared the American people for his grand proposal. After the speech, many individuals and groups, some formerly supportive of the Chief Executive, charged Roosevelt with warmongering and accused him of needlessly frightening the people of the United States. Public reaction to that speech taught Roosevelt an important lesson: no matter how noble or just the cause he could not allow his ideas to “get too far in the vanguard of the people he [was] leading.”

As a result of this lesson, the president moved cautiously, at times too cautiously for preparedness advocates like Marshall, in addressing the worsening international situation. Roosevelt clearly saw the dangers earlier than most Americans, but he also understood that he had to proceed slowly to ensure a substantial majority of the people understood the threats from abroad and were willing to support measures needed to make the United States better able to defend itself and its way of life.

Although Marshall was painfully aware of isolationist sentiments in the Middle West, there was strong opposition to intervention and rearmament throughout the country.

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7 Samuel I. Rosenman, “Introduction,” *Roosevelt Papers* 1941 ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1951), xvii. Following the president’s death in 1945, Rosenman, an assistant to the president in the compilation of earlier volumes of his public papers, assumed the position of editor of the 1941-1945 volumes. Rosenman wrote the introduction to each volume and compiled notes accompanying the selected documents, jobs that had been credited to the president in all earlier volumes.
at the end of 1939. In a public opinion poll taken four times between 11 September and 18 October 1939, respondents expressed their views on whether the United States should declare war and send its army and navy abroad to fight Germany. Roughly 95 percent of respondents in all the polls stated that the country should not take action that might involve the nation in the war.\textsuperscript{10} Isolationist feelings transcended political labels.

Conservatives, liberals, and radicals formed an uneasy alliance opposing any measure that threatened to involve the United States in the war. Many hard-core isolationists blindly followed the words of George Washington who had admonished the nation to avoid entangling foreign alliances.\textsuperscript{11} Others were disillusioned internationalists who believed that the Treaty of Versailles had betrayed their idealistic crusade of 1917-18. A smaller portion were Communists who, following the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939, had altered their stance from an anti-German platform to one advocating American neutrality. Allied with these groups were financial conservatives who had resisted Roosevelt's New Deal economic changes and had come to oppose anything for which the president stood. The business men provided the cash and leadership that combined with the passions of the other neutralists in the fight against any weakening of the neutrality laws or increase in aid to the Western Allies. All of the

\textsuperscript{9}Roosevelt Papers, Introduction, 1941, xxxvii.


conflicting views were reflected in the press, which served as a mirror of opinion. Some news organizations took the side of the interventionists, but most, like a clear majority of the American people, opposed U.S. involvement in affairs outside of the nation.\textsuperscript{12}

The struggle between interventionists and isolationists hampered the Commander in Chief's, the Army's, and the Navy's efforts to strengthen the United States' armed forces. Isolationists in the public, the press, and the Congress attacked appropriations intended to raise the military to a passable state of readiness as Roosevelt's covert effort to involve the United States in the conflict abroad. The public and Congress carefully scrutinized proposals to increase aircraft production, to prepare forces to protect the Western Hemisphere, and to initiate some sort of selective service system. Military and political leaders who understood America's weaknesses also realized that they would have to progress slowly because of the reluctance of the public and Congress to become involved in the war in Europe.\textsuperscript{13}

General Marshall intensified his efforts to prepare the nation for war shortly after he became Chief of Staff in September 1939. He began by requesting a modest increase in Army strength. In a letter to his predecessor as Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, Marshall outlined his proposal. 'We are headed for full peace strength of 280,000, and a total increase of 126,000 for the National Guard, with about double the number of pay drills and two rations a month -- one for weekend shooting and one for weekend training. . . . Unfortunately,' Marshall continued, 'there is little that can be done regarding


\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Roosevelt Papers}, "Introduction," 1941, xxxix.
munitions which we lack which can be remedied quickly." Marshall, like Roosevelt, understood that he had to be careful in approaching Congress for the authorization and funds necessary to accomplish his program of improved military readiness. The Chief of Staff wrote that he had to operate from the position of "what we might be permitted to do rather than . . . what should be done on the basis of national defense." 

The U.S. Army had submitted a budget for fiscal year 1940 shortly before Germany invaded Poland. Because of the invasion, Marshall had to go back before Congress and ask for an increase. Facing the House Subcommittee on Appropriations, Marshall endured tough questioning from the Congressmen on his revised request. The general had to explain why increasing funding for the Army was necessary when the European powers seemed too busy fighting one another to threaten the United States. He defended his requests against charges that increased military spending would send a belligerent message to the warring countries. The Army, he told the committee members, was not trying to build up for war but only striving to reach levels Congress had authorized in 1920. He assured the Congressmen that the War Department had "an earnest desire, a desperate desire, to keep out of trouble, and no one is more sincere in

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that desire than the Chief of Staff.”

Despite Marshall’s strong appeals, Congress was slow to approve the money needed to upgrade the U.S. military. Immediately following Germany’s victory in Poland, Americans became increasingly concerned about military and international affairs. However, such concerns quickly faded during the “phony war” in the winter of 1939-40. The “phony war” was a period of nearly six months during which the British and French were at war with Germany but in which little fighting actually occurred. Congressmen and commentators continued to question why any increases in defense spending were necessary with the drop in the war’s intensity. Much attention in the United States and the Western Powers shifted at the end of 1939 from Central Europe to Scandinavia after the Soviet Union invaded Finland and reduced the Baltic states to satellite nations. Many within the American public became as distrustful of the Soviets as they were of the Germans. Public opinion between 1935 and 1939 showed that Americans felt strong international ties with only Great Britain. When asked which country they liked the best/least, polls showed that Americans consistently ranked Britain as their most liked foreign country, followed by France. After the Russian invasion of Finland, Americans expressed increased admiration for the Finns, ranking them fourth, while less than 1 percent of respondents liked the USSR.

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17 Cantril, Public Opinion, 948-49, #1-3, 10, (FOR, AIPO). The poll questions, asked seven times between October 1935 and July 1939, required respondents to rank a list of countries according to which they liked the best/least.
In an atmosphere of strong isolationist feelings, General Marshall continued to fight for approval of funds necessary for his plan to increase the size and preparedness of the U.S. Army and National Guard. The Navy and the Army Air Corps enjoyed a relatively better situation because of the greater press coverage they received as a result of the daring Air Corps pilots and Navy aviators who took part in dramatic attempts to break aerial records. Since the Chief of Staff of the Army knew that he faced a stiff fight to get Congressional approval of his $850 million budget for 1940, he used every opportunity to communicate the importance of his requests. In a speech before the American Historical Association in December 1939, he spoke about the United States' history of failing to prepare for war. Praising the broadcast and print journalists for keeping the public informed of current events, Marshall urged the assembled historians to provide a more thorough understanding of the military history of the United States so that the public could benefit not only from information about current events but also from the lessons of the past. "Personally I am convinced that the colossal wastefulness of our war organization in the past, and the near tragedies to which it has led us," Marshall told the historians, "have been due primarily to the character of our school text-books and the ineffective manner in which history has been taught in the public schools of this country."  

Marshall described the five provisions of the National Defense Act of 1920 that called for a small regular army to defend the territories of the United States, a national guard to augment the regular army in time of war, an organization to train officers whom the military could rapidly

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integrate into the first two forces, a munitions reserve to supply the military in times of national emergency, and a mobilization plan to provide industrial resources to the meet the demands of an army during times of war. Marshall hoped that a better understanding of the past would prove to skeptics the necessity of taking measures for an adequate defense. According to the general, at the time of his address to the AHA, the U.S. Army was less than 25 percent prepared to fight a war. Marshall continued to make public statements calling for increases in military preparedness. In a radio address in mid-February 1940, Marshall warned his audience that time was running out for America to prepare. The country could not improvise modern warfare, Marshall reiterated: a time lag of one or two years would exist between the initial order of war material and the delivery of finished products to the soldier.

Despite such clear and strong public statements, Marshall acted cautiously in his dealings with Congress. Working carefully within White House-imposed limits, he informed Congress that the Army was asking only for the items absolutely necessary to meet existing needs. He informed his staff to be patient with Congress, saying that their requests might meet with greater approval if left until the last possible date since it was probable “that events in Europe will develop in such a way as to affect congressional action.”

In an appearance before the House Appropriations Committee on 23 February

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19 Ibid.

20 Marshall radio address to ROTC, 16 February 1940, quoted in Pogue, Ordeal, 17.

21 Chief of Staff Conference, 19 February 1940, quoted in Pogue, Ordeal, 20.
1940, Marshall begged the Congressmen to provide the means necessary to allow the
armed forces to prepare themselves to deter any nation or group of nations from
threatening the Americas. In closing he warned the committee members, "If Europe
blazes in the late spring or summer, we must put our house in order before the sparks
reach the Western Hemisphere." In spite of this warning and in opposition to public
opinion that supported a stronger military, the House remained hostile to increased
defense spending and Marshall received word that the House was contemplating a severe
reduction in the Army's appropriations. On 3 April the House Committee cut the budget
of the armed forces by nearly 10 percent, eliminating an airbase in Anchorage, Alaska, and
all but fifty-seven planes from the original request of one-hundred sixty-six. Six days later,
Germany invaded Denmark and Norway.\textsuperscript{22}

The German invasion of Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940 marked the end of
the phony war. Denmark's government surrendered to the Nazis only hours after the
attack, and Norway was not much better prepared to resist the German invasion.

Reporters anxiously watching the wires for the latest news from Europe recalled General

\textsuperscript{22}House Appropriations Subcommittee, \textit{Military Estimated Appropriations Bill
1941}, 23 February 1940 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1940), 3. Six weeks later, President
Roosevelt made a similar statement as he was preparing to leave his retreat in Warm
Springs, Georgia. "My friends of Warm Springs," the statement began, "I have had a fine
holiday here with you all. I'll be back in the fall if we do not have a war." See \textit{Roosevelt
Papers}, #54, "Extemporaneous Remarks Warning of Approaching War," 9 April 1939,
192.

\textsuperscript{23}Pogue, \textit{Ordeal}, 18. The actions of Congress went against public opinion polls,
but were in line with the vocal isolationist movement of the time. Polls showed that from
November 1939, the majority of the public favored the increase in spending for the U.S.
military. The public even was willing to spend pay higher taxes to support larger military
Marshall's prophecy from February. Journalists found the Chief of Staff on Capitol Hill, waiting once again to testify before a House committee. When they stopped him in the corridor near the hearings room to ask if the new German offensive was the "blaze" that he had predicted, Marshall fought the temptation to say "I told you so," and instead replied that "it appeared at the moment" to be what he had had in mind.24

Throughout the dark Spring days of 1940, the people of the United States paid close attention to the events in Europe. The shattering of the phony war in April with the invasion of Denmark and Norway was another movement in Germany's orchestrated military plan that would eventually engulf the European continent in total war. During the next several weeks, Americans waited to see where German leader Adolf Hitler would make his next move. In the United States, the people and Congress still believed that they could avoid involvement in the European crisis and weather the storm behind the weak walls of isolationist legislation. The storm clouds broke over Europe on 10 May 1940 when German forces invaded Holland and Belgium. Only five days later, American journalists in France reported from Paris that German troops had broken through the French lines at Sedan. The next day, 16 May, one American correspondent noticed the beginnings of panic in Paris. "It affected, however, only the most highly sensitized layers of the population: the correspondents, the American and British war-charity workers, and the French politicians." News recounting the extent of the German advance reached the French capital on the sixteenth, delayed "because of censorship . . . for twenty-four

24Quoted in Pogue, Ordeal, 19.
hours.” The French government established an Anglo-American press section under the direction of the Ministry of Information to monitor and shape information about the deteriorating war situation. From the beginning of the German attack in the west, the French government had placed strict controls on the press, especially foreign correspondents. The censors in Paris allowed no news stories about the rapid advance of the German Army or the inability of the French and British forces to slow it down.26

The news from Europe continued to describe the inability of the Western Powers to stop or even slow the advancing Germans. The French government and military failed to recognize fully that the German invasion had placed their country in a desperate position. The French army had so depended on being able to stop the Nazi forces at the vaunted Maginot Line that they had neglected to organize their armored sections into an effective counter to the German Blitzkrieg style of warfare. Between 19 and 20 May, German mechanized units sped across France, seizing the old battlefield of the Somme and reaching the coast near Abbeville, only one-hundred fifty miles from Paris. By 24 May

25 A.J. Liebling, “Paris Postscript,” The New Yorker (3, 10 August 1940), Reporting World War II, vol. 1 (New York: Library of American, 1995), 35-36. This source is a collection of press accounts dealing with the Second World War. Press accounts come from all forms of media — major daily newspaper, news magazines, radio, alternative press, and minority press — and provide a representative selection of news products from the period. Because of the volume of news accounts of the war, this collection has been essential in providing a representative sample of news stories. For specific events, additional news sources were used to supplement the stories found in Reporting WWII. Hereafter cited as Author, “Title of Piece,” Original Place of Publication (Date of Original Publication), Reporting WWII, Volume, Page.

they had driven the main Anglo-French force back to the port of Dunkirk. U.S. journalist John Fisher, a correspondent for Life magazine, had traveled with German forces during the advance toward the main Allied pocket of resistance around Dunkirk. Fisher watched as the German ground forces halted and allowed the Luftwaffe, the German air force, the opportunity to destroy the remnants of the mainly British forces trapped near the port. From 23 May until 3 June, the British Expeditionary Force endured constant air attacks while the British Navy, along with many private vessels, attempted to evacuate as many soldiers as they could. During those eleven days, the hodgepodge of ships rescued over 340,000 Allied troops. Fisher, arriving at Dunkirk on 4 June, witnessed the enormity of the Allied defeat and described the scene of the destruction for Life magazine.

At Dunkerque harbor, Frenchmen lay where they fell, their bodies bloated, legs and arms blown off, guts hanging out. Sprawled in groups, they fell behind their machine guns, the gunner still holding the trigger. The horrid stench of the dead was overpoweringly nauseating. Rows of British trucks unable to be loaded aboard ship stood burned on a dock. Piles of bullets and munitions filled the pat. At one of the smoldering docks, a French tanker named Salome caught fire, its smoke choking us within a few minutes. Distant oil tanks exploded, throwing flames 100 ft. Into the air.

News of the German invasion of France caused some Americans to call for new

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measures to meet the growing threat from Europe. Major General John F. O’Ryan, a New York City lawyer and the retired World War I commander of New York’s Twenty-seventh Division, sent a telegram on 10 May to Congressman James W. Wadsworth (Republican from New York) urging greater military preparedness. “People now seem leagues ahead of the government in [their] understanding of [the] aggression menace. Wilson mobilized guard divisions on [the] border as [a] war measure without hostile public reaction though with presidential campaign pending. This [was] of greatest value to later war efficiency.” Responding to O’Ryan’s appeal, General Marshall wrote that the president “had moved in each instance almost as rapidly as public opinion would permit.” Marshall went on to note that events in Europe had changed public attitudes. “[T]he affair in Norway, which brought about almost a reversal in public opinion; and the assault on the Western front has created a deluge of recommendations for an increase of our military forces.”

But despite the growing sense that the U.S. had to prepare for the possibility of involvement in the war, isolationists redoubled their attacks on the president and watched the armed forces for any signs of interventionism.

Marshall immediately appealed to the Secretary of War, Harry H. Woodring, to demand that Congress restore the military items recently cut from the appropriations bill and add other items to the 1940 budget. Marshall also approached Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau. In a meeting with Morgenthau, he pleaded for the Secretary’s support in gaining approval for the expansion of the Regular Army, the

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construction of sufficient planes to build a modern air force, and the conversion of plants to manufacture ammunition. Marshall also wanted a Protective Mobilization Plan force, that included equipment and munitions for Regular Army and National Guard troops that would ultimately number nearly 1.25 million men. Those additional troops would require pay, shelter, rations, clothing, and maintenance; the Air Corps would need planes of all description -- trainers, fighters and bombers; the Regular Army and the forces that the government could call to duty later would have to have rifles, field artillery, antiaircraft guns, and all types of ammunition. The total bill for all of Marshall’s requests ran over $650 million. When Morgenthau initially remained cool to Marshall’s proposals, the general admitted, “It makes me dizzy.” To which the Secretary replied, “It makes me dizzy if we don’t get it.”

Secretary Morgenthau took the Chief of Staff’s proposals to the President. FDR, however, was reluctant to approach Congress with such a staggering request. He accepted only portions of the proposed plan when Morgenthau first presented it to him on 14 May. Marshall, attending the meeting, became frustrated, angry, and concerned by the president’s apparent failure to comprehend the steps necessary to modernize the armed forces. When the meeting appeared to be over, General Marshall approached the president’s chair and asked for three minutes to explain his position. In slightly more than his allotted time, Marshall poured forth the Army’s critical requirements as he had outlined them to Morgenthau. The Chief of Staff concluded by saying, “If you don’t do something

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... and do it right away, I don't know what is going to happen to this country." The president listened attentively. After a few moments, he told the Chief of Staff that he would recommend only a modest increase in Army forces at first but would later issue an Executive Order authorizing the additional expansion needed to raise the Army to its full strength before the end of July. The president had elected to delay hitting Congress with the full force of the budget demands. He also asked the general to return the next day with a detailed list of his requirements. In the end, the president approved the vast majority of Marshall's proposals, including an increase in aircraft production and pilot training, the appropriation of essential supplies for existing units, and the purchase of critical items that the military would require later if the government had to implement the Protective Mobilization Plan.\textsuperscript{32}

Even though he had approved Marshall's requests, Roosevelt remained unsure of how to approach Congress. The general assisted the president in writing the draft of a letter that FDR sent to the Hill on 16 May. "The developments of the past few weeks," the letter began, "have made it clear to all of our citizens that the possibility of attack on vital American zones ... [makes] it essential that we have the physical, the ready ability to meet those attacks and to prevent them from reaching their objective."\textsuperscript{33} The letter continued with a request for the funds that Roosevelt and Marshall had discussed during

\textsuperscript{31}Marshall Reminiscences, 302.

\textsuperscript{32}Pogue, Ordeal, 31-32.

\textsuperscript{33}Pogue, Ordeal, 32-33; Roosevelt Papers, #48, "Message to the Congress Asking Additional Appropriations for National Defense," 16 May 1940, 198-212.
their talks on 14 May. In all, the president sought immediate funding totaling nearly $900 million in direct appropriations, another $300 million in contract authority, and $250 million for the expansion, modernization, and training of the U.S. Navy. “We stand ready not only to spend millions for defense,” the letter stated, “but to give our service and even our lives for the maintenance of our American liberties.” When recalling the struggle to gain adequate funding for the modernization of the U.S. armed forces in 1939 and 1940, Marshall noted that while he had struggled to get $18 million restored to the budget in April 1940, the president in May asked Congress for more than $1 billion. Marshall and Roosevelt had broken the impasse that developed with Congress. Although it was only the first of many laborious efforts to gain the authorization and funding necessary to build a modern armed forces, the military and the executive had united to win a campaign to prepare the United States for great struggle that lay ahead.34 In later years, Marshall recalled that his and Roosevelt’s actions in approaching funding issues were dependent on Congressional and public opinion.

People have forgotten today what a difficult time we had raising an army, how bitter was the opposition to raising it, how strong was the influence of the Middle West. . . . We had to move cautiously. If I had ignored public opinion, if I had ignored the reaction of Congress, we would literally have gotten nowhere. I had to be very careful, I felt and I still think, not to create the feeling that I, as leader of the military portion of affairs at that time, was trying to force the country into a lot of actions which it opposed. I was trying to get Congress to do it and get the public to do it. Of course, there may have been excessive caution at that time by both the White House and the military. I did everything I could to stir the President’s appreciation of the vastly critical military situation which we had to cure. It was not a question of imagination; I had too much

imagination around. Members of the staff were terribly concerned, and they spent their time trying to force me to take open action contrary to the administration, which I declined to do. In the end it paid because all through the rest of the war I had the backing of the administration and the backing of the conservative Congress.\textsuperscript{35}

As the United States debated its response to the larger war in Europe, American reporters continued to describe German advances in France. On 9 June, the newly appointed Minister of Information, Jean Provost, met with the representatives of the Anglo-American Press Association and encouraged the American reporters to submit optimistic reports regarding French resistance to the Germans. In a press conference, the Minister attempted to allay fears that the war was going badly for the French. "From a military standpoint it is improving steadily," he assured the gathered reporters. "Disregard reports of the government quitting Paris." Provost ended his remarks by assuring the journalists that they would "have many more chats . . ."\textsuperscript{36} But the assurances of the Minister of Information could not stop the German advance. During the second week of June, French Premier Paul Reynaud begged the United States and Britain to send troops and weapons to help halt the German armies. Neither the British nor the Americans were in any position to send meaningful aid to the French. In a desperate attempt to revitalize the French government and its military, Reynaud brought Marshal Henri Pétain and General Maxime Weygand, legends from World War I, back to service. Pétain and Weygand proposed a quick armistice with Germany to salvage what remained of the French Army and save the country from further destruction. With no hope for help from

\textsuperscript{35}Quoted in Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36}Liebling, "Paris Postscript," 51.
either Britain or the U.S., Reynaud resigned his post and turned the government over to Pétain. On 14 June the new government declared Paris an open city.37

The end of the Third French Republic came two days later. Bill Shirer, an intrepid CBS radio correspondent, traveled from Berlin to Paris shortly after the fall of the French capital. While in Paris, Shirer picked up a tip that an armistice was going to be signed in the woods of Compeigne, north of Paris in the same location and railway car that had been used in 1918 to end the last world war. He rushed to the woods and found the German military engineers demolishing the wall of the museum that housed the rail car. On 16 June, Shirer was present to watch the historic event and report it to the American people. Using his contacts within the German Army, he was able to remain at Compeigne even though Hitler had ordered all correspondents returned to Berlin for the official announcement of the surrender. Minutes after the official signing, the radio correspondent sat in a German communications van and began his broadcast to New York. For the next thirty minutes, he recounted the events of the surrender. The only reporter present at the scene, Shirer delivered an emotional account of the events that were both dramatic and personally painful to the reporter.

The humiliation of France, of the French, was complete. And yet in the preamble of the armistice terms Hitler told the French that he had not chosen the spot at Compeigne out of revenge; merely to right an old wrong. From the demeanor of the French delegates I gathered that they did not appreciate the difference.38

37Pogue, Ordeal, 37-8.

38William Shirer, “Revengeful, Triumphant Hate,” Berlin Diary (1941), Reporting WWII, 1, 72.
Not knowing whether his transmission was getting through, he continued until he could say no more. Unknown to the correspondent, the German radio operators in Berlin forwarded his broadcast directly to CBS headquarters in New York.\textsuperscript{39}

Even before the French surrendered, the recent, dramatic Nazi successes against what most believed to be the world’s best army in France had shaken many in the United States out of their sense of false security. Congress, suddenly aware of the threat to the country, and the president, fearful of the events in Western Europe but still unwilling to push public opinion too strongly, looked for means to strengthen American defense. The president spoke directly to the American people about the growing crisis on 26 May 1940. In one of his famous “fireside chats,” Roosevelt told America that despite earlier increases in military spending, the country still needed to allocate more of its resources to ensure the protection of the United States. “At this time when the world is threatened by forces of destruction,” he told his radio audience, “it is my resolve and yours to build up our armed forces.”\textsuperscript{40} The public response to the president’s address was overwhelming. In a press conference held two days after his public appeal, Roosevelt told reporters that he had received thousands of letters, telegrams, and hundreds of telephone calls all supporting increased spending on national defense.\textsuperscript{41}

The increase in public support for military preparedness allowed the president to

\textsuperscript{39}Cloud and Olson, \textit{Murrow Boys}, 84-86.

\textsuperscript{40}Roosevelt Papers, #52, “Fireside Chat on National Defense,” 26 May 1940, 230-40.

approach Congress on the last day of May and ask for the remainder of the items that
General Marshall had requested in his meeting with the president on 14 May. In his
letter to Congress outlining his reasons for requesting more funds for the military,
Roosevelt wrote, "The almost incredible events of the past two weeks in the European
conflict" prompted his appeal. While the president did not want his request to be viewed
as prelude to active American entrance into the war, he cautioned that the United States
had to be prepared for any eventuality. "As long, . . . as a possibility exists that not one
continent or two continents, but all continents may become involved in a world-wide war,
reasonable precaution demands that American defense be made more certain." Congress
approved the request quickly.

Roosevelt's use of the radio to communicate with the public demonstrated the
technological changes in communication that had taken place during the first half of the
twentieth century. Radio played an increasingly important role in the lives of Americans
during the 1930s and 1940s. While radio technology predated the First World War, it did
not develop as a common form of communication and entertainment in the United States
until the 1920s. Radio was changing the way in which the public received information and
spent its free time. Because of its unique ability to provide nearly instant access to events,
radio quickly secured a large following. By the end of 1940, an estimated 89 percent of

42 Roosevelt Papers, #54, "The President Asks for Appropriations for National

43 Ibid.
the public in the United States owned a radio.\textsuperscript{44} Even earlier, Americans had begun to turn to the radio as their source of entertainment. Broadcasts of sporting events like the World Series and horse races, and popular programs like "The Romance of Helen Trent" and "The Guiding Light" provided escape for a public that could not afford to spend money on live entertainment during the Great Depression of the 1930s.\textsuperscript{45} Radio was also the direct conduit between national leaders and the public. Slowly the new medium of broadcasting began to eclipse print media as the chosen source for news. In a poll taken in May 1937, 50 percent of respondents chose the newspaper as their preferred source for national news, while 40 percent chose radio. Two years later the numbers had almost reversed with only 45 percent choosing newspapers while an even half selected radio. By 1940, the majority of respondents (56 percent) favored radio as their method of receiving national and international news.\textsuperscript{46} The radio proved to be an important link between national leaders and the public during the troubling days of 1940. The people received news about the situation in Europe over the wireless and heard directly from their military

\textsuperscript{44}Cantril, Public Opinion, 703, #4 (AIPO), 31 December 1940.


\textsuperscript{46}Cantril, Public Opinion, 523, #3 (AIPO) 3 May 1937, 30 March 1939, 6 March 1939, and 12 March 1940. See also Cantril, 525 #4 (AIPO). In other polls, the pollers offered the sample more choices as the sources of their news. These additional options most likely diluted the results. Nevertheless, it was still evident that the print media were losing their place as the main source of news. Broadcast media continued to build its base of listeners, which increased steadily throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Only with the introduction of television did the number of radio listeners begin to decline. But even this later improvement in technology only continued a shift from print to broadcast that had begun with the introduction of the radio in the 1920s.
and political leaders. Radio technology succeeded in bringing the gravity of the international crisis into the homes of the American people and helped them to understand better the dangers facing their country.

The news of the French armistice was a shock to the United States. The terms of the surrender gave the Nazis control of the French Atlantic Coast and a corridor to pass troops and supplies through friendly Spain to North Africa. The American military worried that Germany would absorb the French fleet, mount a drive from Africa to the Brazilian bulge, and take possession of Dutch and French possessions in the New World.

With the fall of France, only the British remained to oppose the Germans in Europe. In Britain, the war intensified during the late summer of 1940. Just when the United States was taking meaningful steps to prepare itself for conflict, the British began a fight for their very survival. Although the British had imposed strict censorship at the beginning of hostilities, U.S. reporters in Britain were still able to send reports back to their news organizations describing the war.\(^47\) When the German Luftwaffe began its aerial attack on Britain in preparation for a planned invasion of the British home islands,

\(^47\)Two days before the beginning of the war in 1939, the Ministry of Information was created to deal with the press during wartime. Within four weeks, the staff of the newest British ministry grew from 12 to 999. Allied generals and political leaders, fearing the newly developed short-wave radio, had determined the previous year that war correspondents would be treated as they had been during the Great War of 1914-18. The British military would permit only a limited numbers of correspondents, escorted by public relations officers, to accompany Allied forces. All stories, sent either from the front or from Britain, were subject to censorship that covered both military security and information that had the potential to damage public morale. Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 218-9.
U.S. reporters covered first the Battle of Britain and later the Blitz.\textsuperscript{48} The coverage of the air war over Britain, unlike many of the previous events in the war, highlighted the impact that the newest form of journalism could have. Radio was uniquely suited to convey the realities of the air war to the public. The events of the previous several years, from Munich to Dunkirk, had provided radio broadcasters and technicians the opportunity to hone their skills at covering live events of international interest. Edward R. Murrow, the CBS newsman who had helped to bring much of the war to the people of the United States, remained in London and gave Americans their first understanding of what it meant to live through a modern war.\textsuperscript{49} By the late summer of 1940, journalists, both broadcast and print, were focusing their attention on the east coast of Britain. On 16 August, Murrow shared with his listeners his uneasiness about the bombing.

There is something unreal about this air war over Britain. Much of it you can't see, but the aircraft are up in the clouds, out of sight. Even when the Germans come down to dive-bomb an airfield it's all over in an incredibly short time. You just see a bomber slanting down toward his target; three or four little things that look like marbles fall out, and it seems to take a long time for those bombs to hit the ground. . . . I have come to

\textsuperscript{48} The Battle of Britain was the period of intensive German air attacks against British military installations conducted as part of the planned invasion of the British isles code-named "Sea Lion." Lasting from August till September 1940, the Luftwaffe attacks concentrated on air defense bases and military factories. After German leader Adolf Hitler canceled the invasion of Britain on 17 September, the German Luftwaffe continued and intensified their attacks, shifting from mainly military targets to strategic targets. This second wave of air attacks, called the Blitz and beginning in September 1940, destroyed or damaged large portions of the city of London, Coventry, and other major British cities that the Luftwaffe could reach. See \textit{Warfare in the Western World}, Robert A. Doughty and Ira D. Gruber, eds. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 668-74.

the conclusion that bombs that fall some distance away seem very unreal.\textsuperscript{50}

One hundred twenty American foreign and special correspondents covered the climatic weeks of the Battle of Britain. They sent stories back to their newspapers and radio networks recounting the valiant struggle of the British people against the might of the German air force. In contrast to the coverage of their British journalistic colleagues, U.S. correspondents clearly related the magnitude of what they were witnessing in an unabashedly pro-British manner.\textsuperscript{51} As a journalist from \textit{Time-Life} wrote, "We saw the indisputable danger to the United States if England was occupied by the enemy and we cabled our views as plainly as British censorship . . . permitted."\textsuperscript{52}

The British Ministry of Information allowed correspondents like CBS's Murrow and Scripps-Howard's Ernie Pyle to describe the damage done to London and the English countryside. While it was often difficult to verify the combat loses released by the British government, reporters were able to see the bombed-out buildings and the burning docks of the East End of London. Although the Battle of Britain began as a German attempt to win air superiority over Britain for a planned invasion, it shifted to a strategic operation


\textsuperscript{51}Knightley, \textit{First Casualty}, 235n. Knightley states that nearly all British journalists at the time of the Battle of Britain and the Blitz saw the campaign as another disaster for the nation. Knightley points out that censorship hampered the British press and denied them the ability to report to their readers and customers such basic information as what exactly was hit by the German's the previous night. American journalists, because of the British desire to influence American public opinion and the time delay in the release of their stories, were given greater latitude in what they reported.

aimed at breaking the will of the British people. On the night of 24-25 August, German bombers on a mission to attack targets at the Thames Haven strayed off course and dropped their bombs on the City of London. Churchill, over objections from his Royal Air Force advisors, retaliated with a raid against Berlin. The pattern of bombing populations centers had begun. On 7 September nearly 1,000 German aircraft participated in a raid on London (348 bombers, 617 fighters). The attack lasted twelve hours, continuing day and night. Murrow, in a radio address on 10 September, called the “air Blitzkrieg” a people’s war. He told listeners in the United States that while London and Britain had taken a beating from the German air force, he had not met one man or woman who was willing to “suggest that Britain should throw in her hand.” Instead, Murrow noted that the “people [were] angry.” While it was uncertain how long they could stand alone against the Germans, the CBS reporter remarked that they were “rapidly becoming veterans, even as their Army was hardened in the fire of Dunkirk.”

The war situation in the summer and fall of 1940 looked bleak for those opposed to Fascism. In Europe, Britain stood alone. Desperately needing the assistance of the United States to remain in the fight, the British asked, begged, and cajoled the United States for material aid. Many influential Americans began to urge the repeal of the Neutrality Acts forbidding arms shipments to Britain. William Allen White, a renowned editor from Kansas, proposed the formation of a Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. His stance attracted other interventionists. Public opinion polls pointed to a shift in general attitudes. Although a majority of those interviewed still opposed

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involvement in the spreading conflict, nearly half doubted that the nation could avoid involvement in the war and supported measures that would assist Britain in its defense against the Germans.\(^{54}\)

Although the United States did not have all the arms it needed, General Marshall and members of Roosevelt’s staff tried to find ways to aid the British. In Army warehouses throughout the country, the military had stored obsolete World War I-era arms. Declaring the arms surplus, the U.S. Army transferred the weapons to private firms who later sold them to the British. American neutrality laws and continued public opposition necessitated the circuitous route. For Britain, a country considering the impounding of pikes from local museums for use by the Home Guard, the weapons, despite their age, came as a godsend. The U.S. Navy also transferred World War I-era destroyers in September 1940 to Great Britain for use in defending the island nation. In an attempt to placate fears that the transfer of warships signaled greater U.S. commitment, Churchill announced that in exchange for the destroyers Britain would help strengthen Western Hemisphere defenses by giving the United States bases in Newfoundland and Bermuda, and leases on bases in the Caribbean.\(^{55}\) The “destroyers-for-bases deal” was

\(^{54}\)Pogue, *Ordeal*, 38. See also Cantril, 968, #32 (AIPO, OPOR), asked first 8 March 1940. When asked again in May, June, July, September, October December 1940 and January and March 1941, the percentage of respondents believing that the United States would eventually become active participants in the war steadily rose. By 20 July 1940, 49 percent believed the United States would become involved in the war while 48 percent thought the nation could remain neutral. In September 1940, 67 percent believed the country would enter the war. By 29 March 1941, 80 percent thought that war was unavoidable.

\(^{55}\)Roosevelt Papers, #91, “The President Informs the Congress of the Exchange of Certain Over-Age Destroyers for British Naval and Air Bases,” 3 September 1940, 391-
part of a continuing effort by the U.S. government and military to provide the weapons of war that Britain needed without moving quicker than public opinion would allow. But aid sent to Britain in the fall of 1940 threatened to weaken the efforts to strengthen the U.S. military. As Major Walter Bedell Smith succinctly observed: "If we were required to mobilize after having released guns necessary for this mobilization and were found to be short... everyone who was a party to the deal might hope to be hanging from a lamp post...."56

While the public listened and read about the news of the struggle in Europe and heard reports of the growing unrest in Asia, many still hoped that the United States would be able to maintain its neutrality. From the Spring of 1940 through the end of 1941, public opinion polls showed that the American people were willing to support measures meant materially to aid the Allied powers. The release of surplus armaments, the transfer of obsolete war ships, and other programs intended to supply the British with much needed supplies met with public approval. This was a dramatic change in public sentiment. In 1938 and early 1939, most Americans had opposed the supplying of any belligerent country. In polls taken in September 1938, less than a third of the respondents supported the idea of selling military equipment to the Western Powers if a war should break out in Europe. However, as the international situation changed, so did American public opinion. In February 1939, over half of respondents (52 percent) supported the sale of airplanes and other war materials to England and France if they entered a war with

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56Quoted in Pogue, *Ordeal*, 53.
By the summer of 1940, Americans clearly supported the policy of providing war materials to Britain. In a poll question asked three times between July and October 1940, support for aid to Britain rose from 85 percent to 90 percent. Public support for the isolationist movement and its leaders declined as Americans increasingly came to approve of measures to support Britain. When poll takers asked a national cross-section of business leaders, traditional supporters of isolationist thought and anti-Roosevelt feelings, about their opinion of the America First Committee spokesman Charles Lindbergh, only 30.7 percent of respondents felt that he and his organization were making a contribution to the nation's thinking on the war. General Marshall summed up the shift in public attitudes in his portion of the Report of the Secretary of War to the President, submitted in mid-1941. "During May and June 1940," Marshall wrote, "the German avalanche completely upset the equilibrium of the European Continent. France was

57 Cantril, Public Opinion, 1156, #4 (A IPO) 12 September 1939; 1156, #6 (A IPO) 16 February 1939.

58 Cantril, Public Opinion, 1160, #49 (OPOR) 20 July 1940, 22 August 1940, 9 October 1940.

59 Cantril, Public Opinion, 1160, #55 (FOR) October 1940. The questions asked: "Which of the following statements most nearly represents your opinion of Colonel Lindbergh, in light of his recent public utterances. Asked of a national cross-section of business executive." 30.7 percent of respondents selected the response, "He has unselfishly and patriotically been making a useful effort to straighten out the nation's thinking on the war." 38.6 percent chose, "His purposes, no doubt, are patriotic, but his views are mostly misguided." 14.2 percent chose, "He may be guiltless of any conscious subversion connections with foreign interests, but he has been improperly influenced by the personal attentions paid him by Hitler and Goering in Germany." 2.8 percent selected, "Lindbergh is unpatriotic, and he may be deliberately working in the interests of Germany." In total, 55.6 percent of those sampled selected responses that were critical of Lindbergh and his views.
eliminated as a world power and the British Army lost most of its heavy equipment. To many the invasion of Great Britain appeared imminent.” The Army Chief of Staff continued, “The precariousness of the situation and its threat to the security of the United States became suddenly apparent to our people, and the pendulum of public opinion reversed itself, swinging violently to the other extreme, in an urgent demand for enormous and immediate increases in modern equipment [for the United States and for Great Britain] and of the armed forces [of the United States].”

While events in Europe had spurred a reawakening to the threat of war, American public opinion still did not support an all-out intervention on the side of the British. As the polls showed, the common man and his representatives in Congress reacted in fits and starts to the troubling news that came from Europe. With the 1940 presidential election looming in the near future, President Roosevelt “dared not go beyond a policy of improvised aid [to Britain that continued to be] piecemeal, incomplete, and uncoordinated” and the gradual modernization and enlargement of the U.S. armed forces. At the end of July 1940, Roosevelt felt that he could take extraordinary action and mobilized the National Guard. The federalization of the Guard allowed the Army to begin training units that would serve as a core to the anticipated increase in ground forces

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61 Roosevelt Papers, #73, “The President Asks for Authority to Call out the National Guard,” 29 July 1940, 313-15.
if the U.S. entered the war.  

The president also asked Congress to pass a selective service act. The Selective Service Bill in 1940 marked the first time that the United States had attempted to institute a peacetime draft. In all previous wars in which the government had compelled citizens to join the armed forces, the public had reacted with strong opposition to a draft. Knowing his history, General Marshall did not expect the public to welcome a draft in 1940. Because he was campaigning for an unprecedented third term, the president remained largely aloof during the debate on the bill in its early stages. Isolationists attacked it as part of Roosevelt's attempt to "fan war hysteria" and promote his re-election. Despite vocal opposition from both the left and the right, the public surprised both the Army Chief of Staff and the president. In public opinion polls taken throughout the spring and summer of 1940 after the bill had been introduced, support for compulsory military service grew. By mid-August, less than two weeks before the final vote on the bill, over 71 percent of respondents approved of compulsory service. Perhaps most surprisingly, roughly the same percentage of draft-age men also supported the measure. When Roosevelt publicly expressed his support for the bill, as did Wendell Wilkie his Republican challenger in the presidential race, the bill's passage was all but assured. On 27 August Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1940, making men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five eligible for conscription and calling into national service

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62 Pogue, Ordeal, 56.

the eighteen divisions of the National Guard and the officers and men of the Organized Reserves. Although the passage of the Selective Service Act was welcome news for Marshall and other military leaders, it meant that the U.S. armed forces had to supply more men while at the same time trying to provide material to Britain for its stand against Germany. On 16 September 1940, President Roosevelt signed the Act into law, providing the War Department the legal means to raise an effective Army. For the first time in American history, the building of the armed forces began before the nation was officially involved in the fighting. Roosevelt felt confident enough in his stance on selective service that he made it part of his reelection platform. In a speech delivered one month after the passage of the act and just weeks before the election, the president spoke at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Speaking of the recent debates over national security issues, he said, "The Republican leaders played politics with defense in 1938 and 1939. They are playing politics with national security today." Roosevelt went on to call for a united stand behind his policies for national preparedness. When the votes were counted, Roosevelt easily defeated his opponent, and his policy of increased military training and spending continued.

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65 Roosevelt Papers, #121, "Campaign Address at Madison Square Gardens, New York City," 28 October 1940, 499-510.
During the remainder of 1940, the United States began to train the men who would fill the greatly expanded Army, Navy, and Air Corps. Throughout the last months of 1940, the United States also continued to supply the British with war materials, much of it coming straight off the assembly lines of U.S. factories. Marshall and other military commanders had to balance the needs of Britain with the requirements of the U.S. armed forces — to meet the immediate needs of an embattled ally while attempting to continue the build-up of military strength that had increased with the induction of hundreds of thousands of men under the compulsory service law. The call for more direct involvement became louder as the months passed. Roosevelt recognized the need for increased aid to the British but was also aware that public opinion was not yet ready to accept a more active U.S. role in the war. On December 29, the president outlined for the American people his plan to lend or lease American equipment to Britain. In another of his famous fireside chats, Roosevelt described the United States as "the arsenal for democracy."

Addressing the nation via radio, FDR called for United States arms to aid "Britain and other free nations which are resisting aggression." He continued:

I make the direct statement to the American people that there is far less chance of the United States getting into war, if we do all we can now to support the nations defending themselves against attack by the Axis than if we acquiesce in their defeat, submit tamely to an Axis victory, and wait our turn to be the object of attack in another war later on. . . . The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting. They ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters which will enable them to fight for their liberty and for our security. . . . We must be the great arsenal of democracy. For us this is an emergency as serious as war itself. We must apply ourselves to our task with the same resolution, the same sense of urgency, the same spirit of
patriotism and sacrifice as we would show were we at war.66

The House of Representatives passed the Lend-Lease measure by a vote of 260 to 165 on 8 February 1941. The bill cleared the Senate a month later on 11 March and the president signed it into law the same day. A few hours later Roosevelt asked the Congress for an emergency appropriation of $7 billion to finance the new program.67 The Lend-Lease agreement meant that the United States could continue supplying Britain even after its supply of gold, U.S. tender, and investments ran out. In later years General Marshall would remark on the significance of the Lend-Lease Act: "I think the passage of the Lend-Lease Act plainly declared our relations with Great Britain and our friendship with them. It didn't necessarily indicate we were going to war with them, but it made it a probability rather than a possibility."68

Three months after the Lend-Lease Act went into effect, Hitler's armies turned their attention from the West to the East when they invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Eager to use any diversion that might save Britain from the Nazis, President Roosevelt released Soviet funds in the United States and suspended the neutrality laws for Russia. When the government of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin appealed to the United States for material aid in resisting the Germans, Roosevelt directed General Marshall to rush as much assistance as possible to the Soviet Union. Although the military resisted


67Pogue, Ordeal, 70-71.

68Quoted in Pogue, Ordeal, 71.
this latest drain on American military production, Roosevelt understood that if the Russians could survive they would tie up numerous German divisions and give Britain its first respite in nearly two years of war. The “arsenal of democracy” continued to supply the nations fighting against aggression in Europe while it tried to prepare itself for war.\textsuperscript{69}

In the wake of Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union, President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to meet in secret to plan for the future. They held the first of their conferences in early August 1941 off Argentia in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland. While they would develop concrete military plans during later conferences, the British and American military leaders recognized that Japanese aggression in the Far East posed a threat to global stability as surely as did Nazi aggression in Europe. The two sets of leaders agreed that if the United States entered the war, it would direct its attention first to the war in Europe and only later against the threat in the Pacific. Roosevelt, Churchill, and their political advisors also formulated a list of principles outlining the underlying aims of the two powers. Later known as the Atlantic Charter, the peace aims declared that the two nations sought to prevent the formation of new territories or any territorial changes without the consent of the people affected; to guarantee world political and economic freedom; and to begin the disarmament of aggressor nations, “pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security.”\textsuperscript{70} Released to the press on 14 August, the Charter struck a chord with the


public because of its strong moral position and principles that the English-speaking people were prepared to defend. In describing the impact of the Atlantic Charter, Winston Churchill later wrote: “The profound and far-reaching importance of this Joint Declaration was apparent. The fact alone of the United States, still technically neutral, joining with a belligerent Power in making such a declaration was astonishing.”

The conference and the Charter unequivocally linked the two nations together.

General Marshall returned from Argentia, Newfoundland, wondering how he was going to prepare the nation for a war that appeared more certain while also continuing to supply its allies in their continued fight against Fascism. A month before the Atlantic Conference, in a speech to graduates at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, he had outlined what he saw as the most important factor in modern war. “Today,” Marshall told the students, “total war is not a succession of mere episodes in a day or a week. It is a long drawn-out and intricately planned business and the longer it continues the heavier the demands on the character of the men engaged it in.” While admitting that war was fought with “physical weapons of flame and steel,” Marshall maintained that it was not the possession of the arms or use of them that decided the issue. “It is morale that wins the victory.” Morale, the general continued, was an intangible thing that existed in the mind. “It is steadfastness and courage and hope. It is confidence and zeal and loyalty. It is élan, esprit de corps, and determination.” Above all, “It is staying power, the spirit which

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endures to the end -- the will to win."\textsuperscript{72}

Marshall's speech was intended not only to inspire the students that would soon be entering society, but it was also meant to reassure the men who had been swept into the armed forces in the wake of the Selective Service Act. Since the passage of the act in September 1940, Marshall had been working to provide as quickly as possible the essentials needed by the new soldiers. From barracks, cots, and uniforms to rifles, artillery pieces, and aircraft, the U.S. Army lacked much of the equipment necessary to train the new soldiers for war. On the evening of the same day that the Atlantic Conference ended, the House of Representatives had concluded one of the hottest political fights of the year and passed an extension of the draft and the federalization of the National Guard units. One vote (203 to 202) had made the difference. Two days later, the Senate approved the House bill by a more comfortable margin of 36 to 19. Marshall had seen that the original one-year enlistment authorized by the Selective Service Act of 1940 would end before the increasingly grave situations in Europe and the Pacific were resolved. The debate within Congress and between isolationists and interventionists over the extension of the Act was bitter and stretched throughout the summer of 1941.\textsuperscript{73}

The bitter debates in Congress and in some of the leading news outlets of the country seriously impacted the men in the military. On 18 August both \textit{Time} and \textit{Life} magazines published articles describing the low state of morale in the Army. In the \textit{Life


\textsuperscript{73}Pogue, \textit{Ordeal}, 145-55.
piece, the author asserted: "The most important single reason for the bad morale in this division appears to be national uncertainty. . . . Not more than 5 percent of the men in this division believe that the emergency is as serious as President Roosevelt insists."74 The Time article claimed that the low state of morale affected two-thirds of the 1,531,800 men under arms. The author of the Time story quoted "an old army sergeant" as saying, "Give us a shooting war and there won't be a morale problem."75 Some soldiers threatened dissertation at the end of their initial twelve months of service. Servicemen began to scrawl OHIO on barracks walls. The letters stood for "Over the Hill In October" and were a clear threat to continued military training and discipline. Marshall had been aware of the growing unrest among the soldiers in the military but was shocked at the amount of coverage the press gave the issue.76 In a letter to Major General Campbell King, Marshall wrote, "It has been very difficult for us to do much [about the morale problem] . . . without being charged with conducting a propaganda service under the power of the military control and in opposition to the minority group in Congress. So long as we are on a peacetime basis, this situation will be very trying, and I expect to have a difficult time in the coming months."77

Despite his reluctance to be seen as engaging in propaganda, Marshall and the War

74 "This is What the Soldiers Complain About," Life (18 August 1941), 17-18.
75 "Problem of Morale," Time (18 August 1940), 35-36.
Department took steps to correct the morale problem in the military. Noting that many soldiers had complained that they did not understand or believe what they had been told about the current world situation, Marshall began a program to educate the U.S. servicemen. In a memorandum to the president dated 6 September 1941, Marshall wrote he believed that fewer than 10 percent of the soldiers currently in uniform suffered from serious morale problems. But he stressed that “the home influence presents a continuing difficulty.” Despite the increasingly grave situation in Europe, with German forces advancing rapidly into the Soviet Union, the American people continued to express strong isolationist feelings. Marshall explained to Roosevelt, “Parents have been so confused as to the facts or logic of the situation and so influenced by what they read of a critical nature that something must be done to bring them to an understanding of the national emergency and of the necessity for a highly trained Army.” While Marshall was confident that the War Department could adequately “counteract this weakness on the home-front,” he

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8Unlike the German Blitzkrieg through the Low Countries and France, and the air attacks against Great Britain, the American public did not react strongly to Hitler’s decision to invade Russia in June 1941. Traditionally, Americans had ambiguous feelings towards the Soviet Union. The “Red Scare” in the early twentieth century had turned many in the United States against the Communist country. The Russians also failed to take advantage of the tremendous influence of the press in reporting their desperate struggle against the Nazis. While the British had used newsmen to great advantage in turning U.S. public opinion around from an isolationist stance to one of a material ally, the Russians prevented reporters from covering much of the war within their borders in 1941. The legacy of Stalin’s rigid control over the freedom of expression and the press meant that U.S. journalists could not inform the public of the newest German aggression. Public memory of the German-Soviet Pact, the desperateness of the Russian struggle against the Germans, and the limitations in communications systems from the Soviet Union also contributed to the minimal coverage and impact of the German invasion of Russia on the American public. For U.S. public sentiments on Russia see Cantril, Public Opinion, 948-49, #1-3, 10 (FOR, AIPO); for U.S. coverage of the war in the Soviet Union and its impact on U.S. opinion see Marshall Reminiscences, 574, 580, 589.
recommended that the government take "prompt action" to better inform the public.\textsuperscript{79}

Even before Marshall sent his memorandum to the president, Roosevelt and the
armed forces had taken steps to examine how best to harness information for the good of
the country. On 11 February 1941, the War Department had established a Bureau of
Public Relations. The BPR had overall responsibility for all agencies within the War
Department dealing with public relations or related matters. The military appointed public
relations officers to the headquarters of each major command. These public relations
officers worked as liaisons between the military and the press. On 1 May 1941, the Navy
also established a public affairs branch, the Office of Public Relations, with responsibilities
similar to its Army counterpart. Together, the two services attempted to keep the public
informed of their work in preparing to defend the country. The president understood that
while the public was beginning to comprehend the broad outlines of the threats facing the
nation, more needed to be done. To help inform the people, Roosevelt established the
Office of Civilian Defense by executive order on 20 May 1941. The president ordered the
director of the Office of Civilian Defense, former New York City Mayor Fiorello H.
LaGuardia, "to facilitate constructive civilian participation in the defense program, and to
sustain national morale."\textsuperscript{80} Within the OCD, there existed the Division of National Unity,

\textsuperscript{79}Marshall Papers, 2, "Memorandum to the President," 6 September 1941
[Washington, D.C.], 600-01.

\textsuperscript{80}Roosevelt Papers, #42, "The Office of Civilian Defense Is Established.
Executive Order No. 8757," 20 May 1941, 162-73.
that was supposed to encourage the development of national morale. In October 1941, Roosevelt removed the morale-building responsibilities of the OCD and placed them within a newly formed agency, the Office of Facts and Figures. The president hoped that the OFF would be able to sustain morale and serve as a clearinghouse of information on defense activities. The OFF was also responsible for furnishing the president with the background domestic intelligence he needed to make decisions on public information matters and to present to the American people the most accurate and coherent accounts of governmental policy and international developments. These organizations -- the Army and Navy public relations bureaus, the Office of Civil Defense's Division of National Unity and its successor the Office of Facts and Figures -- attempted to carry the president's message to the American people and bring their reactions back to Washington. As the international situation continued to worsen, Roosevelt and his military advisors felt it necessary to form staffs that would provide a closer connection between the military, the government, the media, and the people.

Perhaps in an attempt to address the problem of informing the public of the great crisis the country faced in the late fall and early winter of 1941, General Marshall took the unusual step of inviting seven journalists to the War Department on 15 November 1941. Marshall called the reporters together for what would later be called a “deep background”

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83 *Roosevelt Papers*, #99, note.
interview. The Chief of Staff told the reporters that "there were some things he had to tell to key press correspondents in order that their interpretations of current and forthcoming events did not upset key military strategy of the United States." Robert Sherrod, reporter for *Time* magazine, kept a record of the meeting with Marshall. In his notes Sherrod wrote that Marshall had said, "The United States is on the brink of war with the Japanese. . . . Our position is highly favorable in this respect: We have access to a leak in

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*Marschall Papers*, 2, "Memorandum from Robert L. Sherrod to David W. Hulburd, Jr.," 15 November 1941, Washington, D.C., 676-9. Sherrod was a Washington correspondent for *Time* magazine who had covered military affairs since June 1941. Hulburd was an associate editor of *Time* and had supervised the magazine's news bureaus from New York City. The other six journalists who attended the briefing were Edward E. Bomar (Associated Press), Harold Slater (International News Service), Lyle C. Watson (United Press Association), Charles W. B. Hurd (*New York Times*), Bert Andrews (*New York Herald Tribune*), and Earnest K. Lindley (*Newsweek* magazine). Brigadier General Alexander D. Surles, director of the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations, was also present.

*Japan had been extending its control over Asia since 1931 when it provoked several "incidents" with China, leading to an invasion of Manchuria. In response to Japanese aggression in China, the League of Nations censured Japan, and the United States sent strong diplomatic protests to Tokyo. Such actions appeared to have reinforced the Japanese militarists' arguments that war with the West was inevitable. As a result of this thinking, the military leaders in Japan planned to seize the oil and minerals of southern Asia. After Germany overran Europe in the spring of 1940, Japan signed a Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. The agreement allowed the Japanese free reign in the Orient. Friction between the United States and Japan continued to increase during 1940. In July, 1940, President Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the United States and later instituted a commercial blockade of Japan. With the fall of moderate Prime Minister, Prince Fumimaro Konoye, his replacement General Kideki Tojo advocated the creation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere which would extend Japanese economic and military control from Manchuria to Thailand and New Guinea. To ensure that the United States would not interfere with its plans for expansion, the Japanese planned to cripple the U.S. Fleet at Pearl Harbor and destroy U.S. outposts in strategic locations like the Phillipines. See Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1985), 9-53, for a discussion of pre-war American and Japanese thinking. See also Mitsuo Fuchida, *The Battle of Midway* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1955), 25-54. Fuchida was a Japanese naval aviator who helped to plan
all information they are receiving concerning our military preparations... In other words, we know what they know about us and they don’t know that we know it.”

Marshall told the journalists that the United States was building up its forces in the Pacific. These forces would allow the U.S. both to defend its possessions against Japanese attack and also to wage an offensive war against Japan. Despite the preparations that the military was making to counter the Japanese threat, Marshall assured the reporters that he still hoped to avoid war. “The last thing the U.S. wants is a war with Japanese [sic] which would divide our strength. The Germans are pushing the Japanese from 19 directions to get them into war with the U.S....” But if war with Japan did come, Marshall stated that “we’ll fight mercilessly. Flying Fortresses [B-17 bombers] will be dispatched immediately to set the paper cities of Japan on fire. There won’t be any hesitation about bombing civilians -- it will be all out.” Marshall’s candor with the journalists was a calculated risk. He knew that if the information he supplied the reporters was printed or

and took part in the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor. After the war he wrote a book describing Japanese reasons for striking the American base in the Hawaiian Islands.

86Ibid. Marshall was referring to the breaking of the Japanese diplomatic code. The code, identified as MAGIC by the military, allowed the United States to intercept certain messages sent by the Japanese diplomatic corps. While breaking the code did not provide the United States with access to all Japanese radio traffic, it did allow military leaders a clearer picture of Japanese intentions. See Department of Defense, The “Magic” Background of Pearl Harbor, 8 pts. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1977).

87Marshall’s estimates of the U.S. readiness in the Pacific was overly optimistic. He based his assumptions on an unwarranted belief that heavy bombers, scheduled to be dispatched to the Philippines by 20 November 1941, would be able to defend the islands and attack the Japanese. While the personnel for the aircraft arrived on that date, their airplanes were delayed in San Francisco and subsequently failed to meet up with their crews. See Marshall Papers, 2, “Marshall To Commanding General, Port of Embarkation, San Francisco,” 29 November 1941 [Washington, D.C.], 687-88.
even hinted at in their stories, negotiations with Japan would end immediately and war could start at once. In a hand-written account of the meeting, Sherrod noted that Marshall had said that timing was very important. "The danger period is the first ten days of December, Marshall said. If we get by that, we’re OK until February. By then MacArthur will have plenty in the Phillipines."ˆ88

Although the United States was then on the brink of war, the country was still not prepared for its entrance into the Second World War. U.S. industries continued to supply both Britain and Russia with much needed war supplies. In September and October 1941, German U-boats had attacked U.S. Navy destroyers escorting conveys to Britain. After an attack on the U.S.S. Greer in September, the president had authorized the Navy to fire on any German vessel in waters south and west of Iceland.ˆ89 On 30 October, a German submarine torpedoed and sank the U.S.S. Reuben James. In the wake of the Reuben James incident, Congress ordered the arming of merchant ships.ˆ90 America entered a state of undeclared war with Germany in the North Atlantic. Despite the public anger at these attacks in the United States, the German sinkings of several U.S. ships were not enough to incite the passions of the American people into demanding entry into the war. Public opinion polls signaled that the people supported the current policies of the president but were hesitant to go any further. From May until September 1941, a polling firm

ˆ88Ibid, n8.


ˆ90Roosevelt Papers, #88, "Fireside Chat to the Nation," 11 September 1941, 384-92.
repeatedly posed the question regarding a more active U.S. role in the war. Asked
whether “President Roosevelt [had] gone too far in his policies . . . or not far enough,”
most respondents asserted that the president had acted “about right.” Only 23 percent of
respondents chose either extreme -- that the president had gone too far or not far enough.
Americans were not yet ready to take an active role in the war.\textsuperscript{91} In a fireside chat on 11
September 1941, Roosevelt provided a clear analogy explaining his recent actions. “When
you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush
him.”\textsuperscript{92}

In his briefing with journalists in November, Marshall had been only partly correct
in his assessment of the international situation. His reference to the first week of
December as being the crucial time period proved to be very accurate. But his estimates
of the United States’ ability to protect its assets in the Pacific and rapidly strike back at the
Japanese if they attacked were overly optimistic. On the morning of 7 December 1941,
Japanese naval aircraft swept over the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor. Caught
completely unprepared, the U.S. forces were unable to defend themselves and suffered
extensive damage. In less that two hours, the Japanese sank two battleships, heavily

\textsuperscript{91}Cantril, \textit{Public Opinion}, \#70, 1163 (AIPO). In a poll question asked numerous
times between 26 September 1940 and 9 September 1941, respondents had the
opportunity to express their opinion on whether the United States should “get in” the war
or “stay out.” From 1940 through the summer of 1941, between 80 and 90 percent of
respondents stated that they believed the country should stay out of the war, but continue
with aid to Britain. As the fall of 1941 changed to winter, the majority of respondents still
expressed the view that the country should not take an active role in the war, with 69
percent still against direct U.S. involvement in the war. See also Cantril, \textit{Public Opinion},
971-3, \#61, (AIPO).

\textsuperscript{92}Roosevelt Papers, \#88, “Fireside Chat,” 11 September 1941.
damaged six others, and put nearly a dozen other ships out of action. The Japanese surprise was so complete that their pilots destroyed 150 U.S. aircraft on the ground and killed over 2,300 U.S. servicemen -- sailors, soldiers, and marines. News of the attack shocked the nation. Although the extent of the damage was not known immediately, the country understood that despite its best efforts the United States was now at war.93

By some ironic twist of fate, on the same day that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor catapulted the country into war, the isolationist America First Committee had scheduled a rally in Pittsburgh, PA. Reporter Robert Hagy of Time-Life-Fortune had planned to cover the rally. Just before he left, news of the attack on Pearl Harbor came over the news wires in his office. Hagy still went to the rally where he asked America Firsters what the news meant to them. "If Congress were to declare war," the rally leader told Hagy, "I'm sure that every America Firster would be cooperative and support his government in the winning of the war in every possible way . . . ."94 The rally leader's comments matched the sentiment of the nation. Prior to the Japanese attack, Americans were still divided over whether or not the country should become actively involved in the fighting. After the attack, very few expressed any doubt about what the United States' response should be. On 8 December, President Roosevelt addressed the nation at a special joint session of Congress. Roosevelt asked Congress for a declaration of war against Japan and asked for the support of the American people in the days that lay ahead.

93Spector, Eagle Against the Sun, 1-7; Fuchida, Midway, 50-54.

94Time-Life-Fortune News Bureaus, War Comes to the U.S. -- Dec. 7, 1941 (New York: Time-Life-Fortune, 1941). This source is a compilation of all wire reports from Time-Life-Fortune journalists filed during the first thirty hours after the Japanese attack.
The news from the Pacific was grim. Roosevelt announced that in addition to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces had also attacked Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Wake Island. Congress showed remarkable solidarity and almost unanimously declared war on Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S., and Congress passed a joint resolution accepting the state of war which had been thrust upon the United States.\textsuperscript{95} The war that had begun in 1931 in the Pacific and 1939 in Europe covered the entire globe by December 1941.

The twenty-seven months separating the German invasion of Poland and the Japanese attack on the United States marked a dramatic and uncertain period for the United States. Although the country had been firmly isolationist in 1939, by the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, events across the world had galvanized the American government, military, press, and public, unifying the nation more than anyone would have believed possible in 1939. Many factors contributed to this change in attitude. The leadership of individuals like Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall helped to keep the debates over America’s future focused on preparing the nation for the most dire possibilities. Marshall, in his fight to prepare the U.S. military for a modern conflict, had first to win the support of President Franklin Roosevelt and then convince a reluctant Congress and public that precious funds needed to be spent on improving the armed forces. Even after Roosevelt joined Marshall’s cause, the president still had to move cautiously so as not to outpace public opinion. Both the president and the Army Chief of

\textsuperscript{95}Roosevelt Papers, #125, “Address to Congress Asking that a State of War be Declared Between the United States and Japan,” 8 December 1941, 514-16.
Staff knew that only with the willing cooperation of the public, the press, and the
Congress could the country survive the war they feared would come.

The debates over the Selective Service Act of 1940 and its extension in 1941
demonstrated the divisions that existed within the United States in the years leading up to
America’s entrance into the war. The press and outspoken public figures continued to call
for an isolationist policy. Only with the German invasion of Western Europe in the Spring
of 1940, did the country begin to break out of its isolationist shell. The defeat of France
and the aerial attack on Britain convinced many in the United States that America’s
defenses had to be strengthened and that the United States had to assist in their allies’
struggle against aggression and tyranny. Press coverage of the Allied defeat on the
Continent and the British resistance to German air raids in the summer and fall of 1940
brought the war home to Americans in a way that reporting had never before. With
Britain standing alone against the full power of the Nazis, the United States people, under
presidential leadership and media encouragement, accepted measures that would have
been unthinkable just a few months before. Radio, a new means of information
transmission, sent first-hand accounts of the war, often while events were still unfolding,
to the United States. The reporters who covered the Battle of Britain and the Blitz were
unabashedly pro-British and influenced public feelings. Roosevelt and his advisors
capitalized on the shift in public opinion making it possible to transfer surplus weapons to
Britain, to exchange destroyers for bases, to pass the Selective Service Act of 1940, to
win support for the Lend-Lease Act.

In August 1941, President Roosevelt had taken the unusual step of meeting with
British Prime Minister Churchill to discuss strategy for a war the United States was not yet involved in. At the Argentia Conference, the two leaders produced the Atlantic Charter that clearly spelled out the two countries’ war aims. Drawing on traditional democratic values, the Atlantic Charter affirmed the United States’ commitment to resist fascism and totalitarianism and to fight for the preservation of basic human freedoms throughout the world. Despite this new commitment to resisting tyranny and supporting Britain, the American people were still unwilling to enter the war. While the public became more supportive of measures taken to aid Britain and eventually Russia and China, the people continued to resist active U.S. participation in the war. As late as November 1941, after German submarines had attacked several U.S. vessels, a majority of the public stated that they did not want the government to enter the war.\textsuperscript{96} Not until the dramatic attack on Pearl Harbor did the nation finally unite. The dire international crisis had awakened the United States to the dangers of the world, but only after Japan directly attacked the United States did the country finally understand that it could no longer stay out of the war. The events of 7 December 1941 marked the end of the United States’ preparations for a war it hoped it would not have to fight. Although the country was not fully prepared, military and political leaders were after Pearl Harbor able to unite the country so that it could face the challenges of a world war.

\textsuperscript{96}Cantril, \textit{Public Opinion}, 5 November 1941, #15 (AIPO), 1172.
Chapter 2
“We Americans Have Cleared Our Decks and Taken Our Battle Stations”: The Exceptional Unity of the United States in World War II

In an address on 27 October 1941 commemorating Navy and Total Defense Day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt told the assembled crowd and journalists covering the event, “We Americans have cleared our decks and taken our battle stations.”\(^1\) Roosevelt’s declaration summarized his and his military leaders’ efforts during the previous two years to prepare the country for a war that threatened to envelop the entire world.\(^2\) Although the president’s statement was an apt description of the transformation that had taken place in the United States before the attack on Pearl Harbor, it was an oversimplification of the problems faced by the Chief Executive and his Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, in changing public opinion, winning Congressional and media support, and preparing U.S. armed forces for a world war. As Roosevelt was well aware, the clearing of the decks and the taking battles stations on a warship was far easier than preparing a democracy for war. The task still facing the U.S. in December 1941 was to train, educate, and motivate 140 million Americans for the long war forced upon them when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The government and the military had to find some way to maintain


\(^2\)See Chapter 1.
the cooperation of the public and the press if the nation were to emerge victorious from
the trials of the Second World War.\(^3\)

In the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the country reacted with a mixture
of shock, anger, and fear. Rumors spread through the press -- that a Japanese invasion
force stood poised to invade the West Coast of the United States, that the Japanese had
destroyed the U.S. Pacific Fleet, that American outposts in the Pacific had fallen to the
Japanese. To quell speculation and provide accurate information to the people, President
Roosevelt spoke with reporters on 9 December 1941. He confirmed that the Japanese had
attacked Clark Air Field in the Philippines but resisted reporters’ calls to give the public
every bit of information that he had. FDR did promise that he would supply information
about the war to the American people but with two constraints. “All information,” the
president told reporters, “has to conform to two obvious conditions. . . . The first is that it
is accurate. . . . And the second is . . . it does not give aid and comfort to the enemy.”
When reporters asked where the new information policy left them, he replied, “you have
got to wait -- sit and wait on information, because you can’t determine whether certain
information conforms to those two principles.”\(^4\) Knowing that the correspondents would
not welcome his remarks, the president reassured them. “What we [the government] want
is to get the news out as soon as we can, subject to the two qualifications, and do it in the
most convenient way. In other words,” Roosevelt told the press, “our objectives are


\(^4\) *Roosevelt Papers*, #126, “The Seven Hundred Ninetieth Press Conference,” 9
December 1941, 516-22.
exactly alike. It is going to work all right."

What the president failed to tell reporters at that press conference was that the military and the government had been studying the problem of information management for nearly two years. Even before the United States entered the war, the government had been concerned about how best to use information to build and maintain public support for the anticipated war effort. Confidential surveys showed that the nation faced many difficulties. Some within the public and the government itself did not understand the need to wage an offensive rather than defensive war. The surveys suggested that Americans underestimated the strength of the enemy and the enormous demands that war would place on the nation economically, socially, and politically. Americans were also unsure about their allies -- questioning whether the British or the Russians could aid the United States during a war. Nor did many Americans understand the nature and interrelationships of the economic controls necessary to regulate the cost of living and fight inflation during the anticipated periods of large government spending necessary to equip the nation for war. The government knew it had to persuade the public to curb excess spending and to convince traditionally antagonistic groups, like labor and management, to cooperate until the crisis had ended. It also knew it had to persuade a "substantial minority" of the people that the government was not withholding information about military and naval events.6

Beyond considering what it needed to tell the country, the government had

5Ibid.

examined methods to prevent the release of sensitive military data. Immediately after the first German forces entered Poland in 1939, President Roosevelt ordered the Navy to begin an analysis of the problem of information management, especially the censorship of cable communications, under Commander (later Captain) H. K. Fenn, U.S. Navy. Between September 1939 and December 1941, Fenn had brought to active service more than 400 naval reserve officers who would form the core contingent of naval censors during the war. Fenn and his officers worked with communications companies to draft agreements governing the censorship and release of information. The Navy also established facilities and trained men in the government to implement a censorship plan.  

The Army had begun its own study of censorship in late 1940 when the Army's Military Intelligence Branch assigned Major (later Brigadier General) W. Preston Corderman, USA, to investigate and develop a plan for wartime censorship. Corderman, with his assistant Captain (later Colonel) Gilbert C. Jacobus, studied current methods of censorship. Jacobus traveled to Bermuda in January 1941 to observe the British system. Like the Navy, the Army began to recruit and train personnel in the art of information management.  

The Army generally confined itself to the development of plans to censor the mails while the Navy dealt with cable transmissions. In June 1941, a Joint Army and Navy Board presented a plan to President Roosevelt that outlined a comprehensive approach to

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8Ibid.
censorship -- an approach patterned on the experiences of the Committee of Public
Information (Creel Committee) during World War I. The plan urged the president to
appoint a Director of Censorship, to designate an Army officer as chief postal and wire
censor, and to select a Navy officer as chief radio and cable censor. The president
approved this plan on 4 June 1941, and a committee, under the guidance of the U.S.
Postmaster General, formed in November 1941 to work out the details. The committee
finished its report on 7 December 1941.9

The War Department took no formal action to censor information the day of the
Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. While neither the government nor the military disclosed
exact figures regarding the loss of men and materiel at Pearl Harbor, news of the attack
quickly spread around the nation and the world. The day following the attack, 8
December, the Secretary of War ordered corps area commanders to inaugurate a system
of censoring telephone and telegraph wires crossing the United States' borders. On that
same day, the President, after meeting with members of the committee studying
censorship, designated the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar
Hoover, as temporary head of all phases of censorship. Hoover quickly convened a
meeting with other agencies concerned with the restriction and distribution of information.
From that meeting developed the framework that would govern the release of war news.10

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9Roosevelt Papers, #138, "President Issues Statement and Establishes the Office of
Censorship. Executive Order 8985," 19 December 1941, 574-79. In the note for this
item, Samuel Rosenman described the pre-Pearl Harbor preparations for censorship. See
also, U.S. at War, 207.

10Censorship, Report, 4.
Because of the gravity of the situation facing the country after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt felt compelled to address the American public and give them what information he could. Declaring that "the Congress and the people of the United States" had accepted the challenge that the Japanese had thrust upon them, he told the nation, "Together with other free peoples, we are now fighting to maintain our right to live among our world neighbors in freedom and in common decency, without fear of assault."

The president went on to describe the progression of fascism and totalitarianism during the past ten years. He reminded the country that since 1937 when the Japanese invaded Manchuria, the Axis powers had waged wars of aggression in Asia, Europe, and Africa. For Americans, the events of 7 December meant that the United States was now part of the worldwide struggle to keep the Axis powers from dominating the world. Describing the total nature of the conflict, the president stated:

We are now in this war. We are all in it all the way. Every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history. We must share together the bad news and the good news, the defeats and the victories -- the changing fortunes of war. . . . This Government will put its trust in the stamina of the American people, and will give the facts to the public as soon as two conditions have been fulfilled: First, that the information has been definitely and officially confirmed; and, second, that the release of the information at the time it is received will not prove valuable to the enemy directly or indirectly.11

Roosevelt also warned against the acceptance of statements reporters attributed to "authoritative sources." "As an example, I can tell you frankly that until further surveys are made, I have not sufficient information to state the exact damage which has been done to our naval vessels at Pearl Harbor. Admittedly the damage is serious. But no one can

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say how serious, until we know how much of this damage can be repaired and how quickly the necessary repairs can be made.” He also denied reports that U.S. forces had sighted and sunk a Japanese aircraft carrier near the Panama Canal Zone and explained that it would be some time before the people of the United States possessed the whole picture of the war situation. Citing communications limitations and the difficulties in receiving word from distant outposts especially in the Pacific, Roosevelt asked the public to be patient while waiting for news. He appealed to the news media: “You have a most grave responsibility to the Nation now and for the duration of this war. If you feel that your Government is not disclosing enough of the truth, you have every right to say so. But -- in the absence of all the facts, as revealed by official sources -- you have no right in the ethics of patriotism to deal out unconfirmed reports in such a way as to make people believe that they are gospel truth.” Roosevelt next spoke directly to the average American. He warned, “It will not only be a long war, it will be a hard war.” The public would have to work harder to increase production of critically needed war materials. However, such efforts would not be a sacrifice. “The United States does not consider it a sacrifice to do all one can, to give one’s best to our Nation, when the Nation is fighting for its existence and its future life. It is not a sacrifice . . . rather is it a privilege” to do whatever was necessary to speed victory. In the country’s moment of greatest danger, the president reassured the nation. “We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows.”\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
needed to establish methods to unite the country. The job of the government was to harness the country's determination and direct it in the most efficient way. Its first task was to ensure the speedy and dependable production of war materials. On 15 December, Roosevelt brought together industry and labor representatives at a conference in Washington, D.C. The War Labor-Management Conference struggled for nearly two weeks to work out an arrangement between industry and labor organizations that would ensure the production of the machines and materials necessary for the war. The deliberations at the conference laid the cornerstone of the government's wartime labor policy. The agreements that both sides accepted eased fears that labor disputes would disrupt the war effort. Although occasional work stoppages occurred during the war years, the foundation laid by the War Labor-Management Conference reduced their number and duration.\(^{13}\)

Also during the first week and a half of the war, FBI Director Hoover and the Censorship Committee worked to bring two potentially opposed institutions — the military and the press -- together under an effective system of censorship. Hoover and the other committee members formalized the plans for censorship that the president had approved in the summer of 1941. The War Department retained authority over the censorship of the mails and received additional authority over the telephone and telegraph. During the night of 11-12 December, the Secretary of War ordered Corps area commanders to begin postal censorship. While the manpower did not yet exist to do a thorough examination of the

mails, postal censorship stations began opening letters by midnight 13 December.14 As the Censorship Committee formalized the control of information, the Congress and the President worked to define the government's authority during wartime. Congress passed the First War Powers Act on 18 December 1941, giving the president broad powers to prosecute the war successfully. Section 303 of the act specifically addressed censorship.

Whenever, during the present war, the President shall deem that the public safety demands it, he may cause to be censored, under such rules and regulations as he may from time to time establish, communications by mail, cable, radio, or other means of transmission passing between the United States and any foreign country.5

On the day after the passage of the First War Powers Act, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8985 establishing the Office of Censorship. Roosevelt selected Byron Price, a newspaper man who had served as a Washington correspondent and later as Executive News Editor and Acting General Manager of the Associated Press, to head the new executive agency. Professional journalists respected Price, and his experiences in Washington had provided him with many contacts within the federal bureaucracy. The Executive Order that established the Office of Censorship gave Director Price the power to censor "communications by mail, cable, radio, or other means of transmission passing between the United States and any foreign country or which may be carried by any vessel or other means of transportation touching at any port, place, or territory of the United

14Censorship, Report, 4.

States and bound to or from any foreign country.\textsuperscript{16} Roosevelt also assigned an additional job to Price. Drawing upon the Director’s experience in the commercial news industry, the president asked Price to supervise the voluntary censorship of the print and broadcast press.\textsuperscript{17} Roosevelt, in a press conference on the day that the Office of Censorship was born, explained to the American people why such an agency was necessary.

All Americans abhor censorship, just as they abhor war. But the experience of this and of all other nations has demonstrated that some degree of censorship is essential in war time, and we are at war.

It is necessary to the national security that military information which might be of aid to the enemy be scrupulously withheld at the source.

It is necessary that a watch be set upon our borders, so that no such information may reach the enemy, inadvertently or otherwise, through the medium of the mails, radio or cable transmission, or by any other means.

It is necessary that prohibitions against the domestic publication of some types of information, contained in long existing statutes, be rigidly enforced.

Finally, the Government has called upon a patriotic press and radio to abstain voluntarily from the dissemination of detailed information of certain kinds, such as reports of the movement of vessels and troops. Their response has indicated a universal desire to cooperate.

In order that all of these parallel and requisite undertakings may be coordinated and carried forward in accordance with a single uniform policy, I have appointed Byron Price, Executive News Editor of Associated

\textsuperscript{16}Roosevelt Papers, #138, “President Issues a Statement and Establishes the Office of Censorship. Executive Order No. 8985,” 574-79. See also Report . . . Censorship, 5. In fact, the Executive Order which authorized the creation of the Office of Censorship and outlined the agency’s areas of authority, did not specifically mention the domestic press.

\textsuperscript{17}On 27 January 1942, President Roosevelt wrote a letter to Price authorizing the Office of Censorship to handle the flow of information in the media. The letter states, “As President of the United States and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct you in your capacity as Director of Censorship to coordinate the efforts of the domestic press and radio in voluntarily withholding from publication military and other information which should not be released in the interest of the effective prosecution of the war.” Letter quoted in Roosevelt Papers, #138, and U.S. at War, 208. See also Censorship, Report, 5.
Press, to be Director of Censorship, responsible directly to the President.18

For Director of Censorship Price, the job awaiting him was enormous, especially in dealing with the public press. Whereas the Army and the Navy had been considering the application of postal, wire, and cable censorship for some time before the United States entered the war, neither the government nor the armed services had considered policies relating to the commercial information companies. Voluntary press censorship like that described in Executive Order No. 8985 did not have a very successful history in the United States. Military officers in every war since the American Revolution had attempted to enlist the press' cooperation in withholding certain types of information, but experience showed how difficult it was to gain and to sustain the cooperation of news organizations during wartime. Roosevelt had laid the foundation for press cooperation with voluntary censorship in a letter to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April 1941. Delivered as part of a newspaper conference on "Free Speech and Free Press," the president's letter stated that the "suppression of opinion and censorship of news are among the mortal weapons that dictatorships direct against their own people and direct against the world." While not ruling out some sort of government control of "vital military information," the president informed the assembled newsmen that ultimate control of the press during wartime should rest with members of the media themselves. "Like all of our liberties, liberty of speech and of the press is not a mere phrase, a mere form of words, a constitutional abstraction." Rather, "It has a living meaning -- whatever the

18Quoted in Censorship, Report, 5. Presidential press conference of 16 December 1941. See also Budget, U.S. at War, 207.
press itself gives it. Government juridical process can afford a negative protection against interference with the freedom of speech, but its care, its nurture, and its use are responsibilities of the press itself, which has never prized it so much as it should prize it now."\textsuperscript{19} Despite the historical failure of voluntary censorship, the press agreed to support the war and abide by the president's request to withhold certain news items in the interest of military security.

To make the process of censorship fair and acceptable, Price selected members of the working press as part of his staff. This action placed journalists and broadcasters in charge of deciding what newspapers could print and radios could report. In effect, Price's action reflected the president's desire to have the press govern themselves. Price created a Press Division and a Broadcast Division that worked with military, naval, and government representatives to devise a set of guidelines listing information that might aid the enemy.\textsuperscript{20}

Beyond enlisting the cooperation of news organizations, members of the Office of Censorship's Press and Broadcast Divisions had to fight inter-agency competition and compartmentalization to develop a guide that would be all inclusive. In January 1942, for example, Office of Censorship officials discovered that the Weather Bureau was preparing to issue a long and complicated list of regulations, approved by Navy and Army officers, that would govern the disclosure of weather information. Price's office appealed to the Weather Bureau to abandon its proposed plan since any restrictions issued outside the

\textsuperscript{19}Roosevelt Papers, #29, "A Letter to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on Free Speech and Free Press," 16 April 1941, 120-21.

\textsuperscript{20}Censorship, Report, 7.
Office would confuse the civilian press. The Weather Bureau agreed, but other agencies were more reluctant to accept a centralized information policy.\footnote{Censorship, Report, 33.}

Editors and radio studio executives contacted the Office of Censorship almost immediately after its formation to ask what was publishable information. At first, the Office dealt with each question individually and made many snap judgements. This process became more formalized on 15 January 1942 when the Office of Censorship issued the Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press.\footnote{The Office of Censorship issued separate editions of the Code of Wartime Practices for the print and broadcast press. See United States, Office of Censorship, Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press/American Broadcasters, 15 January ed. (Washington, D.C.: GPO 1942). On 21 January, the War Department issued Basic Field Manual: Regulations for Correspondents Accompanying U.S. Army Forces in the Field. The field manual outlined the relationship among correspondents Army forces and commanders. Restrictions on the publication of information in FM 30-26 were the same as those outlined in Code of Wartime Practices. See United States, War Department, FM 30-26: Regulations for Correspondents Accompanying U.S. Army Forces in the Field (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942).} The members of the Office of Censorship hoped that the regulations would provide clear guidelines that listed the types of “information which might be of value to the enemy and which, therefore, should not be published or broadcast without the appropriate authority of a qualified Government official.”\footnote{Ibid.} The Office of Censorship asked the press to refrain from publishing or broadcasting information relating to the disposition, movement, and strength of troops, ships, and aircraft; and data concerning fortifications, war production, and
weather.\textsuperscript{24}

Once Office of Censorship representatives compiled the list of sensitive information, they had to distribute it to the many news organizations throughout the United States. In 1941, there were in the U.S. more than 2,000 daily newspapers, with 11,000 weekly and semiweekly papers, and 900 commercial broadcasting stations. The public also had access to many specialized publications — technical, professional and scientific journals; industrial, commercial, and financial magazines and trade papers; commercial house organs; church, school, fraternal, and educational pamphlets and newsletters — in all, over 20,000 publications of various types existed along side the dominant journalistic organs.\textsuperscript{25} All had to receive a copy of the code. To assist in the voluntary censorship program, the Press Division created an Advisory Board composed of national and regional press representatives. One editor in each state served as a "missionary" sent out "to spread the gospel of voluntary censorship among his colleagues."\textsuperscript{26}

While the members of the press were not always happy with the provisions of the Codes, they largely complied with the wishes of the Office of Censorship. The nation was at war and members of the press recognized the conflict as a struggle for the continued preservation of basic freedoms. Reporters, editors, publishers, and broadcasters knew that in countries and regions where the governments of Germany, Italy, and Japan ruled,


\textsuperscript{25}Censorship, \textit{Report}, 34.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.
democratic principles like free speech disappeared. President Roosevelt made it clear to the American people that unless they won the war the same could happen to them. Members of the media, recognizing the danger the country faced, tried to do as much as possible to contribute to the war effort. Their dedication to the war was so great that they willingly sacrificed some of their traditional rights for the ultimate goal — victory. Throughout the war, only a few members of the press openly broke with censorship policies.

Besides safeguarding sensitive military information, the government was interested in providing news and information to the public. Even before Pearl Harbor, the government and armed forces had formed several agencies to inform the public of the steps the president and the military were taking in response to the world conflict. The War Department established a Bureau of Public Relations on 11 February 1941. The Bureau had overall responsibility for all activities within the War Department dealing with public relations or related matters. The Army appointed public relations officers to the headquarters of each theater of operations. Public relations personnel provided the press with access to official announcements and statements and acted as liaisons between commanders and the press. On 1 May 1941, the Navy Department also established a public affairs branch, the Office of Public Relations, that had responsibilities similar to those of its Army counterpart. Despite efforts to develop closer relations with the press and the public, none of the government organizations had the authority to compel the armed services or any other office to release information. Unwilling to provide any information that might be useful to the enemy, the public relations offices of the armed
services were reluctant to be completely open with the press but managed to establish contact with journalists.\textsuperscript{27}

Like the armed services, the federal government created several agencies before December 1941 to keep the public informed of military preparations, the changing international situation, and the president’s foreign policy. The Office of Civil Defense’s Division of National Unity (May 1941) and its successor the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF) (October 1941) attempted to carry the president’s message to the American people and bring their reactions back to Washington.\textsuperscript{28} The government directed the OFF to inform the people about the government and the state of the United States’ defense efforts. All facts, good and bad, that the White House, the Navy, and the Army thought were not matters of national security were supposed to be available to the OFF and the public. While in principle the Office of Facts and Figures was a powerful agency, in practice it lacked the authority to compel other agencies to release information. The Roosevelt administration also created many other information agencies: the Division of Information of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), to keep the American public informed about the country’s defense program; the Office of Government Reports (OGR), an agency that had existed before the summer of 1941, to pass official information

\textsuperscript{27}Budget, \textit{U.S. at War}, 210.

\textsuperscript{28}Roosevelt Papers, #42, “The Office of Civilian Defense Is Established. Executive Order No. 8757,” 20 May 1941, 162-73; Roosevelt Papers, #99, “The President Established the Office of Facts and Figures. Executive Order No. 8922,” 24 October 1941, 425-29. Originally the Office of Facts and Figures had been a part of the Office of Civilian Defense. However, as OCD became larger and larger during the summer of 1941, the president ordered the Office of Facts and Figures to be separated from the OCD and act as an independent agency.
onto the public and to handle inquiries coming from state and local governments, citizens' organizations, and the public; and the Office of the Coordinator of Information (OCI), headed by World War I military hero William J. Donovan, to collect and assemble information and data that might bear upon American security from sources domestic and international and help the government in determining how the public, domestic and international, responded to American policies.\(^{29}\) The public relations branches of the Army and Navy Departments, OFF, Division of Information of OEM, the OGR, and the OCI, along with most other government agencies attempted to provide information to the press and the public about government activities and policies. Not surprisingly, this alphabet soup of government agencies led to confusion and contradiction.\(^{30}\)

The efforts of various government organizations, agencies, and offices to formulate a consistent policy regarding the negative and positive management of information were only one part of the larger transformation of American society to meet

\(^{29}\)Within the OCI was the Foreign Information Service that was responsible for informing all foreign countries, other than the nations of Latin America, about U.S. policies and actions. The Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs sent information to the republics of the Western Hemisphere. The OCI’s FIS and the CIAA were often rival organizations. The separation of Latin America from the OCI’s area of responsibility brought the directors of the two agencies, “Wild Bill” Donovan of the OCI and Nelson Rockefeller of the CIAA, into conflict. Many of the problems stemmed from the intentionally vague executive order creating the OCI. Although not originally intended as a covert organizations responsible for foreign espionage activities, the OCI would eventually develop into the Office of Strategic Services. The OSS was the United States’ main source of espionage activities during the war. See Budget, *U.S. at War*, 218-19; Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan* (New York: New York Times Books, 1982), 168-185.

the demands of total war. Life for all Americans changed dramatically with the declarations of war against Japan, Germany, and Italy. President Roosevelt, acting under the authority of the First War Powers Act, created many agencies to mobilize the nation for war. For the first few months after the country's entrance into the war it seemed that the president created a new government office each day. In December, Roosevelt issued an executive order creating the Office of Defense Transportation to direct and coordinate domestic transportation systems, eventually including the use of private automobiles. In January 1942, he established the National Defense Mediation Board (NDMB), an outgrowth of the labor-industry conference held days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The NDMB had final jurisdiction over all labor disputes and wage and salary rates except in the railroad industry. Days after the NDMB was born, the War Production Board (WPB) came into existence. The WPB oversaw and managed the nation's industrial production from raw materials to finished products. It also supervised the allocation of materials, the establishment of production priorities, the rationing of supplies, the direction of national production, and, in an extreme situation, the assumption of control at plants if management did not cooperate. Because of the demands of war production, industry had to change from a peacetime economy capable of producing everyday and luxury goods to


one devoted primarily to war material production. Although the war meant that industries would employ more Americans and they would have more disposable income, the scarcity of consumer goods threatened to cause a dramatic increase in inflation. On 24 January 1942, WPB Directive 1 designated the Office of Price Administration (OPA) to oversee the rationing of goods and services to combat the expected rise in consumer demand for items that the war made scarce. The OPA took steps to prevent an inflationary hike that could derail the U.S. economy just as the country was preparing to participate in the world war.\textsuperscript{34} The president continued to create many other executive agencies during the first six months of the war, placing vast portions of the American economy and society under government control. By June 1942, government agencies had entered the field of labor-management disputes; taken control of war production, rationing, transportation, and shipping; and appropriated $100 billion for armaments and shipping — money that the federal government still had to raise. With the explosive growth and power of the government, Americans quickly realized that their lives had changed dramatically with the coming of war.\textsuperscript{35}

The American public gradually adjusted to a war demanding great sacrifice and tremendous stamina. News from the across the globe during the first half of 1942 was grim for the people of the United States. Japanese forces continued to advance across the Pacific, seizing Guam, Singapore, and eventually the Philippines. There seemed little that

\textsuperscript{34}Roosevelt Papers, #12, "Statement by the President on Signing the Emergency Price Control Act," Date???, 67-73.

\textsuperscript{35}Braverman, Hasten, 11-15.
the country could do to stop the advance in Asia. In Europe, Britain and Russia continued to fight against Germany, but after years of war some Americans wondered how much longer the Allies could endure. Millions of men received a telegram from the President of the United States that began simply, "Greetings. You are hereby ordered to report for induction into the armed forces of the United States..."36 For other Americans, the country's entry into the war meant longer hours at work, shortages of goods, and extra duties to assist the war effort. Industry leaders added shifts to factories across the country to produce the war material needed by the U.S. armed forces and Allies across the globe. The OPA imposed price limits on a wide range of consumer goods, from silk to rubber, necessary for war production. Millions of U.S. citizens joined local civil defense groups, serving as air raid wardens, volunteer nurses, and salvage drive coordinators. Participation in the war effort was unprecedented in the history of the country.37

To help maintain public support for the war effort, government agencies and private groups developed a variety of methods to publicize the country's war aims and to tell the people how they could help to win the fight. Capitalizing on the patriotic assistance from advertisers, newsmen, and motion picture figures, the government disseminated its message to the people through all mediums. Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, representatives from the advertising industry went to Washington, D.C., to provide the government with their expertise in telling the American public what total war


37 Braverman, *Hasten*, 16-17.
meant in terms of conservation and sacrifice. However, the confused information
management program of the federal government in the months immediately after Pearl
Harbor frustrated the "ad men's" efforts. Acting on their own and later with the Office of
Facts and Figure, the advertisers formed a new organization "to mobilize the power of
advertising for victory." Called the War Advertising Council, the industry adopted the
slogan "A War Message in Every Ad." 38 Soon posters and ads began to appear
everywhere across the country. In factories posters urged workers to cut short their
breaks and warned against "loose talk" that could reach the ears of the enemy. In
magazines, companies described how their products were helping the fighting man combat
the nation's enemies overseas. 39 Newspaper editors and radio producers ran pieces that
informed the public of rationed items and how to make essentials -- like clothes, rubber,
and food -- go farther. Even the comics became sites for morale boosting. Characters like
Superman, Tarzan, and Little Orphan Annie did their part to contribute to the war effort. 40
In Hollywood, motion picture studios began to turn out movies meant to keep up public
morale. In 1942, films like "Mrs. Miniver," "Casablanca," and "Guam" described what a
fascist war meant to the people of Britain, North Africa, and the Pacific and informed the
public about the hardships of war. The government and the film industry also produced

38 Raymond Rubicam, "Advertising," in While You Were Gone: A Report on
Wartime Life in the United States Jack Goodman, ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster,
1946), 424-31; William L. Bird and Harry R. Rubenstein, Design for Victory: World War
II Posters on the American Home Front (New York: Princeton Architectural Press,

39 Braverman, Hasten, 214-20.

40 Braverman, Hasten, 213-35.
“shorts,” like newsreels and educational films, that helped to keep the public informed of war events and American policy and efforts to win the war. The contribution of these industries in educating and motivating Americans was immense. Millions of U.S. citizens began to plant victory gardens to supplement food supplies, to collect scrap metal and rubber as part of salvage drives, and to work more efficiently at the factories to increase production.

By the middle of 1942, the government realized that it needed to coordinate the country's efforts to inform the public. On 13 June 1942 President Roosevelt singed an Executive Order authorizing the creation of the Office of War Information (the OWI). The mission of the OWI was to manage the “informational services” of all government agencies, “and to formulate and carry out, through the use of the press, radio, [and] motion pictures . . . information programs designed to facilitate the development of an informed and intelligent understanding . . . of the status and progress of the war effort and of the war policies, activities, and aims of the Government.” The OWI attempted to coordinate the widely disbursed powers of transmitting information from the government and military to the public. Since the beginning of the war, the Office of Censorship had limited information sent through public means like the transatlantic cable, the telegraph, the mails, and the press; but it could do nothing to influence the spread of information from official sources. In effect, every agency of the government — civilian and military —

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42 Executive Order No. 9182, 13 June 1942, *7 Federal Register* 4468.

43 Budget, *U.S. at War*, 223.
had the power to censor information about the war by preventing its release. The OWI was supposed to correct many of the problems that existed before its creation by acting as an overarching public information agency that the U.S. government could use to send a unified message about its war policies and strategies to domestic and international audiences. Operating under the belief that in a country founded upon the democratic principle of free speech, the OWI worked to ensure that the nation's information programs were based on truth and under civilian rather than military control.\textsuperscript{44}

Roosevelt's Executive Order 9182 merged most of the previously existing information organizations under the Office of War Information; and its new director, Elmer Davis, began the difficult task of coordinating the release of information.\textsuperscript{45} At first, no formal relationship existed between the OWI and the Office of Censorship or the other information agencies regarding the types of information to be withheld from publication. In November 1942, the Office of Censorship and Office of War Information agreed that the Office of Censorship would censor OWI broadcasts and statements only for security reasons. Additionally, the OWI would act only positively toward the domestic press, and in no case would the agency ask newspapers or broadcasters to withhold anything from distribution. Regarding official military news, Director Davis decided not to interfere with the Army or Navy communiques. He felt that the OWI was neither capable, nor

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45}Elmer Davis was a CBS announcer who broadcast Eric Sevareid's story of the surrender of France to Germany in 1940. Davis' experience in the media provided him with invaluable experience and contacts that served him well in his new position as head of the Office of War Information. See Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson, \textit{The Murrow Boys} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 75.
authorized, to determine what types of military information imperiled national security. Nevertheless, Davis and representatives from the Army and the Navy public relations divisions met daily to coordinate the release of as much information as possible regarding the activities of the armed services.\textsuperscript{46}

The OWI formed a Domestic Branch to keep the public of the United States informed about all aspects of the war and to coordinate the release of information from the vast, and ever increasing, government bureaucracy. On 10 July 1942 Davis issued a regulation meant to standardize the release of government information and establish the OWI as the central clearinghouse for war news.\textsuperscript{47} In the order, he urged the heads of individual government departments to "maintain an open-door policy" with journalists from all sections of the press. Despite the efforts of Davis and other OWI officials, they achieved only partial success and were unable to gain cooperation from all parts of the government.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46}Budget, \textit{U.S. at War}, 224.

\textsuperscript{47}OWI Regulation No. 1, 10 July 1942. Quoted in Budget, \textit{U.S. at War}, 226.

\textsuperscript{48}President Roosevelt made clear the OWI's problems in July 1942 when he commented on the government's continued problems with information management.

In dealing with the many complex war problems which we face today, it is unavoidable that there be wide differences of opinion between agencies of the Federal Government -- opinions sincerely and honestly held. However, too often in recent months, responsible officials of the Government have made public criticisms of other agencies of the Government; and have made public statements based either on inadequate information or on failure to appreciate all the aspects of a complex subject which is only partially within their jurisdiction.

One of the duties prescribed for the Office of War Information is the coordination of war information activities of all Federal departments and agencies, for the purpose of assuring an accurate and constant flow of
Despite the difficulties that the OWI experienced in its early days, and those that continued to plague it throughout its existence, the government improved its information coordination as the war progressed. Combined with the work of the Office of Censorship and the public affairs offices of the Army and the Navy, the OWI informed the people about the war. These offices made more information available to the public than ever before. The centralized control of information, while never complete or wholly efficient, was an unprecedented accomplishment. Because of the total nature of the war, in which all segments of the society were committed to a single goal, the government was able to eliminate much of the intra-government inefficiencies and to harness the patriotism of the press to improve the flow of information and direct it toward a unified purpose.

While the leaders in Washington were ironing out the policies governing the flow of war information, all across the globe members of the press and the military had to adapt constantly to the changing war. Although the military had taken steps before the war to handle the distribution of news in the event of the United States' entrance in the war, no one was prepared for the influx of reporters attempting to cover the largest story of all time. Initially, the global nature of the conflict limited reporters abilities to cover the

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war information to the public and the world at large, and for the added purpose of eliminating conflict and confusion among the departments and agencies of the Government in the matter of public relations. Elmer Davis, Director of this Office, tells me that so far as written statements from departments and agencies are concerned, very satisfactory progress toward this objective is being made. But, he points out that the attainment of the objective is being gravely hampered by verbal statements dealing with matters touching more than one department or agency made by high officials in press conferences and elsewhere -- statements which do not contribute either to the accuracy or the consistency of public information. White House Press Release, 21 August 1942. Ibid
conflict. While many news organizations had staffs stationed in the European theater of the war, few had reporters in the Pacific. Those reporters in the Far East were concentrated primarily in major urban centers like Manilla, Singapore, and Tokyo.  

America’s entrance into the war caught most journalists unprepared and events often did not allow for the full coverage of the initial stages of the war. Nevertheless, news stories continued to make their way to the people.

Although news from the Pacific in 1942 was dark, reporters attempted to frame their stories in ways that would bolster morale. They played up the limited successes of the United States forces while giving less attention to setbacks. In a commentary on the coverage of the war, E. B. White of Colliers evaluated the coverage of the war through February 1942. White found the reporting too optimistic. Headlines like “Allies Sink Jap Cruiser” touted victories in the Pacific while news of major losses like the Japanese capture of Amboina Island, the second largest base in the Dutch East Indies received less emphasis. White claimed “that the situation . . . in the western Pacific at the end of the second month was very serious and that still further reverses could be expected.” Holding up President Roosevelt’s remarks made during his fireside chat immediately after Pearl Harbor as an example, White suggested that the people understood that bad news would come before good. “This sort of realism,” he wrote, “should be observed by the newspapers in their own field, but I think that if a man were to paper his den with

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headlines he would find himself living in a hall of triumph."50 Despite warnings against over optimism, journalists continued to emphasize U.S. victories, no matter how small, during the first six months of the war.

As the country called up men to fill out its armed forces, so too did the press enlist reporters to cover the far-flung war. Before Pearl Harbor, the coverage of military affairs usually fell to journalists working for news organizations located near military installations. Members of the local media and public relations officers of the individual bases had the opportunity and time to get to know each other and build some sort of working relationship. In Honolulu, the naval officers responsible for dealing with representatives of the media were on a first name basis with the journalists charged with covering the Pacific fleet. The outbreak of war changed matters quickly. News organizations from across the nation sent reporters to distant military and naval bases. Few of the newly dispatched journalists had previously met anyone in the area, let alone the public relations officers with whom they now had to deal. Military and naval officers were often distrustful of these new reporters and were cautious about sharing information with them. In order to alleviate the strain placed on local officers, the Army and Navy Departments established the Joint Accreditation Board in early 1942. The purpose of the

50E. B. White, "The Newspaper Reader Finds it Very Difficult to Get at the Truth," Harper's Magazine (April 1941), Reporting WWII, 1, 300-302. In conclusion, White pointed out that the problems of covering the war did not all arise from failings of journalists to give accurate accounts. Much of this confusion was no one's fault directly according to White. The war was just too big and moved too fast. Facts from the front did not always make it back to the United States in time to be included in the latest accounts. "The news is the privilege which the customer enjoys, but it is also the crossword puzzle which he alone must solve."
board was to determine which correspondents were worthy of covering one or both of the services. To be eligible for accreditation, a reporter had to demonstrate that a recognized news organization employed him.\footnote{The military initially only considered reporters working for a news service, daily syndicate, daily newspaper, magazine, or radio network. Free lance reporters, those without a permanent affiliation, and representatives of more specialized news organizations like \textit{Vogue} and Fawcett Publications were not originally considered for accreditation. Later, the accreditation policy was relaxed and reporters from these and other nontraditional news sources were accredited and given the same credentials as representatives of the daily working press. See Irma Cuhna, “Problems in War Reporting in the Pacific,” M.A. Thesis (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, 1946), 7.} In the Pacific, the military issued accreditations sparingly and did not encourage new applications, in part because the Navy insisted on strict censorship and secrecy, and also because housing and messing facilities in the Hawaiian area were limited.\footnote{Cuhna, “Reporting,” 1-7.}

In theory the process of gaining accreditation was straightforward. First, a reporter met with his employer and requested to be sent to cover the war. The journalist’s editors forwarded the request to the War Department and asked that the reporter be considered for accreditation. The Bureau of Public Relations, War Department, then sent the reporter a security investigation form similar to the one issued to men seeking admittance to an officer training course. The prospective war correspondent filled out five copies of the form and specified which type of correspondent he wished to be accredited as -- news/print, radio, still picture, or motion picture. On the security questionnaire, the applicant supplied such basic information as physical description, birth date, marital status, education background, next of kin, and foreign travel since 1930. When the journalist
completed the form, he returned it to the Bureau of Public Relations, Liaison Branch, Overseas Section, located in Washington, D.C. Military Intelligence, with the cooperation of other federal agencies, checked the information on the questionnaire and contacted references and past employers. While this background check was under way, the applicant applied to the State Department for a passport. If the reporter received accreditation, the military issued him or her an identification card that served as a journalist's basic set of credentials. Step one of accreditation was then complete. Next, the newly accredited war correspondent had to seek permission from an area commander for accreditation to a specific command. The area commander, Army or Navy, had the power to refuse a request for accreditation and was also able to revoke or suspend the credentials of a reporter. The fact that the armed forces would accredit a journalist to only one area of operations at a time limited the access war correspondents had to operations. In the Pacific, the policy of single service accreditation often meant that reporters could not cover both Army and Navy operations, no matter how closely connected or related the actions of the two services might be.53

After an area commander had accepted a reporter, the journalist had to sign an agreement that stated the reporter would comply with military security and adhere to orders from the area commander. Once in the field, the correspondent would submit all journalistic copy, print or photographic, as well as private correspondence to the appropriate area censor. Journalists observed the same rules and ethics in regard to transmission of information that governed service personnel. They also waived all claims

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against the U.S. government for losses, damages, or injuries that they might incur.\textsuperscript{54}

After the reporter submitted all of this paper work, he traveled to an area of operations. Often the military provided transport. In the field, all services recognized the correspondent as a commissioned officer in such matters as messing, billeting, and transportation. Soldiers, sailors, and airmen accorded reporters in the field all the privileges and rights of officers, although they could not carry firearms. Even so, journalists were able to mingle with soldiers, sailors, and marines of all ranks.\textsuperscript{55} Some journalists choose to remain at headquarters, gathering a picture of the war that they easily translated into stories that conveyed the "larger picture" of the war, while others lived with the fighting men.

Despite press efforts to paint an optimistic picture of the war in the first half of 1942, American losses in the Pacific had shaken U.S. morale. While the homefront was gearing up for the demands of the war, the U.S. military and navy continued to suffer setbacks. Roosevelt and his advisors feared that unless they could find some way to reverse the tides, and quickly, American support for the war would diminish. In an effort to encourage the American people, the president authorized a daring mission against Japan.\textsuperscript{56} Since the beginning of the war, Roosevelt had wanted the military to conduct a

\textsuperscript{54}Cunha, "Reporting," 14.

\textsuperscript{55}War Dept., \textit{FM} 30-26.

bombering raid against Japan to improve American morale and shake the confidence of the
Japanese people in the power of their military. Led by Lieutenant Colonel (later
Lieutenant General) James H. Doolittle, sixteen Army Air Corps B-25 bombers and their
crews took off from the U.S.S. *Hornet* on 18 April 1942. All of the airplanes successfully
attacked their targets, most located in Tokyo. However, because of suspected Japanese
detection of the *Hornet* more than 650 miles from Japan, the planes had to launch farther
from their targets than planned and consequently none landed safely.57

News of the attack quickly reached American reporters. Less than three days after
the bombing raid on Tokyo, journalists questioned FDR at his regularly scheduled press
conference. Journalists, military commentators, and the Japanese had all wondered how
the United States was able to strike a target so far away. Although the president would
not reveal anything specific about the operation, he told White House journalists that the
launch site for the bombers was Shangri-La, a fictional setting from the James Hilton
novel, *Lost Horizons*, located somewhere in Tibet. An aide had told Roosevelt, “If you
use a fictional place like that, it’s a polite way of saying that you do not intend to tell the
enemy or anybody else where the planes really came from.”58 Journalists accepted the

57*Roosevelt Papers*, #46, “The Eight Hundred and Twentieth Press Conference,”
21 April 1942, 212-14; *Marshall Papers*, 3, “Memorandum for Admiral King,”
[Washington, D.C.], 2 October 1942, 378-79. See also Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at
329-46.

58*Roosevelt Papers*, #46, “The Eight Hundred and Twentieth Press Conference,”
Note. Samuel Rosenman, compiler of the *Public Papers and Address of Franklin D.
Roosevelt*, years 1942-1945, was the aid who suggested that the president identify the
launch sight of the Doolittle raid as Shangri-La. Later, when the president began to use
his retreat in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland, he against drew upon the imaginative
president's obvious deception and focused on the impact that the raid had on American morale. As FDR had hoped, the daring attack into the center of Japanese controlled territory improved domestic morale and harmed the prestige of the Japanese.\footnote{The military and the government did not release the "full story" of the Doolittle Raid until October 1942. See \textit{Marshall Papers}, 3, "Memorandum for Admiral King," [Washington, D.C.], 2 October 1942, 378-79.}

Despite the acceptance of the Europe-first strategy that had come out of the Argentia Conference, the United States was not in a position in 1941 to take direct action in the West. While American industry was producing the needed weapons of war and the military was training the millions of draftees inducted into the armed services since Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy, Army, and Marine Corps struggled to slow the advance of the Japanese imperial war machine. In the Pacific, the United States had scored its first major victory before the war even began. Prior to the Japanese attack on 7 December 1941, cryptanalysts working for the U.S. military had succeeded in breaking the Imperial Japanese Navy's most secret code. The government's and the military's concern for maintaining security around its code-breaking accomplishment was one of the main reasons that they were unwilling to release more information about the Pacific war. The Navy feared that if journalists learned that there had been warning signals of an impending attack the news would reach the Japanese who might suspect that the U.S. of reading their coded messages. Naval officers also did not want to release the true accomplishments of

U.S. forces or the losses of the Japanese Navy following the Battle of Midway (2 - 6 June 1942) because the U.S. had been able to use decrypted Japanese Naval messages to plan for the battle. Nevertheless, the navy and the government knew that they had to tell the American people something about the first true victory of the war. On 6 June 1942, Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, wrote to General Marshall expressing his concern over the release of information about Midway. Marshall recommended that the Navy release information that the Japanese would also possess and that would not

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Marshall Papers, 3, "Memorandum for Commander in Chief, United States Fleet [King]," 7 June 1942, [Washington, D.C.], 227-29. Later in the war, the military again resisted releasing information that threatened to alert the Japanese to the fact that the United States had broken their code. On 18 April 1943, U.S. Army Air Forces P-38s, acting upon information received from a Japanese naval code broken in 1942, shot down a transport carrying Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander in chief of Japan's Combined Fleet and architect of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese government announced the news of Yamamoto's death on 20 May 1942, and journalists in the United States published several press stories concerning the operation. Later, the Japanese changed the code that had provided the United States with information regarding Yamamoto's flight. The U.S. Navy Department, in charge of activities in the region where the attack took place, ordered an investigation to determine whether rumors and press leaks had prompted the Japanese to change their code. Investigators discovered that Major General Alexander M. Patch, who had commanded all U.S. forces on Tulagi and Guadalcanal between December 1942 and April 1943 when he assumed command of the Fourth Corps at Ft. Lewis, Washington, had discussed the operation at a luncheon in Washington, D.C. General George C. Marshall, upon learning of Patch's indiscretion, dispatched Colonel Carter W. Clarke, the officer in charge of code-intercept handling in the War Department, to get Patch's explanation of the events. Patch confirmed the Navy's investigators' report, modifying it only by claiming that he had taken credit for ordering the attack on Yamamoto. Patch defended his actions, claiming that it was general knowledge in the South Pacific that the United States had been able to break certain Japanese codes. Marshall sent a copy of Clarke's conversation with Patch to Admiral of the Fleet King with a note: "Disciplinary action in the case of a corps commander inevitably involves publicity which would make matters worse. Without publicity the deterrent effect on others, which is desired, would be lacking. I'm puzzled as to the course to follow. However, it is clearly evident that additional instructions are necessary regarding secrecy in such matters." See Marshall Papers, 3, "Memorandum for Admiral King," 28 July 1943, 40; Marshall Papers, 3, "To Major General Alexander Patch," 29 July 1943, 39.
jeopardize cryptanalysis work. He told King that the publicity resulting form the Midway operation was "likely to have a very important effect on future operations. Strongly recommend that this publicity treat the operations as a normal rather than an extraordinary effort on our part. In other words, we should strive to create the impression that the enemy attempted a surprise attack on a large scale, but found our forces on alert in all sectors, and as a result, sustained losses entirely disproportionate to ours."\(^{61}\)

On June 7, the Washington *Times-Herald* published an article entitled "U.S. Navy Knew in Advance All About Jap Fleet." In the piece, the paper revealed that according to reliable sources in Naval Intelligence, U.S. forces knew the strength of the Japanese fleet that the Navy was then battling west of Midway Island. "The information in the hands of the Navy Department was so definite that a feint at some American base, to be accompanied by a serious effort to invade and occupy another base, was predicted. Guesses were even made that Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians and Midway Island in the Hawaiian group might be targets. . . . By last Tuesday [2 June] the Americans were able to conclude that the feint was to be made at Dutch Harbor."\(^{62}\) In communiques from Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the commander of naval forces in the Pacific, the press learned that "American casualties were light" while the Japanese suffered severe losses.\(^{63}\)

On 7 June, Admiral King held a press conference at which he briefed reporters about


\(^{62}\) *Washington Tribune-Herald*, 7 June 1942, 4A.

Midway. King’s briefing mirrored the approach that Marshall had suggested. Despite the Washington *Herald-Tribune*’s story on 7 June, few journalists suggested that the United States had broken enemy codes and the Japanese continued to send messages that the Americans could read. The Navy withheld much of the information about the Midway attack until months later in the war.\(^{64}\)

The symbolic success of the Doolittle Raid and the victory at Midway marked the end of the U.S. strategically defensive operations in the war. Fears that the Japanese would absorb all U.S. military bases in the Pacific had ended. News from the war-front ceased to be mainly about defeat and began to tell the story of how the U.S. and its allies were stopping the advance of the Japanese. On the homefront, the American people took such news to heart and redoubled their efforts. With Japanese expansion halted, the United States was able to shift to the offensive and begin eating away at the Japanese gains in the Pacific while preparing to direct its main efforts against Germany and the liberation of Europe.\(^{65}\)

By the early fall and winter of 1942, the United States’ military was prepared to take the fight to the enemy. On 7 August, elements of the Marine Corps landed on the Guadalcanal, a large and strategically important part of the Solomon Islands, from which the Japanese threatened the lines of communication between Hawaii and Australia. For the next six months, Marine, Navy, and eventually Army units battled Japanese forces in

\(^{64}\)Ibid.

the first major U.S. offensive operation of the war.\textsuperscript{66} While operations on Guadalcanal marked the first time U.S. ground forces had taken the fight to the enemy, the island's distance from major communication centers, limitations in communications systems, and the primitive environment of the theater prevented extensive coverage of the campaign.\textsuperscript{67}

Although the majority of U.S. operations during the first six months of the war took place in the Pacific, the war in the European Theater dominated American newspapers and radio programs. U.S. strategy, formulated during the Argentia conference in August 1941, adopted a "Europe-first" approach to the war. Even though the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had brought the United States into the war, the country's strategic planners remained committed to defeating Germany before redirecting American efforts against Japan.\textsuperscript{68} Throughout September 1942, the U.S. Army commander of forces in Europe, Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower, planned with British military and political leaders for an attack against Germany. Leaders in the United States and Britain decided to begin the war against German forces in French North Africa. They hoped that landings in North Africa would accomplish several important goals: bolster the morale of the American and British people, provide much needed experience.


\textsuperscript{67}Frank Tremain, "Pacific Coverage Hits High Point at Saipan," \textit{Editor and Publisher} (19 August 1944), 10. Tremain described the early press coverage of the Pacific war and the difficulties journalist encountered in reporting of the conflict from isolated islands like Guadalcanal. See also Spector, \textit{Eagle against the Sun}, 166f.

for U.S. forces, remove French forces and territory from Nazi occupation, and draw German forces away from the fighting on the Eastern Front. As the Allies prepared for the offensive in North Africa, the press speculated about where and when operations against Germany would commence. In a cable to Army Chief of Staff Marshall, General Eisenhower expressed his concern that such speculations would endanger the planned attacks. "As concrete preparation proceeds, it [becomes] increasingly difficult, both here [in Britain] and in the United States to conceal evidence of such preparation and, if any portion of the press is to assume the attitude indicated [in speculative press reports] the effort to keep our intentions secret and to give credence to cover and deception plans will be futile."

Despite Eisenhower's fears that the press would inadvertently disclose the timing and destination of the attacks, the Allies achieved tactical surprise when they began landing troops in North Africa on 8 November 1942. Although some difficulties developed during the initial stages of the landings, the U.S. and British forces managed to seize most objectives within the first two weeks of the operation. The Allies had succeeded in liberating German occupied territory for the first time in the war.

With United States ground forces entering the war against Germany for the first time, the Allies moved quickly to secure their gains. The rapid progress of the campaign in North Africa set the stage for further advances in the Mediterranean and around Italy, leading to the eventual surrender of Germany in 1945.

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time, hundreds of journalists flocked to Europe to cover the action and report on the exploits of the U.S. military for the public. One of those reporters came to characterize the press’ support for the war effort and the important role that the media played in uniting the public and the military during wartime. On 23 November, Ernie Pyle, a Scrips-Howard reporter, sailed for Oran, Algeria, and began to report on the Allied operations in North Africa. Like many others, Pyle had become a war correspondent during the Battle of Britain. His pieces recounted the daily life of the American soldier as he was introduced to the horrors of the war. Pyle’s style of reporting filled an important role in the military’s efforts to bring the war to the American people. Just days after operations in North Africa began, General Eisenhower responded to a message from General Marshall concerning the type of coverage the press was giving the landings. Marshall had asked Eisenhower to provide reporters with more opportunities to tell the people about the efforts of junior officers and enlisted men. Most of the coverage up to that point had focused on military leaders in Washington and on Eisenhower’s staff. Pyle wrote his stories from the point of view of the soldier at the front lines. His pieces helped to bring the experiences of the common soldier, the G.I., to the American people. In his columns, he described the lives of the common soldier and the impact of war upon them. He also mentioned the names and hometowns of his characters, bringing instant fame to ordinary men and giving faces and identities to the country’s fighting men. Americans came to know the names of men like Pat Riddleberger, of Woodstock, Va., and Pvt. John Cougline, Manchester, N.H. through Pyle’s columns. As much as Pyle was writing about

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the events of the war, he was also writing to the public at home. He attempted to educate the American people about what life at the front was like. "It must be hard for you folks at home," Pyle wrote from the Tunisian front, "to conceive how our troops right at the front actually live. In fact it is hard to describe to you even when I'm among them, living in somewhat the same way they are. You can scarcely credit the fact that human beings -- the same people you've known all your life -- could adjust themselves so acceptingly to a type of living that is only slightly above the caveman stage."

Despite the success of Ernie Pyle and other journalists, the relationship between the military and the media experienced "growing pains" during the North African campaign. Operations in North Africa marked the first time that a large number of reporters accompanied U.S. forces into the field in World War II. Deficiencies in the military's communications systems caused most of the friction between the military and the press. "Journalists complained to Eisenhower as theater commander that their stories were inexcusably delayed because of the troubles with the communications equipment. The communications problems and journalists' demands for better transmission facilities frustrated Eisenhower so much that General Marshall asked General Alexander Days"

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74In late November 1942, Eisenhower sent a memorandum to General Alexander Days Surles, head of the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations, describing his communications difficulties. "My own worry is communications," Eisenhower wrote. "For some strange reason radio seems to work at its lowest level of efficiency in this area and I am constantly battling with airplane messengers and aerial reconnaissance to keep contact with our scattered forces." Eisenhower Papers, 2, "To George Catlett Marshall," 17 November 1942, 729-32.
Surles, head of the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations, speak with the press.

"We cannot advertise to the world," Marshall wrote Surles, "that he is having communications difficulties but you can tell these press men that when the commander is in trouble over communications they certainly cannot expect voluminous press releases."

Marshall continued, "As a matter of fact, they know practically as much as we know and we regret that [the theater] is not organized as a New York newspaper office."  

General Eisenhower, and the military at large, also suffered from a lack of qualified public relations officers to act as liaisons between the military and the press. Without experienced personnel to coordinate censorship and the release of information, the military floundered in its dealings with the press. Throughout the first half of December 1942, Eisenhower sent messages to Surles and Marshall describing his problems with censorship and the press and his need for a capable public relations chief. In a cable to Marshall, Eisenhower apologized for a censorship error that "permitted [a story] to go out . . . that completely misrepresent [sic] attitudes of this headquarters in political matters, particularly, in that it was stated [sic] this headquarters is going beyond matters of immediate military importance." Eisenhower described his relationship with the press as "one of the most difficult administrative problems we have had because it involves dual political and military set up [and is] further complicated by necessary coordination with French."  

In a message to Eisenhower, Marshall noted that "the weakness if any [in your

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command] appears to be in those who have supervised for you at Algiers and London the
transmission of messages and the handling of news and radio releases." Eisenhower
replied that he and his staff were "struggling to get these matters better systematized and
handled."\textsuperscript{77}

To improve the situation, the U.S. Army ordered Brigadier General Robert A.
McClure on 9 December 1942 to assume a position on Eisenhower's staff and coordinate
public relations, military and political censorship, and probably psychological warfare and
propaganda activities.\textsuperscript{78} The British and American armed forces also dispatched six
trained censors to the area. American press representatives in Africa, however, continued
to complain about the delay in the transmission of their news dispatches. Events frustrated
efforts to improve communications.\textsuperscript{80} As a last ditch measure, Eisenhower "directed that

\textsuperscript{77} Marshall Papers, 3, "To Lieutenant General Eisenhower," Washington, D.C., 7
December 1942, 749.

\textsuperscript{78} Eisenhower Papers, 2, "To George C. Marshall," 9 December 1942, Cable
#1503, 818. The U.S. press also criticized Eisenhower for allowing the British too much
control over the flow of information. The New York Times criticized the U.S. command in
North Africa for not dealing as openly with the press as the British command did. The
New York Times also noted that censorship procedures delayed stories from the area up to
seven days. In a memorandum to General Surles, Marshall noted that such reports implied
that the British controlled press communications in Algiers. The difficulties in dealing
with the press in North Africa seemed to Marshall to be building "anti-British prejudices"
within the U.S. press. Marshall Papers, 3, "Memorandum for General Surles,”
[Washington, D.C.], 7 December 1942, 474.

\textsuperscript{79} Eisenhower Papers, 2, "To Russell Peter Hartle," 10 December 1942, Cable
#1592, 825.

\textsuperscript{80} Eisenhower Papers, 2, "To Alexander Days Surles," 11 December 1942, Cable
#1674, 826. Eisenhower had tried to do everything he could think of to improve the
communications system in the theater. He had ordered signal personnel to go "out into
the middle of the Mediterranean among the hostile submarines, to dig up the old Malta
press dispatches take precedence over all official messages going out of this headquarters except those properly classed as urgent and priority." In an attempt to improve the relations between Eisenhower and the press, General Marshall wrote directly to Mr. Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information on, 12 December. "I am very much worried over the terrific pressure being put on [Eisenhower]," Marshall wrote, "more or less to do the impossible, when what we want him to do is win the fight in Tunisia, safeguard our situation against a German rush through Spain, and keep the tribes in North Africa quiet." Marshall continued that "there seems to be no conception here or in England of the fact that he has not the facilities of Cairo or London or Washington and that he has a terrific communication problem." In conclusion he wrote, "I want to give [Eisenhower] a chance to do what he was sent to Africa to do and I hope you can find some way to take off pressure and bring the Press to a practical realization of his difficulties, without advertising them to the enemy." 

Political matters also complicated the North African campaign. In an effort to win

cable, splice it, and bring it into this port. . . . The cable was in operation two hours when a storm dragged the anchored fleet over it and tore it to pieces. Repair took time." Eisenhower also noted, "We have had extraordinary difficulties with static, codes and ciphers to Washington and London. It may have been forgotten that instead of coming in here initially with all the elaborate signal equipment that we wanted and knew we should have, we threw it out of the original loadings so as to bring fighting equipment. A material part of such signal equipment as we could bring went down on the Leedstown. Signal personnel has literally worked twenty hours a day under the most competent technicians that the British and American services can produce."

"Ibid.

"Marshall Papers, 3, "Memorandum for Mr. Elmer Davis, 12 December 1942, [Washington, D.C.], 480-81."
French cooperation in the theater, Eisenhower had approached a retired French officer, General Henri M. Giraud, to act as an intermediary between Allied and Vichy French forces in the area and convince the French not to resist the Allies. The situation was made more complex when the Allies found that Admiral Jean Darlan, a reputed French collaborator with the Nazis, was present in Algiers at the time of the invasion. Darlan and Giraud vied with each other for a place in the new government of North Africa. The press, especially reporters in the United States, criticized Eisenhower and the Allies for dealing with Darlan. Although the military censored most correspondents' reports on the political situation in North Africa, Ernie Pyle was able to dispatch one story on the situation in which he lambasted the Allied policy. Pyle, who usually avoided such reporting, attacked the Allied policy toward former officials of the Vichy administration.

In his column, he wrote that "our fundamental policy still is one of soft-gloving snakes in our midst... The loyal French see this and wonder what manner of people we are. They are used to force, and expect us to use it against the common enemy, which includes the French Nazis. Our enemies see it, laugh, and call us soft. Both sides are puzzled by a

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84The Allied forces in North Africa attempted to utilize the French government of the region to maintain civil authority. General Eisenhower, commander of U.S. forces in North Africa, agreed to allow French officials like Admiral Darlan to remain in power as long as they cooperated with the Allies. Many within the press corps viewed the Vichy officials as collaborators with the Germans or even as proto-Nazis. Pyle, "Soft Gloving Snakes in Our Midst," Scripps-Howard Column (4 January 1942), quoted in James Tobin Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II (New York: Free Press, 1997), 76.
country at war which still lets enemies run loose to work against it.\textsuperscript{85} Eisenhower was aware of the criticism of his handling of the political situation in North Africa and wrote to his son, John, about his feelings toward the press. "From what I hear of what has been appearing in the newspapers, you are learning that it is easy enough for a man to be a newspaper hero one day and a bum the next... Apparently, the people who have been creating the storm do not like Darlan. The answer to that is, 'Who does?"\textsuperscript{86}

Despite Eisenhower's frustrations with the press, the relationship between the military and the media in North Africa was not as grim as it might have seemed. Although reporters complained about the speed of communications and certain specific actions of Eisenhower, none of the correspondents seriously challenged the legitimacy of the war effort or the soundness of U.S. or Allied strategic reasoning. As the Allies became more secure in the military position and more experienced in dealing with reporters, the situation improved. By December 1942, U.S. and British forces had successfully occupied French North Africa and prepared to move east toward Tunisia and German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Corps. With the stabilization of the situation in Algiers, Eisenhower was able to write to General Surles, "I really believe that at long last our censorship, public relations, ... and other related functions are getting straightened out."

A new member of Eisenhower's staff had arrived in the theater and gave tremendous assistance to the commander in dealing with the press. Brigadier General Walter Bedell

\textsuperscript{85}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{86}Eisenhower Papers, "To John Sheldon Doud Eisenhower," 20 December 1942, 885-86.
"Beetle" Smith, a former executive with the Columbia Broadcasting System, became Eisenhower's chief of staff in December 1942. By 1 January 1943, Eisenhower was writing, "Before Beetle Smith came there was literally almost no one, except myself, in this headquarters that had ever served intimately in the War Department and knew anything at all of the real involvements of press relations, censorship, propaganda, and related subjects." Although Eisenhower had "recognized this weakness in the overall set-up before [he] left London, [he] guessed wrong in thinking that there would be some little time to straighten out these affairs after the first rush of landing was over." Eisenhower, himself, noted, "I think I was a bit naive in believing that censorship would be an easy thing to apply."87 By the middle of January 1943 Eisenhower felt confident enough in his relationship with the press and in the military situation in North Africa that he ordered the "liberalization of censorship policies subject to a few restrictions that seem desirable."88 When President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and other Allied military and political leaders met at Casablanca in North Africa for a strategy conference in January 1943, the press demonstrated their improved feelings toward Eisenhower's command by cooperating in keeping the location of the conference secret until it ended.89 Perhaps the


89. The Casablanca Conference began on 14 January 1943 and continued until 24 January. At the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill planned operations for the next two years. Keeping the Europe first strategy, the two leaders decided to postpone a Cross-Channel invasion of France until sometime in 1944. In its place, the Allies agreed to continue operations against Germany in Africa and then to take steps to remove Italy from the Axis powers. See *Roosevelt Papers*, "The Eight-hundred and Seventy-fifth Press Conference. Joint Conference by the President and Prime Minister Churchill at
most important strategic decision of the conferences was the acceptance of the total war aim of unconditional surrender from the Axis powers. When news of this decision was released to the public, the American people gained a better understanding of what the country was fighting for.\textsuperscript{90}

The news of the Allied successes in North Africa did much to hearten the American people. After the military set-backs of 1941 and early 1942, reports that the U.S. had won a victory in North Africa improved the morale of the United States. Poll data from the period indicated that the first victory for the United States increased American confidence tremendously. When asked if they thought the United States was winning the war, only 25 percent of respondents had answered yes in August 1942. By the end of 1942, that number had risen to 82 percent.\textsuperscript{91} However, the dramatic shift in public attitudes worried some military leaders. As early as 14 December 1942, General Eisenhower wrote to Marshall expressing his concerns that the people of the United States were becoming overly optimistic. "Informal reports reaching me from home indicate that columnists and newspaper writers have been leading the public to expect a quick and easy victory in the Tunisia area," Eisenhower wrote Marshall. "It occurs to me that this impression may do harm in several directions and might possible have something to do with the lack of general understanding" of the war. "I think a talk with the press . . .

\textsuperscript{90}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{91}Gallup Poll, Stoll Source, August 1940 - December 1940.

would serve the purpose of giving a more accurate picture and so warn the public that an early victory is not to be expected." During the initial phase of the Allied eastward drive towards Tunisia, reporters and commentators in the United States continued to speculate on an early victory. Americans had initially believed that the war would last at least three years. By January 1943, only 1 percent believed the war would last that long. Most Americans felt that victory was less than one year away in January 1943.²³

Belief that victory would come quickly was ended on 15 February 1943 when German forces under the command of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel struck inexperienced U.S. troops at the Kasserine Pass, in western Tunisia. The German attack so stunned the green U.S. forces that some units broke and ran. In an attempt to explain what had happened at Kasserine, Ernie Pyle wrote a column to the American people. "Our predicament is damned humiliating . . . . We’ve lost a great deal of equipment, many American lives, and valuable time and territory -- to say nothing of face. Yet no one over here has the slightest doubt that the Germans will be thrown out of Tunisia. It is simply in the cards."²⁴ Pyle stated that two things had contributed to the defeat. First there was "too little to work with . . . , and we underestimated Rommel’s strength and his audacity."

He went on:

Both military men and correspondents knew we were too thinly spread in our sector to hold if the Germans were really to launch a big-

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²³Gallup, January 1942 - June 1942; NORC, 1 January 1943, Stoll Source.

scale attack. Where everybody was wrong was in believing they didn’t have the stuff to do it with. Correspondents are not now permitted to write anything critical concerning the Tunisian situation, or to tell what we think was wrong. The powers that be feel that this would be bad for “home morale.” So you just have to trust that our forces are learning to do better next time.

Personally, I feel that some such setbacks as this -- tragic though it is for Americans, for whom it is now too late -- is not entirely a bad thing for us. It is all right to have a good opinion of yourself, but we Americans are so smug with our cockiness. We somehow feel that just because we’re Americans we can whip our weight in wildcats. And we have got it into our heads that production alone can win the war.

. . . As for our soldiers themselves, you need feel no shame nor concern about their ability. . . . It is true they are not such seasoned battle veterans as the British and the Germans. But they had had some battle experience before this last encounter, and I don’t believe their so-called greenness was the cause of our defeat. One good man simply can’t whip two good men. That’s about the only way I know to put it. Everywhere on every front we simply have got to have more stuff before we start going forward instead of backward.55

Pyle’s words described the true situation in North Africa and across all fronts of the war in early 1943. The United States, which had suffered great losses in the first months after its entry into the war, began to expect too much, too quickly. The war, as Pyle and others explained, would not end with an early Allied victory. Americans accepted Pyle’s view and gradually relinquished their thoughts of an early victory. Only through the continued support and work of the American people could U.S. and Allied forces eventually defeat the Axis powers.56

As the North African operations in 1942 and 1943 demonstrated, the relationship

55Ibid.

between the military and the media was not perfect. The war forced two very different institutions into a close working relationship. In early 1943, the Faculty of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri published a collection of articles examining the "journalistic problems" facing the nation during the current war.\(^7\) The University of Missouri School of Journalism was the first such school devoted exclusively to the education of future journalistic professionals. Founded in 1908 by Walter Williams, it had educated many of the leading journalists and press executives in the years leading up to the Second World War. Traditionally the School of Journalism held a "Journalism Week" shortly before the June commencement exercises to provide a national forum for leading journalists to discuss the state of their profession and to present their views to the soon to be graduated journalism majors at Missouri. With the shortages caused by the war, the faculty of the School decided to abandon the conventional observance of Journalism Week in 1943. "This action was taken because of a patriotic obligation to limit all but the most essential travel, and a belief that leading American journalists would find it doubly difficult in [those] tough times to leave their great responsibilities and come to Columbia [MO] to participate in the exercises." In place of the traditional week of activities, the faculty decided to contact and solicit written comments from leading members of the profession with the intention of publishing a book of the contributions to stand "as the thirty-fourth annual 'Journalism Week' in print." Frank Luther Mott, Dean of The School of Journalism, University of Missouri, acted as editor of the volume. Thirty-two media

\(^7\) *Journalism in Wartime: A Symposium of the School of Journalism, the University of Missouri*, Luther Mott, ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943).
professionals contributed to the work covering topics ranging from censorship to public opinion and post-war reconstruction. One common theme emerged in the articles. Nearly every author praised the ability of the military, the media, the government, and the public, despite problems like those encountered in North Africa, to join together in a common cause and work toward victory. While not ignoring difficulties, contributors pointed to the united efforts of all members of the American society to sacrifice and strive for the war effort. But while all participants of the United States’ war effort might agree in the ultimate goal of the struggle, there were still disagreements on what were the best means to achieve the goal.\footnote{Ibid.}

For the American homefront, 1943 was a year of full mobilization for war. By the middle of 1943, the armed forces had swelled to number nearly 10 million men, with three-fourths serving in the Army. More men continued to fill the ranks, with nearly 100,000 additional inductees each month. The Army and the Navy had dispatched nearly 2.5 million servicemen overseas, and more were shipping out as rapidly as they could complete their eight to ten months of training and the government could find transport. "Dontcha' know there's a war on?," was perhaps the most often uttered phrase in America during 1943. Those left behind repeatedly used it to explain their changed world. Workers at aircraft plants were turning out 7,000 planes a month by June 1943. Under the direction of William Jeffers, the "rubber czar," U.S. industry had succeeded in finding an efficient means to manufacture critically needed synthetic rubber. Small southern textile plants received orders from the armed forces to turn out thousands of uniforms,
parachutes, tarpaulins, and blankets. Many industries, like the major automotive firms, completely retooled their production lines and began to turn out tanks, guns, ammunition, and the thousands of parts necessary to run the machinery of war. To fill the slots of male workers who had joined the armed forces, industry opened its doors to groups that had previously been denied entry into the workforce. Women and minorities began to play a greater role in war production.99

With the increase in jobs, millions of Americans found themselves with more money than they had possessed at any time in the last ten years. However, at the same time that salaries rose, the number of goods available to consumers shrank. By 1942, OPA had imposed rationing on what seemed like everything. Meat, canned goods, gasoline, rubber, silk — all were rationed and available only on certain days. Americans also found that the government discouraged them from traveling and vacationing during the war, and even if someone was able to find the means to move about the country, there was always the question of finding accommodations at the end of the journey. With goods rationed and travel restricted, the government encouraged Americans to invest their surplus in war-bonds and war-stamps to help pay for the war. Volunteers erected booths selling the government issued savings certificates in schools, libraries, factories, and movie theaters. Many Americans saw the victories in North Africa and the end of the campaign on Guadalcanal in February 1943 as signs of hope that they could win the war. With this sense of hope, most did all that they could to help the war effort. The government provided encouragement to the people and reminders of the need to sacrifice. The Office

99Phillips, 1940s, 156-62, 176-79.
of War Information conducted an extensive "poster campaign" in 1943 to inform the people of what they needed to do to help win the war. Posters encouraged Americans to "Buy War Bonds," to "Use it up - wear it out - make it do," and to "Keep America Rolling! Save your 5 best tires. Sell others to Uncle Sam."  

One thing that was not rationed due to the war were motion pictures. Movie stars and production studio chiefs did what they could to encourage the homefront. Movies like "The Human Comedy (March 1943)," "The More the Merrier (13 May 1943)," and "Stage Door Canteen (June 1943)," informed, entertained, and inspired Americans to keep working towards victory. Stars like Bob Hope, Jimmy Stewart, Clark Gable, and Betty Grable conducted tours selling war bonds across the country and went overseas to entertain the troops. The film industry used its enormous resources and facilities to produce thousands of films, documentaries, training films, newsreels -- some as war propaganda and others as purely escapist entertainment. Each type of production had its place in the war effort.  

Americans by 1943 had accepted the need to sacrifice for the war effort. Whether as reporters, air raid wardens, overtime laborers, salvage drive organizers, or war bonds buyers, Americans contributed to the winning of the war. Newsmen, like those who took part in the annual journalism symposium organized by the University of Missouri, agreed to curtail their natural drive to publish certain types of information because of military security concerns. American women became more active in society, filling jobs in  

100 Bird and Rubenstein, Design, 35, 37.  
101 Morella, Films, 57-61.
factories as many men left to fight overseas. Nearly all Americans -- regardless of race, class, religion, or gender -- purchased war bonds and accepted rationing in an effort to support the war. No previous war in the country’s history had seen such national unity. The total commitment of the country mirrored the total nature of the war. With the demand for American-produced war machines coming from U.S., Britain, Russia, China and the other Allies, unity was essential for victory. The U.S. government by 1943 had successfully convinced all Americans to do their part for the total war effort.

As Americans at home worked and sacrificed for the war, U.S. soldiers, sailors, and airmen continued to battle the enemy across the globe. In Europe, U.S. and British forces landed first on Sicily and then invaded Italy itself. During the Sicilian campaign, General Eisenhower as Commander of Allied Forces continued to struggle with military-media relations. While the military and the press had become much more accustomed to working together since the beginning of the North African campaign, difficulties still arose. Perhaps the best known episode involving the military and the press during the war was “the Patton slapping incident.” General George S. Patton had risen quickly within the U.S. Army during the war. A commander of U.S. troops in North Africa and later in Sicily, Patton had become one of the media’s and public’s favorite war leaders because his flamboyant nature appealed to the American sense of military daring. During the invasion

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102The landings on Sicily (Operation Husky) began on 9 May 1943. On 9 September 1943, elements of the Allied armies of Europe landed at Salerno, Italy, and began the liberation of Italy from German control. For complete chronology of the Sicilian and Italian campaigns, as well as the rest of the war, see Chronology, 1941-45, Mary H. Williams, comp. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1960). See Weinberg, World at Arms, 593-614.
of Salerno and Sicily, Patton's emotional nature and personal sense of duty embroiled him in a controversy that would stun the nation. Patton, on a trip to visit American wounded at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital in Sicily, encountered in quick succession two men who suffered from combat fatigue. When Patton saw the first man, who did not have any apparent physical injuries, the general asked the man why he was in the hospital. The man replied, "General, I guess it's my nerves." Patton, who had been under the stress of command during the previous days and was personally moved by the suffering of men under his command who were in the hospital, flew into a rage. He attacked the soldier verbally. When the general met a second soldier suffering from the same condition moments later, he struck the soldier in the head knocking his helmet to the ground.\(^{103}\)

The story of the incident soon spread throughout the hospital and the neighboring units. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of Allied and American forces in the European Theater of Operations, received an unofficial account of the incident on 20 August 1943 from the surgeon in charge of the hospital. Within a matter of hours, a group of newspaper reporters approached Eisenhower. The journalists had already gathered most of the pertinent facts about the incident from witnesses at the

\(^{103}\) In his memoirs, General Dwight D. Eisenhower attempted to explain Patton's behavior. According to Eisenhower, Patton "sincerely believed that there was no such thing as true 'battle fatigue' or 'battle neurosis.' He always maintained that any man who began to show signs of breaking under battle conditions could by shock be restored to a sense of responsibility and to adequate performance of duty." Eisenhower also attested that one of the men was suffering from physical illness, running a temperature of 102. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1948), 180. See also Harry C. Butcher, My Three Years with Eisenhower (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1946), 391-394; Eisenhower Papers, 3, "To George C. Marshall," 24 November 1943, Cable W6017, 1571-73
hospital. Eisenhower, professing that he understood without condoning what Patton had done, immediately took steps to reprimand the general while attempting to save Patton's career for "service in the great battles still facing us in Europe." The Supreme Commander also met with the group of reporters who had first brought the story to him. He explained to them the actions that he had taken and his reasons for them. In his memoirs, Eisenhower specifically addressed this issue, noting that the general assumption was that "censorship was applied." Eisenhower denied that he censored the story. In fact, he issued specific instructions that no one was to take direct or indirect measures to suppress the account and allowed them to use their own judgements regarding how they reported the story. All the journalists voluntarily refused to write or speak about the matter.

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104 Eisenhower, Crusade, 181. Eisenhower took steps to reprimand Patton without ending his career. He immediately wrote a severe letter of reprimand to Patton informing him that no repetition of the incident would be tolerated and that Patton had to personally apologize to both of the men he attacked. He also instructed Patton to apologize to the officers and staff of the hospital in which the incident took place. Finally, Patton had to appear before the officers and representative groups of enlisted men in each of his divisions to assure them that he had "given way to impulse and respected their positions as fighting soldiers of a democratic nation." Eisenhower also dispatched three representatives, the Surgeon General who went to the hospital to speak with the medical staff, General Blesse to meet with the officers and representative groups of enlisted men from the divisions of Patton’s army, and his special assistant General Lucas to meet with Patton himself. Patton instantly complied with all of Eisenhower’s conditions and remained in the theater of operations, although in a less visible role. See Butcher, 3 Years, 394-397.

105 Eisenhower offered proof that there was no official ban on the story. Only few days after his meeting with the correspondents, two of the journalists, Demaree Bess and Quentin Reynolds, returned to the United States where they were then free from any direct or indirect influence from the Allied Headquarters. The two wrote nothing about the incident. Eisenhower, Crusade, 182; Eisenhower Papers, 3, "To Walter Campbell Sweeney," 28 December 1943, 1629-30.
The incident continued to be a trouble spot for the Supreme Commander. Edward Kennedy, the local bureau chief for the Associated Press, returning from America informed Eisenhower that he feared that the story about Patton would eventually appear in the U.S. papers and that the war correspondents assigned to cover the war in Italy would be accused of "whitewashing" the news or of being subjected to rigid censorship not based on military security. Drew Pearson, a gossip columnist based in Washington, D.C., finally broke the story about Patton's slapping of the soldier on 23 November 1943, four months after the incident. Immediately after the news broke in the U.S., Eisenhower's chief of staff at the Allied Force Headquarters held an informal press conference to supply the local war correspondents any details about the incident that they might lack. During this conference, one reporter asked about disciplinary action taken against Patton. The briefer replied that the Supreme Commander had issued no reprimand. While this was technically accurate, it did not reflect the actual events.¹⁰⁶ At the end of the conference, a reporter contacted Eisenhower to criticize him for the "shabby treatment of the press."

Eisenhower immediately issued a clarifying statement, but it was too late. In less than ten minutes the information from the conference had been dispatched to the United States and put out over the news wires. Only with time and the continued success of the Allied forces in Europe did the incident begin to fade from the memory of the public. The Patton slapping incident, while widely known, signified the improvements of the military-media relationship since operations in North Africa. Through his candid approach to the press,

¹⁰⁶ Eisenhower had written a letter of reprimand but had chosen not to make if a formal entry in Patton's official 201 file at the War Department. Butcher, 3 Years, 450.
Eisenhower succeeded in enlisting the aid of journalists in preserving the career of one of his most competent commanders. Just as other journalists set aside their professional interests for the good of the country, the war correspondents in Italy refrained from publishing a story that could have damaged the war effort.107

While the difficult fighting in Italy continued, the Allies began intensive planning for the next phase in their war against the Germans -- the cross-Channel invasion of Europe. Although U.S. military leaders had hoped to begin the operation in 1943, they had neither the landing craft nor the cooperation of the British for an invasion in that year. The Allies agreed on the timing of the invasion at the Cairo conference (lasting from 22 November till 7 December 1943). For the next six months, Eisenhower as the newly designated Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces, and his headquarters, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces, planned for the largest operation of the war. By the beginning of 1944, the command structure for the upcoming invasion, code-named Overlord,108 was in place. While it was no secret that the Allies were


108I have chosen to use Overlord as the descriptive name for the cross-Channel invasion even though Neptune was the official code-name for the attack. In the glossary of Gordon A. Harrison’s Cross-Channel Attack (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1950) he offers the following definitions: Overlord - “plan for the invasion of northwest Europe, spring 1944;” Neptune - “Actual 1944 operations within Overlord.” I recognize that a popular misconception has arisen in which Overlord was believed to be the code word for the Normandy invasion. A similar mistake with regard to terms referring to the Allied invasion of southern France. Many historians use the names Anvil and Dragoon interchangeably. Harrison defined Anvil as the “planned 1944 Allied invasion of southern France in the Toulon-Marseille areas” and Dragoon as the “Allied invasion of the southern coast of France, 15 August 1944, planned under the code name Anvil.” (See Maurice Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition
planning to return to France sometime in 1944, the date and location of the invasion were some of the most closely guarded information of the war. The opening of the second-front would be the largest operation of the war and determine the remaining course of the war.\textsuperscript{109}

The planning for the invasion of France was exhaustive. As part of the preparation, Allied military leaders gave much thought to ensuring that the people received the most accurate information about the operation. General Eisenhower had learned how to deal with the press during the previous two years of operations. His attitude toward representatives of the press was to regard them as "quasi staff officers" and to recognize their mission in the war and to assist them in carrying it out.\textsuperscript{110} In the Foreword to \textit{Regulations for War Correspondents Accompanying Allied Expeditionary Force in the Field}, published and distributed in April 1944, Eisenhower reaffirmed his

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\textit{Warfare, 1943-44} (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1959). I also recognize that even major historical figures of the period -- such as Churchill -- used those terms. Nevertheless, it was used inaccurately. German intelligence successes caused this semantic inaccuracy. The Germans had compromised both Overlord and Anvil in late 1943. The Allies detected the compromises, and replaced Overlord and Anvil as official code names for operations with Neptune and Anvil. However, Allied military and political leaders had used both Overlord and Anvil widely before they were compromised that they continued in use, even at high levels, often with Allied deception and security agencies' encouragement. Consequently the terms crept into history and into the terminology of the war. The Germans never detected the far more secret and accurate terms of Neptune and Anvil, but few individuals knew of those terms and they did not become part of the invasion terminology. To assist the reader, I have chosen to use the less historically accurate code-names to designate the specific operations that were part of the cross-Channel invasion campaign.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{109}See Weinberg, \textit{World at Arms}, 612ff.

\textsuperscript{110}Eisenhower, \textit{Crusade}, 300-301.
attitudes toward the press.

To Press and Radio representatives accredited to Allied Expeditionary Force: --

With regard to publicity, the first essential in military operations is that no information of value shall be given to the enemy. The first essential in newspaper work and broadcasting is wide-open publicity. It is your job and mine to try to reconcile these sometimes diverse considerations.

I well appreciate that the man in the street is entitled to be informed about his country's forces and of the progress of the war. He is vitally interested, and the fullest and most accurate information, compatible with the maintenance of military security, should be made available to him. Only by the willing cooperation of the general public in the war effort can we be victorious.

I am glad to have you with us; I know that we can so cooperate that this particular job will be well done. 111

Eisenhower and Brigadier General Thomas Jefferson Davis, SHAEF's Chief of Public Relations Division, sought to establish a well planned system that would support the journalists allowed to cover Overlord. Part of the difficulty in dealing with the press before the beginning of the invasion was in finding enough news for them to report during the build-up phase of the operation. Because of the need to maintain secrecy, many parts of England were off limits to reporters and specific details of the preparations were not revealed to the press. The military leadership faced the problem of continuing to supply information to the home front that would demonstrate that the Allies were still making progress in the war against Hitler without disclosing details about the invasion. In the

111 "Accredited War Correspondents," from Dwight D. Eisenhower to All United Commanders, Allied Expeditionary Forces, 19 April 1944, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 331, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, Secretary General Staff, Public Relations Division, Executive Branch, 000.74-1. Hereafter cited as "Document Title," Date, RG 331, SHAEF, SGS, PRD, EB, Decimal File #000.00. See also, Regulations for War Correspondents Accompanying Allied Expeditionary Force in the Field (April 1944), "Forward"; Eisenhower Papers, 3, "To All United Commanders, AEF," 8 May 1941, 1853-54.
end, SHAEF allowed the publication of general information regarding the preparation for some future invasion but kept secret any specific information regarding Overlord.\textsuperscript{112}

At a meeting on 24 April 1944, American and British public affairs officers, developed much of the formula for the invasion's coverage. Because of technological and logistical limitations, the military controlled the only means of transmitting stories from the beachheads. When a correspondent on the beaches finished his story, according to SHAEF's plan, he would deliver it to the military public relations officer who accompanied him. The PRO would then put the story in a special press bag and designate it for transport back across the Channel by boat. If a bag contained several stories, the public relations officer would prioritize the stories according to time submitted so that the censors back in London would examine them in the correct order. In the event that the landing forces could establish sufficient radio communication stations from the beachhead, the military public relations officer would also handle the censoring of broadcasts.\textsuperscript{113}

On 6 May 1944, exactly one month before the invasion would take place, the \textit{New York Times} published an Associated Press story commenting on SHAEF's plans for the handling of press material during the invasion of Europe. British and American censors would work together to perform joint censorship of stories as they arrived in London from the beachheads of France. Joint censorship was intended to "eliminate delay and

\textsuperscript{112}"Public Relations Plan, 'Overlord,'" 1 May 1944, RG 331, SHAEF, SGS, PRD, EB, Decimal File 009."

\textsuperscript{113}"Memorandum to chief public relations officer," 20 March 1944, Publicity and Psychological Warfare, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, from Major Fred M. Payne (Canada), RG 331, SHAEF, SGS, PRD, EB, 000.73."
confusion which sometimes resulted when copy had to be cleared by both American and British censors." On the same day that the New York Times ran the story of joint censorship, correspondents in London met to honor the work of SHAEF in planning for the upcoming offensive. The Association of American Correspondents in London passed a resolution honoring General T. J. Davis for the arrangements to facilitate press coverage of the invasion of western Europe. According to the account of the ceremony, "General Davis explained the pooling, censorship, and communications arrangements and said the whole effort was being made to enable the finest and fastest possible coverage of the invasion." Although the press expressed hope that all of the time and effort the military had directed toward the efficient handling of invasion news would succeed, journalists were still wary. The "blueprints for second-front news coverage look beautiful on paper," James MacDonald of the New York Times wrote from London on 26 May 1944, "but many newspaper men are keeping their fingers crossed because they have not forgotten the many snags that interfered with the transmission of news when Allied forces landed in North Africa." MacDonald noted that over 400 newspaper reporters, radio broadcasters, still and movie camera men were poised in England to cover the most dramatic event of the war to date. While praising the efforts made by the military to facilitate the flow of news, MacDonald pointed to what he saw as a problem in the planning. For the first few hours after the invasion had begun, most accounts of the progress would come from

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114 New York Times, 6 May 1944, 3.

official sources. In an effort to satisfy all reporters, military authorities in SHAEF decided
to issued two communiques daily, one at 11 a.m., British time, and the other at 11:30
p.m., British time, but both release times were too late to make the normal deadlines of
American newspapers. Journalists informed SHAEF representatives "that a communique
issued at 11 a.m. in London . . . will just miss the morning editions in New York unless
their papers go to extra expense of "holding open" far beyond their regular closing time. . .
. Moreover, a communique issued at 11:30 will have a similar effect on New York
afternoon newspapers. . . . Most American newspaper men . . . would have preferred the
communiques to be issued at 4:30 a.m. and 4 p.m." Despite such complaints, most
journalists accepted the military's plans.\footnote{116}

SHAFF issued press assignments for Overlord well in advance of the landings.
Only a relatively small portion of accredited journalists would actually witness the
invasion. In 1944, 368 reporters covered the Allied Expeditionary Force from London.
Nearly one half of the total (180) were from the American press corps.\footnote{117} When the actual
landings began on the morning of 6 June 1944, SHAFF assigned twenty U.S.
correspondents to cover the U.S. First Army's landing on Omaha Beach. In all only
twenty-seven U.S. newsmen -- representing print, radio, films, and still photography --

\footnote{116}{James MacDonald, "Invasion Newsmen Hope for 'Breaks'," \textit{New York Times},
27 May 1944, 2; see also "Subject D-Day Guidance for the Press," 31 May 1944, RG 331,
SHAFF, SGS, PRD, EB, 007.3 London was six hours ahead of New York in the
summer and five hours ahead of the U.S. east coast the rest of the year.}

\footnote{117}{88 British newsmen were accredited to SHAFF, while an additional 27
represented press organizations from the British empire. "Public Relations Plan
'Overlord'," 1 May 1944, RG 331, SHAFF, SGS, PRD, EB, 009.}
accompanied the first waves of the Allied armies. More journalists followed in subsequent waves. The small number of newsmen landing in the initial stages of the invasion meant that certain portions of the invading force did not have press coverage. For example, no American correspondent accompanied the Ranger forces that attacked the Dog Green section of Omaha Beach made famous by the Steven Spielberg’s film Saving Private Ryan. Only one reporter, Time’s William Walton, landed with U.S. airborne units behind the Normandy beachheads.\footnote{Ibid.}

In practice, reporters who went ashore were not able to tell the full story of the first few hours and days of the cross-Channel invasion. Most of the story came from SHAEF headquarters in London. Reporters who had stayed in London, like Edward R. Murrow, provided the best and often only source of news during the initial phases of the invasion.\footnote{New York Times, 7 June 1944, 7.} The first word that the second-front had been opened came from the Germans, with SHAEF issuing their official confirmation at 9:30 a.m., 6 June 1944, British time.\footnote{Butcher, 3 Years, 567.} Although the invasion had successfully secured a toehold on the Continent, officers at SHAEF worried that reports from London and those beginning to trickle out from the beachheads might lead to overoptimism. By 8 June the Allies continued to advance inland, but operations were off by twelve to twenty-four hours.\footnote{Butcher, 3 Years, 575. See Weinberg, World at Arms, 662ff.}

Despite the best plans of the military and the media, the coverage of the invasion
from the beachheads fell apart. On 10 June 1944 the New York Times printed a Combined American Press Dispatch titled “U.S. Beachhead Reporter Says News System Fails.” According to the report, the system set up to transmit news from the invasion “broke down completely and for more than twenty-eight hours [reporters] were unable to get news out on the dough boys in action.” While the U.S. press was out of touch with the rest of the world, the BBC carried reports from its correspondents accompanying the British invasion forces. The confusion and chaos on the beaches were the prime reason that the U.S. reporters lost contact with London. According to the story, “Public relations officers brought a radio ashore early in the assault waves, but put it aboard a jeep which they were unable to find until this morning.” Although SHAEF planners had developed an alternative method to convey journalists’ stories back to London, it too failed. “There is supposed to be a system of couriers to take correspondents’ dispatches from the beach to ships returning to England, where they are to be picked up and forwarded to London,” the story continued, “but there are no couriers.”

Despite the breakdown in communications, reporters still sent stories back from the beachheads. During the first day of the invasion, journalists on the beaches and in London managed to send 400,000 words and over one hundred pictures related to the landings, but the majority of information came from England and not from Normandy. The situation for reporters covering the landings and follow-on operations gradually improved and on 10 June, the AP reported that 2,500,000 words had been cabled from

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\[122\] New York Times, 10 June 1944, 10.

\[123\] New York Times, 11 June 1944, 34.
London and France since the start of the invasion. The military did not intentionally delay
the transmission of reporters' stories from the landing beaches of Normandy. Censors
quickly cleared stories once they reached London. On 13 June, E. C. Daniel of the New
York Times was able to report that censors vetted stories about the invasion in an average
of eleven minutes apiece.124 Once forces had secured the beachheads and brought in
additional supplies, the situation for the reporters improved. The press coverage of D-
Day, while not without its setbacks, was effective. The public received word about the
opening of the second front as quickly as possible under very difficult conditions.125

Following the success of the landings in Normandy, the American people looked
forward to the end of the war in Europe. With the breakout of Allied forces from the
beachhead area in July and August of 1944, the end of Germany seemed almost in sight.
Throughout the summer and the fall of 1944, U.S., British, Canadian, and French troops
pushed the German Army back toward the Rhine. The rising sense of optimism worried
some within the military and political leadership. They feared that the American people
expected too much, too quickly. Production of vitally needed war equipment in the
United States decreased in response to the feeling among the American people that the
war was almost over. The success at Normandy had caused many Americans to react as
they had after the victories in North Africa. In July 1944, over 50 percent of poll
respondents expected victory in the next year. By November, that number had risen to 66

1944, 4.

125Butcher, 3 Years, 610.
percent.\textsuperscript{126} In a better position to know the true standing of the enemy forces, leaders such as General George C. Marshall, General Dwight Eisenhower, and President Franklin Roosevelt understood that while the Germans were reeling they were not yet defeated.\textsuperscript{127} In August and October 1944, Eisenhower had written to Washington expressing concern over excessive optimism. Citing the recent victories in Europe, Eisenhower cautioned, "But all these accomplishments must not blind us to the fact that we have got a terrific battle to fight."\textsuperscript{128} The commander of Allied operations in Europe went on to write, "Now, as never before, it is time for us to redouble our efforts and steel ourselves to the conflict. The exact date of the finish of the battle is not nearly so important as is the completeness of our victory. . . . Therefore, a united front and an intensification of effort will be valuable it two ways; it will shorten the war by increased application of tactical power, and discourage the German in the execution of his last desperate plan."\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{126}Roper Organization, July 1944; Roper Organization November 1944, Stoll Source.

\textsuperscript{127}George C. Marshall: Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue, Larry I. Bland, ed. (Lexington, VA: George C. Marshall Research Foundation, 1991), 625. In response to a question from interviewer Pogue, Marshall recalled, "We felt very deeply that we would get into political distress if war and casualties were prolonged. All our instincts pointed to necessity of ending war at earliest possible moment. During the Bulge that Texan (big old Buster - Connally) went wild. Every time we had a victory, of course, people thought the war was over. Wanted to close down. Hadn't begun. Very bad in 1944 when we broke out. Almost dislike to hear of a victory. A very serious consideration in wanting to avoid sideshows. We wanted to end the war in a hurry."


\textsuperscript{129}Eisenhower Papers, 4, "To Surles," 6 October 1944, 2210-11.
Reports from Europe contained news of great victories, steady advances, and optimistic predictions about the future. Journalists and military leaders fed off of each other's excitement about the long-hoped-for end to the fighting. Few wanted to disrupt the good feeling by injecting a cautionary voice. By December 1944, the Allied advance had reached the German border at the Our River in the south and penetrated the boundaries of the Huertgen Forest in the north. On 16 December 1944, the fears came true as German army units launched their "last desperate plan" and attacked the weak American positions near the Ardennes regions of Belgium and Luxembourg. The Germans advanced rapidly, breaking through the widely-spread U.S. troops. Only two divisions, the airborne units of the 82nd and the 101st, were available as reinforcements, and they moved forward quickly to help slow the German advance. For nearly a week, while the weather prevented the Allies from bringing in air power, the Wehrmacht pushed the U.S. and British forces back — nearly sixty-five miles at one point.\(^{130}\)

Before the German offensive in the Ardennes, reporters had helped to fuel the growing optimism about the end of the war. Caught off guard by the sudden attack, journalists scrambled to make sense of what was happening. They began asking how the United States Army, with superiority in men, weapons, leadership, could be retreating before the almost defeated enemy. SHAEF officials, hoping to limit information that might help the Germans in gauging the success of their attack, imposed a twenty-four to forty-eight hour news blackout on reports about the fighting in the Ardennes. Reporters, sensing a story of immense proportions, protested the military's decision to delay news

\(^{130}\)See Weinberg, *World at Arms*, 760-78.
and charged that the military withheld information not for security reasons, but because officers were attempting to shield the public from bad news and to cover-up military errors. 131 Journalists were able to report on the full story of the offensive only after the Battle of the Bulge ended. The determination and ruthlessness of the German Army’s last attempt to save its homeland characterized many of the accounts. Journalists reported the savagery of the German massacre of American POWs at Malmedy, the deception activities of German special forces disguised as G.I.s to spread confusion, and the bitter cold and terrible weather that took its toll on men and machines. 132 Perhaps Fred McKenzie of the Buffalo Evening News provided the best known story of the Battle of the Bulge. McKenzie was with the 101st Airborne Division when it rushed to defend the city of Bastogne. For over a week, the paratroopers held out against the Germans. Even though surrounded, the U.S. soldiers refused to give ground. When the German commander offered terms for surrender, General Anthony MacAuliffe, commander of the 101st at Bastogne, responded with one word: “Nuts!” This story, printed first in Buffalo and later throughout the United States, came to symbolize American determination. 133

The German attack in the Ardennes had a beneficial impact on the American war effort. The surprise attack succeeded in shaking the public out of its premature sense of

131 “Newsmen Flare Up At Army Blackout,” Editor and Publisher (23 December 1944), 13.


133 “How Newsmen Faced Nazi Breakthrough,” Editor and Publisher (6 January 1945), 60.
victory. An editorial published on 6 January 1945 in the media trade journal *Editor and Publisher*, expressed the rededication of the nation. “Within the past few weeks we and 125 million other Americans have come back with a sudden jolt to a realization that the main business of this nation continues to be war!”\(^{134}\) In the same publication, Robert Brown blamed the German breakthrough on the unrealistic expectations that the war was almost over. “We've had too much overoptimism in the last few months from the highest commanders right down to the assembly lines and the two immediate results were the shortages of supplies and the German breakthrough.” After the Battle of the Bulge, newsmen and other public figures resisted the temptation to speak of a quick end to the war. Americans, in part because of news accounts of the battle like Fred McKenzie's description of the defense of Bastogne, rededicated themselves to working until the war was truly over.\(^{135}\)

During the first few months of 1945, the German defenses in the west unraveled quickly as the Allies advanced. The Third Army reached the Rhine and the 9th Armored Division seized a bridge across the Rhine at Remagen on 7 March. By the end of the month, U.S. had troops crossed the frontier of Germany from the south while British forces advanced from the north. As these Anglo-American armies rolled through western and central Germany, Soviet forces entered the outskirts of Berlin from the east, occupying the capital of the Third Reich on 20 April 1945. Five days later, Soviet and


American units met on the Elbe and effectively cut Germany in half. The end for Germany came of 7 May at a small red schoolhouse in Rheims, France, where Allied and German representatives met to stop the war. While journalists gathered nearby, General Eisenhower accepted the German surrender. At a small press conference after the signing, the German representative, Colonel General Alfred Jodl said, "With this signature, the German people and armed forces are for better or worse delivered into the victors’ hands."\textsuperscript{136}

The end of the war in Europe was a moment of great exuberance and joy for most Americans. However, the surrender marked the lowest point in the military-media relationship in Europe. As victory approached, the relationship became increasingly strained. Since January 1945, journalists and editors had called for a relaxation of censorship rules.\textsuperscript{137} Two weeks before the surrender took place, journalists had transmitted a premature announcement of the war’s end.\textsuperscript{138} The day prior to the surrender, SHAEF public relations officers selected seventeen correspondents to cover the meeting between Jodl and Eisenhower. Major General Frank A. Allen, who had replaced


\textsuperscript{137}"Censor Trouble Blamed on Gaps in Education", \textit{Editor and Publisher} (17 February 1945), 30.

\textsuperscript{138}"Peace Flash Denial Sets Off Rivalry Among Newspapers," \textit{Editor and Publisher} (5 May 7 1945), 9.
General T. J. Davis as director of the Supreme Headquarters' Public Relations Division, warned correspondents that the government leaders of the United States, Britain, France, and Russia would make the first announcement and that reporters would not witness the actual surrender signing. "I pledge each one of you on his honor," Allen told the reporters, "as a correspondent and as an assimilated officer of the United States Army not to communicate [news of the surrender] until it is released on the order of the Public Relations Director of SHAEF." Following Jodl's signing of the surrender documents, the SHAEF press officer told the correspondents that "high political" officials had ordered a news blackout until the following day. Edward Kennedy, an Associated Press correspondent, was present at Rheims and heard of the surrender and news embargo from General Allen. When Kennedy asked Allen about the delay in releasing the news, the general informed the journalist that it was a political decision. Kennedy, who had several times been scooped on a story because he had delayed the release of information to suit the military, decided to find a way to get word of the war's end out to his news organization. Using a complicated military telephone system that was not censored, Kennedy transmitted his story to London at 3:34 PM (fully nineteen and one half hours before the official announcement was scheduled) headed, "Rheims, France, May 7 --

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139 *Eisenhower Papers*, 4, "To Alexander Days Surles," 6 September 1944, 2123-24. General Davis had taken sick and was replaced by Brigadier General Frank A. Allen, Jr. Allen had experience as both a public affairs officer and as a line commander. He remained director of public relations with SHAEF from September 1944 through the end of the war.

140 Dwight Bentel, "Kennedy Details Incidents Before His Surrender Flash," *Editor and Publisher* (9 June 1945), 7, 62.
Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies and the Soviet Union at 2:41 a.m. French time today.\textsuperscript{141} The military responded to Kennedy's actions, rescinding his accreditation and suspending the Associated Press' facilities throughout Europe. On May 17, SHAEF ordered Kennedy to return to the United States. Generals Allen and Eisenhower both released statements condemning Kennedy's actions, characterizing it as a betrayal of trust. The president of the AP apologized to the nation and, after reviewing his actions, directed Kennedy to apologize or lose his job. Kennedy refused and was fired. The end of the war in Europe, supposedly a happy event, was a time of division. Some journalist were angry with the military for imposing censorship for political reasons. Most, however, were more upset at Kennedy for breaking his word to embargo the news of the surrender. Despite the tensions over the way SHAEF handled the announcement, the war in Europe was largely a successful endeavor that united the press, the military, the government, and the people behind one goal — the defeat of Germany.\textsuperscript{142}

In the wake of 7 May 1945, the United States and its Allies celebrated their victory

\textsuperscript{141}Kennedy, "The War in Europe is Ended!" British censors passed the story because they had received no special instructions on surrender stories. "Kennedy's Statement in Reply to Gen. Allen," \textit{Editor and Publisher} (12 May 1945), 6.

\textsuperscript{142}Dwight Bentel, "SHAEF Turmoil Goes On; Kennedy is Ordered Home," \textit{Editor and Publisher} (19 May 1945), 8; Butcher 835-6. In 1948 a proposal was made to the United States Congress that a special decoration be awarded to those correspondents present at Rheims on 7 May 1945. The decoration read in part, that those reporters had "displayed the highest ideals of responsible journalism . . . by keeping inviolate the pledge of confidence and military secrecy imposed on them." Kennedy did not receive the award. See Phillip Knightley, \textit{The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker} (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 332.
over Germany. The Allies had accomplished the first part of their war strategy, the defeat of Germany and the liberation of Western Europe. As early as August 1941, at the Argentia Conference, Anglo-American leaders had recognized the threat that Germany posed to world stability. Not only had Adolf Hitler's Nazi forces threaten to conquer all of Europe, but they also had stood poised to exterminate the democratic freedoms and traditions of the United States. Because of Germany's great threat to the United States, the American people responded totally to the needs of the war effort. Under unprecedented government leadership, all segments of American society contributed to the war through sacrifice, dedication, and determination. Despite difficulties -- like the problems between the military and the press during operations in North Africa and the Italian theater, and the public's feelings of excessive optimism during 1944 -- Americans remained remarkably united in their commitment to winning the war. With the defeat of Germany, the United States and her allies redirected their efforts to the last remaining member of the Triple Axis -- Japan.\(^{143}\)

Although the Allies had accepted a "Europe-first" strategy before the United States entered the war, American troops by 1942 engaged the enemy not only in North Africa but also on Guadalcanal, one of the Solomon Islands, and in New Guinea. Soon, names of far away, exotic places like Tarawa, Eniwetok, Saipan, and Iwo Jima came to be familiar as U.S. forces advanced through the Central Pacific in 1943 and 1944. Warfare in the Pacific was different from that in Europe. The great distances and the underdevelopment of the Pacific region made the close coordination between the armed

\(^{143}\text{See Weinberg, } \textit{World at Arms}, \text{ Introduction, 780ff.}\)
services, that characterized fighting in Europe, difficult. And while combat on Japanese-held islands was some of the severest of the war, the units in the Pacific fought sharp battles and then enjoyed extended periods of inaction during which they could recover, rethink tactics, and retrain for the next landing. Troops in the Pacific took advantage of the time necessary to move between distant islands to improve steadily their combat effectiveness.\textsuperscript{144}

News from the Pacific was limited because of the nature of the war in that theater, poor communications systems, and the strategic and press concentration on "Europe first." During early Pacific campaigns, like the fighting on Guadalcanal, editors had to instruct journalists to include the month in their date lines because stories arrived so late in the States that it was difficult to tell if they had been written, for example, in November or December. Reporters had to send their stories from the isolated islands of the Pacific by either plane or ship from the front to a more developed area like New Caledonia for transmission to the United States. By the time of the Saipan invasion in April 1944, the Navy had improved the process and allowed reporters to file stories directly from ships supporting island invasions.\textsuperscript{145} However, difficulties persisted in the coverage of operations in the Pacific. Because few civilian correspondents operated in the theater, combat correspondents of the U.S. Marine Corps provided much of the Pacific war coverage. During the invasion of Guam in September 1944, one hundred correspondents reported on the invasion, but only twenty-seven were civilians, compared with the more

\textsuperscript{144}See Weinberg, \textit{World at Arms}, 310ff.

\textsuperscript{145}Tremain, "Pacific Coverage Hits High Point at Saipan."
than three hundred civilian correspondents with forces in Europe at the same time. Correspondent Ernie Pyle, at the urging of the U.S. Navy, agreed in 1944 to observe the fighting in the Pacific. Pyle was struck by the ebb and flow of action that was so different from the war he was familiar with in Europe. Despite some personal ties to forces in the Pacific, he never felt the same closeness with the soldiers, sailors, and marines as he had with the units he accompanied in Europe. In December 1944, Pyle wrote to Eisenhower expressing his views of the war in the Pacific. The Pacific war, he told the general, “bears no resemblance to the misery and bitterness of the front lines as we know them. . . . As much as I grew to hate the war [in Europe], I miss my friends and the camaraderie of the misery of the Western Front.” Pyle’s feelings reflected the nation’s lack of connection with the actions in the Pacific.

Just as the war in Europe was winding down in the spring of 1945, U.S. forces in the Pacific were gearing up for their final push toward the Japanese home-islands. Communications systems continued to improve and allowed for greater coverage of the war in the Pacific. During the invasion of Luzon in January 1945, the Navy established a floating press headquarters on three ships anchored off the landing sites, allowing reporters to send 170,000 words to San Francisco by voice-cast or by high-speed radio teleprinter in one week. Reporters praised the innovation as the “best solution to the

146 “Guam Invasion Covered by 100 Correspondents,” Editor and Publisher (9 September 1944), 30.

problem [with communications] so far.\footnote{148} On 19 February 1945, U.S. Marines stormed ashore on another small volcanic island in the Pacific named Iwo Jima that served as an early warning station against U.S. bombing raids on Japan and that possessed several sites that U.S. bombers needing emergency landing sites could use. Three Marine divisions -- the 3rd, 4th, and 5th -- took part in the largest amphibious invasion in the Pacific to date. Four days after first setting foot on Iwo Jima, the Marines reached the summit of Mt. Suribachi, the highest point on the island.\footnote{149} On the summit the Marines raised the flag of the United States. Joe Rosenthal, an AP photographer, was present when the Marines planted the symbol of America over Iwo Jima and captured the moment on film.\footnote{150} The Navy rapidly sent his picture to the United States where nearly every newspaper reprinted it.\footnote{151} It embodied the triumph of the United States and the country’s determination to continue to final victory. The press widely used Rosenthal’s snapshot and the government employed it as the symbol of the Seventh War Bond Drive, making the drive the most successful of the war.\footnote{152}


\footnote{149}See Weinberg, \textit{World at Arms}, 858-69.


\footnote{151}Jack Price, “Navy Plan Help Cameramen in Speedy Coverage on Iwo,” \textit{Editor and Publisher} (24 February 1945), 7; “Iwo Reporters Have Full Aid of Navy Dept.,” \textit{Editor and Publisher} (3 March 1945), 6.

\footnote{152}“Wartime Gains Are Shown in Ad Readership Studies,” \textit{Editor and Publisher} (30 June 1945), 7.
With the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, the country focused all of its attention and efforts toward the defeat of Japan. Coverage of the war, like that supplied by Rosenthal and other reporters, helped to keep the country focused on final victory. Advertisers stepped up their efforts to motivate the homefront with a campaign that emphasized, "Germany's Defeated, Don't Forget Japan." 153 Young & Rubicam, a leading New York ad agency, produced a new advertisement that ran along side the announcement of the Allied victory in Europe. The ad was a "strong presentation of the feelings of the troops in the Pacific who are still dodging bullets." Young & Rubicam designers created a scene where a tired Pacific soldier spoke to God. "If you could only get the people back home to remember me." the soldier prayed. "You see, God, I'd like to go home, too." As had happened after the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, the American people maintained and even increased their work to bring the war to a speedy end. 154 Americans had always envisioned a long war against Japan. In 1942, 41 percent of poll respondents had stated that the war would last at least two years. By the beginning of 1944, only 6 percent believed the war in the Pacific would end before 1945 and in March 1945 nearly 70 percent believed that victory would not come for another year at least. 155

Almost immediately after the German surrender, U.S. forces invaded Okinawa on 10 May 1945. Okinawa was the last major outpost in the Pacific defending the Japanese

153"Nations Advertisers Emphasize: Germany's Defeated, Don't Forget Japan," Editor and Publisher, 12 May 1945.

154"Long, Tough Job Ahead, Y & R Ad Remind," Editor and Publisher (19 May 1945), 58.

155Gallup, June 1942, Gallup July 1944, Gallup, March 1945, Stoll Source.
home islands. The Japanese air forces tried everything to defeat the U.S. navy supporting the landing. In all, over 1,000 aircraft, nearly 300 of which were kamikaze or suicide attacks, hammered the fleet. These attacks sank over thirty vessels, damaged 368 others, and killed and injured nearly 100,000 U.S. sailors. On land, the same type of fanatical resistance awaited the U.S. Marines and Army troops. By the end of June 1945, fighting on Okinawa was over, and the U.S. Tenth Army had destroyed the Japanese Tenth Army, which had numbered over 100,000 men. In addition to the military losses, over 80,000 Japanese civilians died during the invasion. The invasion of Okinawa gave America a taste of what an attack on the Japanese main islands would be like, and many leaders feared that the rising cost of the war would cause the American people to call for a negotiated end to the war.\textsuperscript{156}

As many within the military and the government prepared for the final push in the Pacific, a few political and military leaders knew that the country had a weapon that might spare the country the horrendous casualties that an invasion of Japan would entail. Since the beginning of the war the great project to build the first atomic bomb, code-named the Manhattan Project, had consumed over 175,000 workers, hundreds of millions of dollars, and some of the best minds in the free world. Despite the enormous size and scope of the undertaking, very little information about the project had found its way to the public.\textsuperscript{157} The world was stunned when, on 6 August, the U.S. government released news that an Atomic bomb had destroyed the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later the U.S.

\textsuperscript{156}Marshall Reminiscences, 625. See Weinberg, World at Arms, 868-85.

\textsuperscript{157}See Weinberg, World at Arms, 546-74.
dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki. Immediately after news of the Hiroshima blast reached newsmen, journalists scrambled to find out as much as they could about the new weapon. The director of the Manhattan Project, General Leslie Groves, had anticipated the demand for news and ordered his public relations officers to construct temporary dormitories and press facilities at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In May, Groves displayed great foresight and trust by inviting William Laurence, the science correspondent for the *New York Times*, to prepare scientific data for release to the public. Groves allowed Laurence access to information and key personnel connected with the construction of the atomic bomb. No one among Laurence's colleagues at the *Times* knew about his extraordinary assignment. After the destruction of Hiroshima, Laurence began a series of articles that explained to the public the power of the atom and the development of the A-bomb. The inclusion of Laurence as part of the Manhattan Project characterized the effect that a nation working toward a unified goal could have on the relationship between the military and the press.\(^{158}\)

Less than a month after the dropping of the first atomic bombs, representatives of the Imperial Japanese government and military surrendered on the U.S. battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo bay. General Douglas MacArthur presided over the ceremonies held aboard the *Missouri* on 2 September 1945. He was determined to use the ceremony to

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\(^{158}\)Samuel Rovner, "Atomic Bomb, Russia War Blast Way into Front Page," *Editor and Publisher* (11 August 1945), 7; Richard Gehman, "How Public Relations Handled Atom Story," *Editor and Publisher* (15 September 1945), 16; S. J. Monchak, "Laurence Relates His Role on Atomic Bomb Project," *Editor and Publisher* (22 September 1945), 9; William L. Laurence, "War Department Called Times Reporter to Explain Bomb's Intricacies to Public," *New York Times*, 7 August 1945, 1.
show who the victors had been. Eisenhower had taken the German surrender on French, not German soil, in the middle of the night, and without any witnesses among the press. MacArthur planned to have a ceremony in broad daylight, in Tokyo bay and covered by the world’s media. Although he did not intend to humiliate the Japanese, MacArthur wanted to provide a dignified end to the war and to use the surrender ceremony as the symbolic beginning of the occupation of Japan. Three hundred journalists covered the Japanese surrender ceremony, the greatest gathering of writers, photographers, and radio men of the war. The military permitted every accredited correspondent who wanted to view the ceremony to see the final act of the war. Newsmen praised the event as the best covered story of the war.159

With the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay, the Second World War ended. For Americans and the world, the final victory over the Axis powers was the most important and significant event of the decade. Many found it difficult to believe that the United States, a nation bitterly divided between isolationism and internationalism as later as November 1941, could have united so completely and so quickly to work toward victory. America during World War II was marked by a tremendous sense of cooperation between the military, the government, the public, and the press. Each segment of society worked together for the common goal of winning the war. The war’s total nature — its threat to the very ideals of American life, its demand for total mobilization of the national population, and its total strategic objectives — required the unity that Americans adopted

159 Perrett, 473; “Japs Have Surrendered.” . Thank you, Mr. President,” Editor and Publisher (18 August 1945), 14; Samuel Rovner, “Correspondents Mark Biggest Week of War,” Editor and Publisher (September 8, 1945).
after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Although national solidarity was not absolute, it remained a characteristic of the country during the entire war. The times that unity began to waver -- during the winter of 1944 or near the end of the war in Europe -- strong national leadership from the president and the military helped the country overcome its difficulties and rededicate itself to the war effort.

The sense of cooperation that developed during the war was based to a large degree on the pre-war planning of military and government leaders. Unlike other wars, President Roosevelt and General Marshall clearly saw that the United States would eventually become involved in the war. While they attempted to preserve peace, the two leaders laid the foundation for many of the policies and organizations that helped the country achieve victory. Early efforts to study production needs, information policies, and strategic options provided national leaders with a framework to transform the country to a wartime footing. The length of the war also allowed the military to make mistakes and then make corrections. During the North African operations in 1942, General Eisenhower learned that he had to anticipate press needs while conducting operational planning. This experience, while not pleasant at the time, allowed the Allies to be better prepared when they invaded France in 1944.

Several individuals also showed how important personal leadership was to ensuring cooperation from such widely separated groups as the military and the media. Eisenhower, Marshall, and Roosevelt all understood that the country could not win the war without the support of the people. They also knew that the press was the main connection between the military and government and the people. To preserve national
support for the war, the military and the government had to establish a working relationship with the press. As communications equipment improved -- first in Europe and then in the Pacific -- the press was able to provide more information about the war than ever before. Roosevelt and his military commanders used the press to inform the public about its progress in the war. Even before the country entered the war, the president told the press and the people that the United States was fighting for democratic freedoms. After the liberation of North Africa, the Allied leaders expanded their war aims to include the unconditional surrender of the Axis power, committing their country's to a fight that would continue until they had completely defeated their enemies. The clear articulation of war aims gave Americans a definite goal to work towards and allowed them to know what the outcome of the war would be. Throughout the war, journalists and military personnel provided updates that told the homefront how much more still needed to be done. After the end of the war in Europe, the media cooperated with the government and the military to redirect and sustain American efforts as the war shifted to the Pacific. The success of the Seventh War Bond Drive showed how powerful press and government cooperation could be in directing public actions. World War II was a tremendous victory for the United States. Never since the American Civil War had the continued existence of the country been so threatened. Because of the severe threat the war posed, the government, the military, the press, and the public united as never before to wage war.
Chapter 3
Limited Success in a Limited War:
The United States’ Experience in the Korean War

In the months following the German capitulation at Rheims and the Japanese surrender on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri, the United States’ people and its military quickly abandoned their wartime footing and began to enjoy the peaceful prosperity won during World War II. Few within the country thought about if or when events might compel the country to take up arms again. Secure in the belief that the United States’ monopoly on atomic weapons would protect the country from international dangers, military and political leaders did not immediately direct their attention to the new threat of international communism. The military had begun a rapid demobilization of its forces almost as soon as General Douglas MacArthur accepted the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay. Despite the lessons from previous wars, when the United States had consistently demobilized its armed forces too quickly and severely, the country moved rapidly to put its recent martial accomplishments behind. Not even the loss of the country’s atomic monopoly in 1949 could completely shake America out of its complacency. All Americans hoped that life after the Second World War would proceed into “the broad uplands” promised as the reward for victory and that the world would remain peaceful for many years to come.¹

North Korea shattered hopes for peace on 25 June 1950 when seven North Korean

divisions crossed the 38th Parallel at 4:00 a.m., KT,\textsuperscript{2} and began to move toward Seoul, the capital of South Korea. In the mountains on the eastern side of the Korean peninsula, additional North Korean divisions attacked south and east into South Korean territory. Follow-up units rapidly exploited the breaches made by the first echelon forces. All along the broad front, North Korean forces overwhelmed South Korean defenders, advancing almost unchecked. The first news of the invasion reached the American military advisory group in Seoul around dawn when five U.S. advisors with a South Korean regiment on the Ongjin peninsula reported that the North Koreans were about to overrun the unit. Three hours elapsed before the American embassy in Seoul forwarded information of the invasion to the United States Far East Command (USFEC) in Tokyo. In Washington, D.C., Pentagon and State Department officials learned of the attack shortly after 8 p.m., EST, Saturday, 24 June, when the United Press office in the capital forwarded a report from one its journalists in Korea that a large-scale North Korean attack was underway. Finally, at 9:26 p.m., EST, U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, John Muccio, cabled the State Department, saying, "It would appear from the nature of the attack and the manner in which it was launched that it constitutes an all-out offensive against the Republic of Korea."

\textsuperscript{2}There is a fourteen hour time difference between Washington and the Korean peninsula. Dates and times of events in Korea and Japan are given throughout in Far Eastern time which is fourteen hours ahead of Washington (EST) and nine hours ahead of London (GMT). Therefore, 0440 25 June in Korea was 1400 EST, 1500 EDT 24 June in Washington, and 1900 GMT 24 June in London. \textit{New York Times}, 25 June 1950, 1.

The North Korean invasion caught leaders in Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington by complete surprise. Although analysts had recognized that the North Koreans possessed strong military capabilities, they had discounted the possibility of an attack against the Republic of Korea. Shortly after the State Department received Ambassador Muccio's cable, Secretary of State Dean Acheson telephoned President Harry S. Truman at his home in Independence, Missouri, where the president was visiting for the weekend. Both U.S. leaders hoped that the North Korean attack was merely a major raid and not a full-blown invasion. At 2 a.m. (EST), Acheson again spoke with Truman relaying new information from Muccio and MacArthur that confirmed that an invasion was underway in Korea. With that news, Truman directed Acheson to approach the UN Security Council and to bring the invasion before it as a threat to world peace. Under the United Nations Charter, the Security Council could authorize member nations to impose economic sanctions, institute a blockade, or take collective military action against aggressor states.  

The Security Council met at 2:20 p.m. (EST), Sunday 25 June, just as the second day of war dawned over Korea. Jacob Malik, the Soviet Union's ambassador to the UN, had boycotted the Security Council since January 1950 as a protest against its refusal to seat the Communist Chinese regime instead of the Chinese Nationalists. The Soviets hoped that Malik's absence would make the proceedings illegitimate, but the eleven other Security Council members debated the proper response to the invasion and reached an agreement that evening. By a vote of 9 - 0 - 1, the U.S.-sponsored resolution condemned

4Rees, Korea, 22.
the invasion and called for a return to pre-invasion borders. After the passage of the UN resolution, Acheson telephoned Truman, still in Missouri, informing the president of the vote and advising Truman that he felt that the North Koreans would ignore the call for a cessation of hostilities and the return to the status quo ante bellum. Truman immediately decided to return to Washington and oversee the crisis from there. The night of 26 June, the president, Secretary of State Acheson, and his chief military and diplomatic advisors met at Blair House to discuss the United States’ policy and response. In his Memoirs, Truman wrote that there was “complete, almost unspoken acceptance on the part of everyone that whatever had to be done to meet this aggression had to be done. There was no suggestion from anyone that the United Nations or the United States could back away from it.” Truman, having led the nation to final victory in the Second World War, believed that an uncontested invasion of South Korea could start a chain reaction of aggression, possibly starting a world war in the way that fascist actions before 1939 had.

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6 Besides Truman and Acheson, Defense Secretary Louis Johnson, Army Secretary Frank Pace, Air Secretary Thomas Finletter, Navy Secretary Francis Matthews, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General of the Army Omar Bradley, Army Chief of Staff General Joseph Lawton Collins, Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Sanford Vandenberg, and the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Forrest Percival Sherman attended the first strategy session concerning the Korea conflict. Also in attendance were Under Secretary of State Webb, Assistant Secretaries of State Dean Rusk and Hickerson, and Ambassador-at-large Philip Jessup. They met at Blair House because the White House was undergoing reconstruction and was closed. See Rees, Korea, 22.

Truman saw Korea as the “American Rhineland” and determined that aggression would be met with force. The U.S. leaders also believed that failure to act would result in the demise of the United Nations as an effective organization. The group decided to commit U.S. forces to help South Korea halt the Communist advance. They gave General Douglas MacArthur, United States Supreme Commander Allied Forces, Pacific (SCAP) and Commander of the U.S. Far East Command (USFEC), wide discretion to use his air and naval forces to evacuate U.S. nationals from Korea and placed the Seventh Fleet under MacArthur’s command. The Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest Sherman, believed that naval and air power alone would be sufficient to stop the North Koreans, but Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, argued that if the South Koreans failed to halt the invasion, U.S. ground forces would be necessary. Representatives from the State Department warned that the invasion was a Soviet test of U.S. commitments to its allies in Asia and told the president that “the line ought to be drawn now.” At the end of the meeting Secretary of State Acheson showed Truman a message from John Foster Dulles, the U.S. special ambassador negotiating the Japanese Peace Treaty, who had just returned to Tokyo from Korea when the fighting began. “To sit by while Korea is overrun by unprovoked armed attack,” Dulles warned, “would probably start a disastrous chain of events leading most probably to world war.” Both Dulles and MacArthur urged the president to appeal to the Security Council for immediate action.\footnote{Dulles message quoted in Rees, 
\textit{Korea}, 23. Neither Dulles nor MacArthur knew that the United Nations Security Council were already meeting when Dulles transmitted his message to Washington.} Many of the officials
gathered at Blair House on Sunday, 25 June, remembered that less than ten years earlier another war had started with a surprise attack on a Sunday. They feared that the current crisis in Korea would engulf the world in war just as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had signaled the beginning of America's entry into the Second World War.9

Throughout Monday, 27 June, the news from Korea worsened. South Korean President Sighman Rhee appealed for more U.S. aid, and later in the day MacArthur signaled Washington that "a complete collapse" was imminent, prompting the president to convene another conference at Blair House. Earlier in the day, the United Nations Security Council had adopted a follow-on resolution recommending "that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security to the area."10 Taking the latest UN resolution as his mandate for action, Truman quickly decided to expand the United States' commitment and directed Secretary of Defense Johnson to contact MacArthur, ordering the general to use his air and naval forces to help the ROK south of the 38th Parallel. The next morning, Truman met with Congressional leaders to apprise them of his response to the Korean crisis.11 The Congressional delegation displayed bi-partisan support for the president's actions, and at 12:30 p.m. Truman issued

9Ibid.

10"United Nations Security Council Resolution," 27 June 1950, in Truman Administration, 439. The voting was 7-1-2, with Britain, France, Nationalist China, Cuba, Ecuador, and Norway voting in favor of the resolution; Egypt and India abstained; and Yugoslavia, after tabling an alternative cease-fire proposal, voted against. For the first time in history an international body had voted force to meet force.

an official statement to the public. He told the country that he had “ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.”\textsuperscript{12}

The ultimate aim of U.S. policy, first outlined in the United Nations Security Council Resolution of 27 June, was to force the North Korean forces to withdraw north of the 38th Parallel and to preserve the Republic of (South) Korea. Warning that “a return to the rule of force in international affairs would have far-reaching effects . . . ,” the president pledged that “the United States will continue to uphold the rule of Law.”\textsuperscript{13} Reaction to the president’s policy was strong. The conservative Republican Senator Robert Taft, a bitter critic of the president, reluctantly endorsed Truman’s decision to support the South Koreans. “Mister President, since I approve of the change now made in our foreign policy, I approve of the general policies outlined in the President’s statement. I feel that we must back up our troops, where they have been sent by the president, with unstinted support. Whether the President chose the right time for his new policy, or the right place, can be discussed in the future.”\textsuperscript{14} Public reaction to the decision to commit U.S. forces to Korea was largely favorable. Although many in the country feared that the North Korean invasion was only a prelude to a larger war, the public supported Truman. His approval ratings soared, and the populace appeared to be preparing for what they feared might be a


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} “Taft’s Endorsement of Intervention,” in \textit{Truman Administration}, 439-42.
long struggle.\textsuperscript{15}

Although Truman had taken a firm stance against North Korean aggression, neither he nor anyone else knew whether the American people, the press, or the military would continue to support the war in Korea. Unlike the unconditional war aims of World War II, the aims in the Korean conflict were politically and militarily limited. The initial goal for American and UN involvement in Korea was only to push back the North Korean invaders and restore the original boundaries along the 38th Parallel. In an expression of the war's limited aims, Truman called the U.S. led UN-involvement a police action -- a euphemism for war that, while producing ridicule from political opponents, correctly described the limited nature of the initial goals of the war. Truman had decided to keep the conflict in Korea limited and authorized MacArthur only to halt and reverse North Korean advances in South Korea. While the fighting was done in the Far East, military and the government leaders continued to observe the actions of the Soviet Union and Communist China. U.S. leaders did not fear the loss of South Korea to Communist aggression as much as they feared the possible spread of the war to China, the Soviet Union, and perhaps the world. They also wondered if the country, the public and the press, would support a war that did not follow the pattern of total commitment and total

victory.\textsuperscript{16}

While the country learned of the president's decision to aid South Korea, North Korean forces continued to roll southward. Truman had ordered MacArthur to expel the North Koreans from the south, but first the general had to find some way to slow their advance. The belief that with U.S. naval and air power Republic of Korea (ROK) forces would halt the North Koreans proved wrong. The North Koreans had too much momentum and the ROK was too unprepared for the invasion. MacArthur quickly realized that the South Koreans needed U.S. ground forces if they were to save their country. Following the UN Security Council's mandate to aid South Korea, Truman authorized MacArthur to deploy part of his occupation force from Japan to the war in Korea. MacArthur ordered Major General William F. Dean and his 24th Infantry Division to begin deployment to Korea at the end of June. Dean sent an infantry-artillery task force led by Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, commander of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry to Korea. Task Force Smith, named for its commander, arrived in Taejon on 2 July and immediately moved into defensive positions just north of Osan. Although the unit was under strength, its officers were confident that they would quickly halt the North Koreans. The chauvinism of the U.S. military was evident in the belief that the North Koreans would "turn around and go back when they found out who was [now] fighting."\textsuperscript{17}

Shortly after 8:00 a.m. on 3 July, members of Task Force Smith sighted the enemy

\textsuperscript{16} Weigley, \textit{U.S. Army}, 511.

for the first time. The North Koreans attacked the U.S. defensive positions with infantry and about fifty Russian-made T-34 tanks. Although greatly outnumbered, the defenders stood their ground, but they had little success because their weapons proved ineffective against the North Korean armor. U.S. journalists reported that Task Force Smith’s weapons failed to damage the North Korean tanks, allowing them to easily bypass U.S. positions. Following the tanks came waves of North Korean infantry in a frontal attack. While taking heavy casualties, the North Koreans managed to envelope the defenders. After more than six hours of combat, Smith ordered his small force to withdraw. Enemy pressure intensified as the U.S. task force began to disengage. The withdrawal went poorly for the Americans, and the advancing North Koreans overran portions of the retreating U.S. troops. Some soldiers abandoned their weapons, equipment, and dead in their haste to break free from the attackers. Fortunately for the survivors of Task Force Smith and for the rest of the U.S. forces streaming into Korea, the North Koreans did not press their pursuit. By the next morning, remnants of Task Force Smith had reached Cho’onan. In the end, over one-hundred and forty men and officers were missing from the task force. Task Force Smith’s ineffectiveness shattered the idea that the war would be quickly over once the North Koreans faced American units.18

While South Korean and U.S. forces attempted to slow and stop the invading North Koreans, the world paid close attention to the unfolding of events in Korea.

Initially only thirty accredited journalists covered the war, most having been present in the

Far East when the fighting broke out on 25 June. A student of the military-media relations since before World War I and a veteran of the Pacific campaigns of World War II, General MacArthur understood the power and importance of the media during war time. Just three days after the invasion, Colonel Marion P. Echols, Chief of the USFEC’s Public Information Office, told correspondents in Tokyo that the military did not plan to apply censorship to coverage of the new war in Korea. Echols asked journalists to refrain from publishing any “strategic or helpful information.” Within three days, Echols seemed to reverse his earlier statement when he implied that military personnel would review journalists’ stories for security violations. However, the military imposed no official censorship. Instead of military censorship, MacArthur asked reporters to devise voluntary controls that would ensure that they maintained military security. To help the journalists determine what constituted items vital to military security, the public

19 MacArthur’s first major interaction with the news media came in 1914, when he served as a member of Army Chief of Staff General Leonard Wood’s General Staff and wrote a paper entitled “Regulations Concerning Correspondents with the United States Army in the Field.” MacArthur’s duties on the General Staff included acting as the War Department’s first public affairs officer. See Douglas MacArthur (?), “Regulations Concerning Correspondents with the United States Army in the Field,” Papers of Leonard Wood, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Diary 1914. Although MacArthur did not sign the report, Geoffrey Perrett, biographer of MacArthur, offers substantial evidence that the report was indeed written by MacArthur. See Geoffrey Perrett, Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur (New York: Random House, 1996), 68.


information officers (PIOs) of the Far East Command requested that reporters refrain from mentioning information about troop movements, either proposed or in progress; the location of units, air bases, or other installations; and the names of major units until the military made an official announcement about the commitment of such forces. The military also asked newsmen not to pass along sensitive or potentially sensitive information over the unsecured telephone system that connected South Korea with Japan. Military leaders hoped that these guidelines would be sufficient to stop the publication of any news that might be useful to the enemy.23

For the first time since the turn of the century, reporters covering a U.S. war were able to file their stories without military censors checking their work. This situation arose mainly from the unique circumstances of the conflict. The commanders who were responsible for the decision believed at the beginning of the conflict that the fighting would end quickly. Within the U.S. military, many officers felt that once U.S. forces deployed from Japan and elsewhere to Korea, the invaders would quickly fall back. There would be neither the time nor the need to establish a formal process for checking journalistic accounts of the war. Decision makers also remembered the usually good relations that had developed between the military and the media during the Second World War. Although there had been occasional tensions between the two groups during that war, both sides had worked together for a common goal. Military leaders had no reason to believe that the new conflict in Korea would be any different. A reporter in Tokyo

noted that one other reason for the military's reluctance to apply censorship was the accreditation of Tass, the Soviet news agency, to the headquarters in Tokyo. If the military imposed censorship, officers feared the Soviets would protest any restrictions on their national reporters and use the incident for propaganda purposes.²⁴ Finally, and perhaps most important, the events on the Korean peninsula occurred so fast and unexpectedly that few had time to consider how best to deal with representatives of the press. Halting the North Korean advance remained the military's highest priority for the first three months of the conflict.²⁵

Although North Korean forces enjoyed numerical superiority in ground forces, U.S. air and naval units operated almost unopposed during the opening of the Korean War. The U.S. Far East Air Force (FEAF) and ships from the U.S. Pacific Fleet controlled the sky and provided support for the American forces from the beginning of July 1950. The Navy's and Air Force's combined fire power prevented China and the Soviet Union from resupplying North Korean forces and denied North Korea sea lanes needed to infiltrate troops and materiel into South Korea. Fire support from the air force and the navy also allowed the U.S./UN ground forces to hold out against the larger North Korean forces, buying the time necessary for the arrival of additional men and material to the war zone. Because of the nature of the war, reporters found that they could cover the war better from Tokyo than from the front. The rapid withdrawal of ground forces down the Korean peninsula disrupted communications and prevented journalists from filing


stories with any regularity. As the U.S. came to rely more heavily on air and naval forces in July 1950 to stem the North Korean advance, reporters focused their attention on information originating from the USFEC headquarters in Japan. On the ground, U.S. forces fought a delaying action as they reluctantly retreated before the relentless advance of the North Koreans. While the elements of the 24th Infantry Division and later the 25th Infantry Division slowed the North Koreans, other forces arrived at the South Korean port of Pusan. By 1 August 1950, the 24th and the 25th had fallen back within an area around Pusan bordered by the Naktong River that reporters began to call the Pusan Perimeter.26

The efforts of the first ground troops and the firepower of the air force and navy had not stopped the North Koreans, but they had bought time for the U.S.-led United Nations forces to gather into an effective force. Throughout August the UN forces continued to pour into Pusan, despite sustained, violent North Korean frontal attacks on the Pusan Perimeter. The North Koreans continued with their attacks during the first two weeks of September, but despite improved organization and concentration of force, they were unable to break through the Pusan Perimeter. The Eighth Army had stopped the advance, and a counterattack was about to begin.27

Since the beginning of the conflict, reporters had predicted that the military would


27Appleman, *South to Naktong*, 252-55.
soon impose some sort of censorship. Contradictory regulations governing the release of information came from the Army, Navy, and Air Force commands operating in the Korean theater of operations. Members of the media acknowledged the need for some type of censorship to protect military security and clarify policy concerning the release of information. An editorial in the *New York Times* cited the right of the American people to receive information about the war but went on to commend the Secretary of Defense for providing guidelines and restrictions on the release of certain types of information. At the beginning of the war, journalists had written stories that cast doubt on whether the newly arrived U.S. forces could stop the advance of the North Koreans. The military tried to control such stories. On 15 July, the military headquarters in Tokyo suspended the privileges of two reporters citing the negative impact of their stories upon the morale of the troops. However, the following day General Douglas MacArthur reinstated the journalists, permitting them to return to Korea to cover the fighting. The military’s suspension of the two reporters highlighted a new problem for journalists who found themselves not only having to guard against security violations but also having to examine their stories for tone and content that might harm U.S. troop and domestic morale.

As United States troops continued to fight the North Koreans around Pusan, correspondents faced many difficulties while trying to cover the war. The ambiguous

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control of information that existed in the Far East made the gathering of news problematic. Despite limited attempts by the Defense Department to provide press guidelines, most reporters still felt that they lacked clear guidance from the military or the government. Often, the newsmen had to decide themselves what information might be useful to the enemy. Journalists did not always make the correct decisions. The military, aware of the tenuous situation at the front, continued to urge reporters not to publish articles that could damage the morale of the American homefront. The press also released information that could potentially damage national security. All three services — the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force — criticized the press for publishing information describing the deployment and composition of U.S. forces as they departed to join the conflict in Korea. In response to the military’s complaints, members of the press asked again for formal censorship. Reporters in Korea noted that sources in Washington released much of the information that they had refrained from transmitting to the United States. Officers and men of the Far East Command also provided sensitive information to journalists. In an attempt to stop damaging press stories originating from his command, MacArthur urged members of the armed services in the Far East to refrain from talking to the press about the deteriorating situation on the Korean peninsula. Many journalists and soldiers sought a system of censorship like that which the government and military


had imposed in World War II -- a solution that did not match the nation’s limited commitment to the war in Korea.\textsuperscript{36}

During the first three months of the war, the American Army was hard pressed to prevent the Communists from driving it into the sea. The difficulties of the Army soon required a partial mobilization of the United States. For American industry, a partial mobilization posed few problems. Unlike the situation at the beginning of the Second World War where the government had to establish a large bureaucracy to overcome the ill effects of the Great Depression, the United States in 1950 was still basking in the economic boom that World War II had caused. Industry could produce large quantities of war materiel while still providing goods that the public wanted. Providing the manpower necessary to resist the Communists was much harder. On the eve of the war, Congress had renewed the Selective Service Act and after the war began it also extended expiring enlistments. In response to the Army’s retreat toward the sea, the Army cannibalized all its formations not intended for the commitment to Korea to bring the units in or bound for combat to war strength. The military’s system for bringing Korea-bound units up to strength meant that government drafted fewer civilians than it had during World War II. The lack of total national commitment to the war -- characterized by the absence of industry’s complete conversion to war production and the government’s decision not to mobilize the population fully for the war -- meant that the U.S. homefront felt less of a commitment to the Korean War than they did to the Second World War.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{37}Weigley, \textit{U.S. Army}, 510-11.
The military situation in Korea began to improve by September 1950. Fresh troops and desperately needed supplies flowed into Pusan and provided the means necessary to slow and then stop the North Korean advance. On 15 September, U.S. forces made an amphibious assault on Inchon. MacArthur planned to use the landings at Inchon as the first step in liberating South Korea and perhaps force a decisive battle that would allow his forces to destroy the North Korean army. Located on the northwest coast of Korea, Inchon was a major port facility and its location provided the UN Command with the opportunity to turn the North Korean’s flank. Despite its strategic advantages, Inchon possessed perhaps the worst physical conditions for an amphibious landing. Located nearly due west of Seoul, the landing site had treacherous hydrographic conditions that created severe differentials in tides, strong currents, and mud flats that could strand ships. The island of Wolmi-do, that the North Koreans had fortified, guarded the approach to Inchon and conditions dictated that the second wave could not land until the next high tide nearly twelve hours after the first troops hit the beaches. Despite all of the reasons against its selection, General MacArthur chose Inchon as the place where his UN Command would launch its first counter strike against North Korea. The landing of the X Corps under General Edward M. Almond at Inchon threatened the North Korean lines of communication and had the potential to achieve the UN’s war aims in one stroke. Immediately after the landings, the U.S. Eighth Army began its breakout from the Pusan Perimeter. A week later the North Koreans began to waver under the two-pronged pressure. They began to retreat on 23 September and within hours the retreat had turned into a rout as North Korean forces withdrew behind the 38th Parallel. MacArthur’s bold
move at Inchon gained the initiative for the U.S.-led forces for the first time in the war. By the end of September, barely two weeks after Inchon, the UN Command had liberated all of South Korea and achieved the initial goals of the United Nations.  

The landings at Inchon, the most successful operation of the war, highlighted many of the difficulties that existed between the military and the media. One press report charged that the "invasion of Inchon was the worst-kept secret of the Korean war." Journalists had heard of the impending landings both in Korea and in Japan. They reported hearing Army commanders telling their troops in the Pusan Perimeter that if "we can hang on until mid-September, there will be landings behind enemy lines which will completely change the picture." Despite the "open" secret of the impending attack on Inchon, the military punished one member of the press for the premature release of information about the operation. Bill Shinn, an Associated Press correspondent, was present when the commander in chief of the South Korean armed forces announced the amphibious invasion. Shinn rushed his story to the wire and dispatched it at 2:05 p.m., Korean time, 15 September -- nearly four hours before the first forces landed at Inchon. At 3:24 p.m., Major Buel A. Williamson, a public information officer on MacArthur's staff, told AP representatives in Tokyo that the General Headquarters wanted the story killed, but he did not contradict the veracity of Shinn's report. The AP took no action and

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38 Rees, Korea, 77-94.


40 Ibid.
released the story over the news wires before the landings commenced. The day after
Inchon, Williamson limited Shinn's access to communications equipment. Because Shinn
was a Korean citizen whom the military had not accredited as a correspondent in the Far
East Command, Williamson stated that the military would not permit Shinn to use the
telephone from Korea to Tokyo.41

The Navy did not handle press relations any better than the Army did during the
invasion at Inchon. The bureau chiefs of NBC and CBS charged the Navy with
favoritism. The Navy allowed only an ABC reporter to accompany the first wave of
troops to land at Inchon. NBC and CBS also charged a Navy public information officer
with allowing the ABC reporter to release information of a potentially sensitive nature.42
The letter from the bureau chiefs of NBC and CBS displayed the intense competition
among correspondents. Within the press, the competition to be first with news tempted
many journalists knowingly to publish stories that potentially violated security. In the
theater of operations, competition constantly confronted correspondents with the danger
of withholding some information while a less scrupulous peer went ahead and submitted
the same information for publication. From outside the Far East, editors and publishers
pushed their reporters in Korea to scoop their rivals. These two factors -- poor guidance


42Ltr. To Vice Admiral C. T. Joy (USN), Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Far
East, from Bureau Chief, National Broadcasting Company, Far East Division and Bureau
Chief, Columbia Broadcasting System, Far East Division. The Marion Patton Echols
Papers, Box 2, Official Correspondence 1950, Archives, United States Army Military
History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.
and competition — led to the inevitable press violations of security. However, the improved military situation of the United Nations Command after mid-September 1950 partially alleviated the problem. With the North Korean forces in retreat and X Corps in possession of Seoul, the enemy had little chance to take advantage of the information that press accounts supplied. In fact, there was never any proof that the information found in news reports helped the North Koreans. Military success also bred a false sense of security for the UNC. Many commanders believed that the end of the war was in sight, and they were reluctant to take decisive action against the press in what they saw as the last days of the conflict.43

By September 1950, the number of accredited journalists had grown from thirty to more than three hundred. Journalists from the United States and other nations drew all of their necessities from the military while covering the action in the field. Reporters looked to the military to give them shelter, food, transportation, and the communication equipment necessary to file their stories with their home offices. At EUSAK headquarters in Taegu, General Walker established a correspondents’ billet and mess. When the Eighth Army moved north, the army provided similar facilities in Seoul. In both locations, the military set up secure phone lines with Tokyo and installed teletype machines to transmit the news from the front to the rest of the world. In Japan, the Far East Command received reporters’ stories from Korea and then sent them out to centralized locations like New York and London. At times, the military transmitted over 80,000 words per day.

FEC information personnel not only transmitted the journalists’ stories, but they

43Mossman, “Press,” 5
occasionally also acted as editors for those war correspondents without representatives in Japan, editing and filing stories for publication.\footnote{Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army Korea, \textit{Special Problems in the Korean Conflict} (Unpublished Monograph), Chpt. VIII, "Press Censorship," 114.}

The changing tides of war following the Inchon landings and the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter caused many to reconsider the goals of the war. Although Truman had accepted the UN mandate to return the peninsula to pre-war conditions, he and his advisors had considered the goal of unifying the two Koreas as early as mid-July 1950. During Army Chief of Staff Collin’s visit to Tokyo on 13 July, MacArthur had said that he intended to destroy the North Korean forces and that it might be necessary to occupy all Korea. At about the same time, President Rhee cabled Truman saying, “for anything less than re-unification to come out of these great sacrifices of Korea and their powerful allies would be unthinkable.”\footnote{Truman, \textit{Trial and Hope}, 379-80.} Despite these two influential voices supporting more ambitious objectives, the Truman administration did not publicly discuss operations beyond the 38th Parallel until August when Warren Austin, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, spoke before the Security Council.

\begin{quotation}
The United Nations must see that the people of Korea attain complete individual and political freedom. . . . Shall only a part of the country be assured of this freedom? I think not. . . . The General Assembly has decided that fair and free elections should be held throughout the whole of the Korean peninsula. . . . We are waiting, and while we wait, the strength of the United Nations increases.\footnote{Warren quoted in Rees, \textit{Korea}, 99.}
\end{quotation}

On 1 September in a broadcast to the nation, the president said that the Koreans had a
right to be "free, independent, and united." Although American rhetoric appeared to be calling for a change in war aims, the president and his advisors had not made any final decisions. The successes at Inchon and elsewhere made it imperative that Washington issue some sort of new military directive to MacArthur. Collins and his naval counterpart, Admiral Sherman, had agreed in August during a visit to Tokyo that since MacArthur's ultimate military objective at the time was the destruction of the North Korean military forces, he should extend ground operations beyond the 38th Parallel as necessary to achieve that goal. The Joint Chiefs of Staff made the Collins-Sherman agreement official military policy on 7 September when they submitted an official recommendation on the subject. The president approved of the policy and issued a further directive to MacArthur on 15 September, D-Day at Inchon, that articulated the country's new war aims.

MacArthur was to conduct the necessary military operations [Truman wrote] either to force the North Koreans behind the 38th Parallel or to destroy their forces. If there was no indication of threat of entry of Soviet or Chinese Communist elements in force... [he] was to extend his operations north of the Parallel and to make plans for the occupation of North Korea... [but] no ground operations should take place north of the 38th Parallel in the event of Soviet or Chinese Communist entry [into the conflict].

Despite the cautionary tone of the directive, Truman's desire to exploit the victory of Inchon outweighed the fear of Chinese or Soviet intervention. Before the end of September, Republican Senator William Knowland of California announced that a failure to cross the Parallel would constitute appeasement of Russia. Truman, who had suffered

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47 Truman, *Trial and Hope*, 379.

48 Ibid.
Republican charges of being soft on communism and of “losing” China in 1949, hoped that the unification of Korea would demonstrate his determination to fight and beat Communists in Asia. Militarily, the JCS and the Far East Command (FEC) advised the president to allow MacArthur to exploit the new situation and to destroy completely the Korean People’s Army, even if it meant moving across the Parallel. All sides felt that the Security Council had provided a mandated for operations above the 38th Parallel in its 27 June resolution that charged member nations to “restore international peace and security in the area.”49 Truman hoped that a total military victory would justify the Korean sacrifices to the American people and satisfy the country’s need for a clear-cut, absolute solution for Korea that conformed to the pre-Cold War traditions of American political thought.50

After the president and his chief advisors accepted an expansion of war aims in Korea, Secretary of State Dean Acheson approached the United Nations to secure further international authorization for the strategic change. On 20 September, Acheson told the UN General Assembly at Lake Success, New York, that the United States believed that all of Korea should be returned to its own people under the guidance of the UN. Acheson immediately set about lining up support for a resolution expanding the UN mandates of June 1950. With Soviet representative Joseph Malik once again sitting with the Security Council where he would veto any measure intended to expand the war in Korea, Acheson and the U.S. diplomats planned to approach the General Assembly and present its

49 “UN Resolution,” in Truman Administration, 438-39.

resolution to the full body of the United Nations. 51

As Acheson worked in New York, Truman and the JCS sent another policy
directive to MacArthur further refining his objectives in Korea. On 27 September, the
JCS, after some inter-allied consultation, told CINCFE that his military objective was "the
destruction of the North Korean Armed Forces" and in attaining that objective "he was
authorized to conduct military operations north of the 38th Parallel . . ." as long as "there
had been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no
announcement of an intended entry, and no threat by Russian or Chinese Communists to
counter our military operations in North Korea." The JCS, however, directed MacArthur
"as a matter of policy" that he was not to use non-South Korean ground forces in the
provinces bordering the USSR or Manchuria. Sensitivity to Soviet and Chinese borders
had already resulted in the Joint Chiefs of Staff prohibiting the bombing of targets near the
Soviet border.52 MacArthur, replying to the 27 September directive, immediately sent his
superiors in Washington his plan for the conquest of North Korea. The new Secretary of
Defense, General George C. Marshall, approved MacArthur's plan on 29 September and
told the UN Commander, "We want you to feel unhampered strategically and tactically to
proceed north of the 38th Parallel." 53

As the military defined their new strategy, U.S. Ambassador Austin spoke to the
Political Committee of the UN on 30 September.

51 Rees, Korea, 103.

52 Truman, Trial and Hope, 380-82.

53 Marshall quoted in Rees, Korea, 103.
Today the forces of the United Nations stand on the threshold of military victory... The aggressor's forces should not be permitted to have refuge behind an imaginary line because that would recreate the threat to the peace of Korea and of the world. ... The question of whether this artificial barrier shall remain removed and whether the country shall be united now must be determined by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{54}

The very next day, on 1 October, ROK forces crossed the 38th Parallel. The Joint Chiefs ordered MacArthur to down-play the event. Instead of touting the crossing of the Parallel, the FEC issued a demand to the North Koreans calling for their unconditional surrender. Importantly, the response to the UNC surrender demand came not from Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, but from Beijing and Moscow. Chinese Premier Chou En-lai issued warnings that severe, but undefined, consequences would come if UN forces crossed the 38th Parallel and the Soviet Union offered alternative proposals to end the conflict in Korea. The United States and the UN ignored the Communist warnings and the conquest of North Korea became the aim of the UNC. In early October the Political Committee of the United Nations, a committee of the whole General Assembly, passed an eight-point resolution that rejected the Soviet proposals. On 7 October, the United Kingdom's Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Kenneth Younger, introduced the Political Committee's resolution to the General Assembly that approved the new war aims by a vote of 47-5-7.\textsuperscript{55} The heart of the resolution lay in two clauses authorizing the United Nations Command to take "all appropriate steps . . . [needed] to ensure conditions

\textsuperscript{54} Austin quoted in Rees, \textit{Korea}, 103-04.

\textsuperscript{55} Rees, \textit{Korea}, 108. The five negative votes in the General Assembly came from the USSR, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Yugoslavia, and India abstained.
of stability throughout Korea’ and that the UNC take “all constituent acts, including the holding of elections, under the auspices of the United Nations, for the establishment of a united, independent, and democratic government in the sovereign state of Korea.”\textsuperscript{56} With the adoption of the resolution, the United Nations crossed the Rubicon in Korea with the euphoric support of the Western Allies.\textsuperscript{57}

On the same day that the crucial UN vote took place, the first patrols from the 1st Cavalry Division of the Eighth Army moved across the 38th Parallel in the Kaesong area at 5:14 p.m., KT, while a general Eighth Army advance across the Parallel began on the morning of the 9 October in the same sector. The victorious atmosphere in Washington was so great that Truman and the JCS removed one of the restrictions that they had placed on MacArthur in their directive of 27 September. Despite clear threats from China that it would intervene if UN forces crossed the former border between North and South Korea, Truman told MacArthur to proceed as long as “in your judgement, action by forces now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success.”\textsuperscript{58} That same day, MacArthur again called on the North Koreans to surrender unconditionally, threatening that he would proceed “to take such military action as may be necessary to enforce the decrees of the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{59} The North Koreans again did not respond to

\textsuperscript{56}The UN General Assembly resolution was paraphrased in Truman, \textit{Trial and Hope}, 383.

\textsuperscript{57}Rees, \textit{Korea}, 108.

\textsuperscript{58}Truman, \textit{Trial and Hope}, 383.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid.
MacArthur's call for surrender, and the Chinese continued to warn that UN activities posed a threat to Chinese interests. During October and November, UN forces advanced through Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, to within fifty miles of the Chinese border along the Yalu River. MacArthur and other U.S. officials in the Far East and Washington continued to ignore Chinese warnings, and MacArthur's forces pushed onward.60

The ease with which the UN and U.S. forces advanced excited the public and the leadership in the United States. After enduring several months of nearly continuous setbacks, America heartily welcomed news that U.S. forces were advancing, and a sense of optimism swept across the U.S. as the public and the nation's leaders looked forward to an imminent victory on the Korean peninsula. In the most consistently asked polling question of the war, the Gallup Organization and other pollers questioned Americans if they thought the president had made a mistake in sending troops to Korea. In August 1950 shortly before the U.S. landings at Inchon, 66 percent of respondents stated that they thought the United States had not made a mistake. In a similar poll, 75 percent responded that they approved of President's Truman's actions in sending American military forces to help the people of South Korea. When asked why they approved of the president's decision, over 50 percent of those who supported the deployment of troops to Korea cited the need to "Stop the Reds" from taking over the entire peninsula.61 With the war seemingly going well for the United States and the UN, the American public was decidedly in favor of the war and the president's war aims. As one newspaper expressed it in an

60 Appleman, South to Naktong, 749-76.

61 See Mueller, Public Opinion, Table 3.1, Table 3.2.
editorial, "Except for unexpected developments . . . we can now be easy in our minds as to the military outcome."\(^6^2\)

Unexpected developments occurred on 25-26 October when Communist China entered the war. Even after Chinese troops began to operate below the Yalu River, U.S. military leaders failed to recognize that the war had changed. At first, Chinese intervention was uncoordinated and dispersed throughout the broad-front of the UNC advance. As suddenly as contact with the Chinese troops had come, it stopped abruptly on 6 November 1950. U.S. commanders explained away the involvement of the Chinese as merely the actions of "a few volunteers" fighting for North Korea. In November, United Nations Command intelligence estimates, supported by CIA reports, placed three Chinese divisions (10,000 men per division) in the EUSAK sector and two additional divisions in the Xth Corps area.\(^6^3\) Even with these intelligence reports, MacArthur cabled Washington on 4 November that although Chinese intervention was possible, "there are many fundamental, logical reasons against it and sufficient evidence has not yet come to hand to warrant its immediate acceptance."\(^6^4\) By the end of November, most in Washington believed that the Chinese objective was to obtain an UN withdrawal through intimidation and diplomatic means. MacArthur did not consider the available evidence supporting the notion that the Chinese Communists were preparing for a full-scale

\(^6^2\)New York Times, 1 November 1950, 23.

\(^6^3\)McCullough, Truman, 815-6.

\(^6^4\)MacArthur quoted in Truman, Trial and Hope, 373. See also Perrett, Old Soldiers, 560.
offensive effort as conclusive. On 24 November MacArthur flew to Korea to visit the front lines. When the commander of the 24th Division, Major General John Church, remarked that he felt confident his troops could go all the way to the Yalu, MacArthur responded in a lighthearted way, “Well, if they go fast enough, maybe some of them can be home in time for Christmas.” Several journalists were standing nearby and caught only the last part of MacArthur’s remark. They hurriedly filed dispatches asserting that MacArthur had solemnly promised that U.S. troops now in Korea would be home by Christmas, adding to the inaccuracy of their copy by fabricating details and inventing some extra “quotes” from MacArthur to round out their pieces. When the “Home by Christmas” story got out, MacArthur tried to correct it, without success. The country had adopted a growing sense of optimism and celebrated news -- even incorrect news -- that the war might soon end.

During MacArthur’s visit to Korea, his forces continued to advance north with elements of the 7th U.S. Division reaching the Yalu in late November. The presence of U.S. and UN troops on their border sparked the Chinese. On 25 November Chinese forces struck the EUSAK center and attacked X Corps in the northeast corner of the peninsula on 27 November, and by the next day, United Nations forces began to crumble. On 28 November MacArthur informed Washington, “We face an entirely new war.” The next day, he instructed General Walker to take whatever steps necessary to escape the

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67 Ibid.
Chinese envelopment that was developing. MacArthur ordered X Corps to pull into a beachhead around the coastal port of Hungam. The EUSA K forces began a steady withdrawal back down the Korean peninsula. By 15 December Walker’s force was again at the 38th Parallel and establishing defensive positions. The X Corps began an amphibious withdrawal from Hungam and redeployment to Pusan on 24 December. 68

As MacArthur had said, the war in Korea had changed dramatically when Chinese ground forces joined the fight against the United Nations Command. The sudden reversal caused public support for the war to decrease dramatically in December 1950. When polling organizations again asked Americans if they believed the United States had made a mistake in sending troops to Korea, only 39 percent of respondents still felt it had been the right decision—a drop of over 25 percent since August. 69 Although support for the war gradually increased, it never again reached the high level of public approval following the landings at Inchon. When asked in early January 1951 what the future policy of the United States should be after the introduction of Communist Chinese forces into the war, 66 percent stated that the United States should “pull out” its troops from Korea as fast as possible. Only 25 percent thought that the president should keep American troops there to fight the larger enemy forces. 70

The sudden and unexpected entrance of the Chinese Communists and the dramatic decrease in public support for the war caused the UNC to lose the initiative, making press


69 Mueller, Public Opinion, Table 3.1.

70 Mueller, Public Opinion, Table 4.4.
relations once again a significant issue. Following the Chinese Communist intervention, the Far East Command took steps to control the flow of information. Since the beginning of the conflict, the FEC public information division had provided daily briefings to the press. These briefings often included sensitive information that had potential value to the enemy. The release of such information to correspondents was nothing new. In the Second World War, the military had often conducted similar background briefings that outlined proposed activities. The relationship between the press and the military in World War II had been such that the information provided in backgrounders was rarely, if ever, released before any operation had begun. In Korea, however, the relationship between the military and the press was different. With fewer formal and informal restraints on the release of information and with the entrance of the Chinese into the war, the military decided to halt background briefings on 10 December. This halt effectively denied journalists one of their easiest and most reliable means of gathering information. Two days later, on 12 December, the FEC released new security guidelines to the press. Similar to those distributed in July 1950, the new guidelines attempted to remove some of the ambiguity about which types of information the military did not want the press to release, including the movements, planned or in progress, of troops or material; enemy movements with respect to UNC boundaries; weaknesses in the UNC position, or undefended portions of the line; effectiveness of material of either the UNC or the enemy; and activities or locations of UNC troops except at the divisional level, or separate forces, and then only after those units had firmly engaged the enemy. The guidelines also cautioned journalists against publishing information that would help the enemy by
weakening U.S./UN morale. Although the new guidelines clarified many of the problems between the military and the press, they were not formal censorship rules.\textsuperscript{71}

The 12 December criteria for the release of information were only interim measures. Representatives of the Far East Command’s public information section and the press began discussions in early December to devise a workable plan for the implementation of some sort of security review for war reports. On 20 December the FEC Public Information Office initiated formal censorship for the first time in the war and created a Press Advisory Division to help guide journalists, to respond to problems between the military and the media, and to act as censors for news stories. In the EUSA, a Press Security Division had the same function for journalists in the field. Journalists reacted differently to the new policy of censorship. Some reporters charged that the new rules were the "most drastic in military history." That claim was shortsighted and absurd in light of the fact that the military based the censorship policy on the \textit{Codes of Wartime Practices for the American Press} that had worked well just a few years before in the Second World War.\textsuperscript{72} The military’s claim that they could court-martial journalists for violations of security under the United Military Code Justice also raised the ire of many correspondents.\textsuperscript{73} A few newsmen stated that the military’s real purpose in issuing the

\textsuperscript{71}Mossman, "Press," 6.


\textsuperscript{73}The military based this claim on the fact that Article 92 of the UCMJ authorized the military to try any person accompanying military forces who provided, willingly or
new rules was not to halt the flow of sensitive information but instead to limit the press' criticism of the conduct of the war. Despite these and other complaints, most of the correspondents supported some form of military control over information by the end of 1950. They understood the importance of maintaining operational security and hoped that the newly formalized reviews of stories would limit the sense of competition that existed among representatives of the press.\textsuperscript{7a}

Although both the press and the military hoped that censorship would solve many of the problems that had developed since the beginning of the conflict, difficulties continued. One major source of continued friction between the military and journalists stemmed from the decentralized approach to censorship that the military had taken. Although all censors were working from the same guidelines, public information officers in Tokyo and those with the EUSAK often applied different criteria to their review of journalistic material. These differences in review established a de facto appeal process for those stories that one command or the other had censored. If, for example, a journalist in the field submitted a story to the Press Security Division of the Eighth Army that subsequently denied permission to file the story, that journalist could immediately transmit the story to Tokyo and resubmit it to the FEC Press Advisory Division. Often one

\textsuperscript{7a}Ibid.
command would permit the transmission of a story that the other had censored.\textsuperscript{75}

One incident convinced many within the military that the FEC had to take greater control of the press. The day before Christmas 1950, General Walker, commander of the EUSAK, died in a motor vehicle accident. Despite clear rules governing the release of casualty information, the press immediately filed stories about the general’s death. News of Walker’s death reached the United States before the military had notified his next of kin. Many soldiers resented the press’ flagrant disregard for the feelings of the Walker family and their violation of the security guideline governing the release of sensitive military information and the reporting of casualties. Because of the way some journalists had handled the news of Walker’s death and the military’s growing distrust and dislike of the press, the relationship between the military and the media worsened during the winter of 1950-1951.\textsuperscript{76}

Following the death of General Walker, Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway hurriedly flew to Korea from Washington to assume command of the Eighth Army. In Tokyo MacArthur informed the new commander that he wanted the Eighth Army as far north as possible to stop the Chinese and North Korean advance. However, MacArthur stressed the overriding concern that the Eighth Army must remain fit for combat and that its preservation was Ridgway’s priority. Ridgway reached Korea on 26 December and initially hoped to keep his forces along the 38th parallel, moving from the defensive to the


offensive as quickly as possible. He quickly reevaluated his plans after conducting inspections of the front lines and found that the Eighth Army was a dispirited command that had endured successive Chinese attacks and an almost continuous month of withdrawal. In addition, the defensive line across the old boundary of North and South Korea was thin and weak. Facing the forces of the Eighth Army was the Chinese XIII Army Group west of Seoul and twelve reconstituted North Korean divisions in the center of the peninsula. All indications pointed to a major enemy offensive beginning around the turn of the new year.77

The anticipated enemy attack began on New Year’s Eve. The major Chinese/North Korean effort was toward Seoul, forcing the Eighth Army forces back in the west. Ridgway ordered his forces across the Han River bridges and then reestablished a defensive line forty miles south of the city. In the west, the last troops left Seoul on 4 January 1951, destroying all bridges across the Han as they withdrew. Once again the South Korean capital had changed hands. The Chinese drive slowed considerably after they captured Seoul. However, in the central and eastern sections of the peninsula, North Korean forces continued to attack UN forces until the middle of January. When the enemy advance finally stopped, Ridgway ordered probes to detect the positions and status of the enemy forces.78

Reporters covering the fall of Seoul were critical of the military’s conduct in the


78Mossman, Ebb and Flow, 300-14.
withdrawal back down the Korean peninsula. Reflecting the growing public dissatisfaction with the war, journalists criticized the military for not anticipating Chinese involvement and questioned the effectiveness of UN and South Korean forces. During the destruction of the last bridge over the Han River, South Korean forces had destroyed the bridge before all ROK troops had made it across. Seeing victory slipping away, journalists began to question the wisdom of continued U.S. involvement in the war. A growing percentage of the public called for an end to the war.79 The sudden reversal of fortunes in Korea ignited a "great debate" on American policy in Korea. Politicians like Senator Robert Taft and former president Herbert Hoover stated that the United States should withdraw from Korea and redirect its attention to Europe. In public opinion polls conducted after the Chinese intervention, popular opinion also showed a growing weariness of the war in Korea. According to the National Opinion Research Center, support for the war dropped from 75 percent in July to 55 percent in December. A Gallup poll covering the same period supported the NORC findings, showing a decrease in public support for the war of 27 percentage points.80

During the withdrawal from the Yalu, MacArthur believed that his command was in danger of being pushed off the Korean peninsula if he did not take dramatic action. The UNC commander lobbied Washington continuously for reinforcements and asked for permission to attack military bases and industrial centers in China. He also felt that


80 Mueller, Public Opinion, 45.
correspondents were "sniping in the rear," hampering the war effort, and hurting the morale of U.S. soldiers and civilians. 81 However, he refrained from imposing stricter censorship measures and instead went on an aggressive public relations blitz, issuing many statements and communiques extolling the accomplishments of the FEC and the UNC. MacArthur authorized his chief of intelligence, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, to prepare a study of how the press had provided "aid and comfort to the enemy" in an effort to generate positive coverage of the war and improve U.S. support for the war. 82 However, these attempts to bolster American morale and stop press criticisms failed and support for the Korean War within the public and the media continued to decline. 83

Americans viewed the entrance of the Chinese into the Korean war as a possible first step toward a larger global war between Communist nations and the free world. The stunning reversal in Korea shocked Americans and forced them to reevaluate their commitment to the war. They embarked upon a wave of buying and hoarding, causing inflation and threatening to derail the nation's economy. Polls indicated that support for the war had fallen and the public was less supportive of the president and some called for the ouster of Secretary of State Dean Acheson -- the government official the public viewed as the symbol of the U.S. foreign policy and war strategy. As the situation deteriorated, the public inundated the White House with letters and telegrams calling for a


82 This study was later published as Major General Charles A. Willoughby, Aid and Comfort to the Enemy: Trends in Korean Press Reports (USFC? , 1951).

new approach to the war. One citizen from Lubbock, Texas, wrote: “I suggest that all auto factories be converted to war material plants,” while a small-businessman from California conceded that “my partner and I expect to lose our small business as the result of the defense effort. . . . That is not important. Our only concern is the safety of our country, and of free people everywhere.” A few citizens went so far as to urge the president to launch a preemptive strike against the Soviet Union, and others demanded that he use all weapons available to the United States, including the atomic bomb, against China. 84

In response to the new war situation and changes in public opinion, Truman accelerated mobilization and stabilization efforts and decided to declare a national emergency, allowing the government to impose wage and price controls. On 15 December 1950, he addressed the country on radio and television, explaining the new and dangerous turn of events in Korea. The fear of a larger war was so great, President Truman said, that he was declaring a state of national emergency. 85 The next day, on 16 December 1950, Truman formally proclaimed a national emergency and created the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) to oversee the increased mobilization efforts. Truman established the ODM for several reasons. First, he knew that its creation carried certain psychological imperatives that would show Americans that they had entered a new war with all the attendant sacrifices that a substantial war effort required. He hoped that the

84 Polls and letters quoted in Pierpaoli, Truman and Korea, 42-43. See also, Mueller, Public Opinion, Table 4.4.

85 Truman, Trial and Hope, 417-28.
ODM would serve as a "symbol of unity" for the country—something that policy makers viewed as critically important during a partial mobilization of an indefinite duration during a limited war. The president’s creation of the ODM also signaled that Truman was taking stronger steps to manage national production needed for the Korean conflict that was part of a larger effort in the world-wide struggle known as the Cold War. The reverses in the Korean War that Chinese intervention had caused led the Truman administration to realize that the war would not be short and, further, that the United States had to prepare for any eventuality, including the expansion of the war to other parts of the world.\footnote{Pierpaoli, \textit{Truman and Korea}, 45-46.}

As the military situation in Korea continued to deteriorate in late 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed MacArthur that he was to stay in Korea if he could, but should the Chinese force the UNC command back on Pusan, the Chiefs would order a withdrawal to Japan.\footnote{McCullough, \textit{Truman}, 816-8.} MacArthur ignored the reasoning of Washington and at the beginning of 1951 began to act independently, flagrantly flouting Truman’s authority as Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces. MacArthur publicly proposed four retaliatory measures that he felt would force the Chinese to abandon their efforts in Korea. All of MacArthur’s proposals called for broadening the war and went against the country’s stated war aims. He wanted to blockade the China coast, destroy China’s war industries through naval and air attacks, reinforce the troops in Korea with Chinese Nationalist forces, and allow Nationalist troops to conduct diversionary operations against the Chinese mainland. Although the military leaders in Washington studied MacArthur’s
suggestions, the Joint Chiefs ultimately rejected them and choose to limit the fighting to and in Korea. 88

Ridgway’s success at strengthening the position of the Eighth Army did much to change the situation in Korea. By 15 January Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins was confident that the Chinese could not drive the UNC from Korea. “As of now,” he announced, “we are going to stay and fight.” 89 Because of MacArthur’s recalcitrance, the Joint Chiefs of Staff began to bypass the UN Commander and issued orders directly to Eighth Army Commander Ridgway. 90 Less than two weeks later, on 25 January, Ridgway opened a cautious offensive against the west sector of the enemy line and gradually widened the offensive to the east. The advance was methodical, with EUSAK forces eliminating all pockets of resistance in an area before moving farther north. Resistance was stiff and the Chinese and North Koreans counterattacked in February against the center of the UNC line. The 23d Regiment of the 2d division withstood a determined counterattack by a numerically superior Chinese force. Ridgway took the actions of the 23d as a sign that the fighting spirit of the EUSAK had returned. After defeating the counterattack, the Eighth Army continued its advance, recapturing Seoul by mid-March. By the end of winter 1951, U.S. forces were once again north of the 38th parallel. 91 The resiliency of the Eighth Army was remarkable. However, public support


89 Mossman, Ebb and Flow, 237.

90 Weigley, U.S. Army, 518.

91 McCullough, Truman, 834.
for the war was not as quick to bounce back. Throughout early 1951, public support for
the war remained low, with nearly 80 percent of the public believing the United States had
made a mistake in sending troops to Korea.\footnote{Mueller, \textit{Public Opinion}, Table 3.1.}

As the military situation continued to fluctuate during the first several months of
1951, the Far East Command repeatedly attempted to improve the censorship process. In
January, the Far East Command General Headquarters (GHQFEC) redistributed the
authority to release information about the war. After 11 January, EUSAK was responsible
for the issuing and censoring all news on ground operations. The Far East Navy and Air
Force commands had similar responsibilities for their services. The Far East Command
Headquarters would henceforth be responsible for releasing only roundup stories (those
dealing with GHQ matters) or rewrites of previously censored accounts. For rewrites
FEC public information officers would consider only those sections of the stories that
military censors had refused to clear previously. In March, the GHQFEC again resumed a
full role in the censoring of all stories, no matter where they originated. This new system
effectively established a two-tiered censorship process. Censors with each individual
service command in the field first cleared a reporter's story. Once journalists transmitted
their stories out of Korea to Tokyo, the FEC recensored the report. Newsmen
complained that having two levels of censorship hampered their coverage of the war
because it slowed the transmission of news accounts, causing delays that angered many
journalists and their editors. Inconsistent application of the guidelines of what constituted
sensitive information also hampered the system. On 16 March, the military issued a final
set of rules that clearly listed what constituted a violation of security and what did not. The new rules meant that there were fewer questions about what was sensitive information and greater consistency between the services and commands in the Korean Theater.93

Because of the continued complaints from the press, General Ridgway ordered the Eighth Army's Chief of Information to study the new censorship procedures, hoping to find ways to improve relations with the press. The Eighth Army's Chief of Information recommended the elimination of the two-tiered system of censorship. In its place, the UNC/FEC HQ would assume control of all censorship duties, centralizing the process of reviewing and clearing journalists' stories. Ridgway accepted these recommendations and forwarded them to MacArthur. The general of the Eighth Army hoped to take censorship duties out of the hands of the tactical commands and return it to theater staff. MacArthur did not adopt the Eighth Army's recommendations, but the study gave Ridgway a better understanding of military relations with the press -- an understanding that would be useful later in the war.94

In the spring of 1951, MacArthur and Ridgway again prepared to go on the offensive. Although both commanders felt they could still defeat the Communists and reclaim North Korea, the leadership in Washington rejected their ambitious plans. The political and military leaders in the United States no longer wanted to liberate all of Korea from the Communists. The president and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were willing only to


accept the restoration of South Korea as a final result of the UNC’s efforts. Washington’s strategic limitations angered MacArthur, and the general became increasingly insubordinate in his dealings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the president. On 20 March 1951 the Joint Chiefs notified MacArthur that President Truman would soon issue a statement indicating his willingness to negotiate with the Chinese and the North Koreans. The president would make this announcement before UNC forces made any further advances north of the 38th parallel. However, before Truman could make his peace overture, MacArthur issued a statement of his own. In MacArthur’s message to the Chinese and North Koreans, the general also offered to meet with the Communist commanders on the field of battle to end the war, but coupled his offer with threats of disaster for China itself if they did not accept his terms. MacArthur’s statements were at odds with Truman’s and forced the president to cancel the release of his proposal. Although he bristled at MacArthur’s presumptuous action, Truman hoped that the Communists could be forced to the negotiating table if the pressure was kept up. He left the decision to cross the 38th parallel with the tactical commander.95

After the incident in March, President Truman considered removing MacArthur from command but had not yet decided when MacArthur again openly challenged the president. On 5 April 1951, Joseph W. Martin, Republican leader of the House of Representatives, rose before his fellow congressmen and read a statement from MacArthur agreeing with Martin’s proposal to use Nationalist Chinese forces in Korea. MacArthur’s

support of this proposal went against Truman’s stated and known policy. As Commander in Chief, Truman could not allow one of his subordinate commanders openly to challenge national policy. This final clash between MacArthur and Truman ended a long-running quarrel between the two men that went back to December 1950 when the Joint Chiefs, under presidential direction, issued an order requiring official clearance of all statements touching on national policy. Truman saw MacArthur as insubordinate and recalled the general from his command on 11 April, designating Ridgway as the new commander of the United States Far East Command and the United Nations Command in Korea.96

Truman’s decision to relieve MacArthur was a difficult one for the president. Although Truman enjoyed support for his initial actions in Korea, public opinion had steadily turned against the president and his war. On 14 March, a Gallup Poll reported the president’s public approval rating had plummeted to only 26 percent.97 The war was taking a terrible toll on the fighting forces engaged in Korea with UNC casualties totaling 228,941 killed, wounded, and missing by the end of March 1951.98 Public support for the war had remained almost constant since the UNC began its retreat in December, with only 43 percent approving of the war in March 1951.99 Truman knew that if he relieved MacArthur, an immensely popular figure and a potential political rival, he would face an


98McCullough, *Truman*, 837.

outry from his political opponents and the public. Nevertheless, Truman rightly believed that as Commander in Chief he could not tolerate open insubordination from a military commander. The day after Truman announced MacArthur’s recall, Americans reacted with outrage. In the press, editors called for the president’s impeachment. Western Union made deliveries of telegrams to the Senate and House office buildings in bushel baskets. According to one tally, of the 44,358 messages received by Republicans in Congress during the first forty-eight hours following Truman’s announcement, only 334 supported the president’s action. At the heart of the public’s condemnation of Truman was the Korean war. One senator took to calling it “Truman’s War.” The people could not understand a limited war. They wanted to fight to win, not to achieve a stalemate at a horrifying cost. As casualties continued to rise, support for the president and the war declined. One scholar of public opinion concluded that as casualties in Korea increased by a factor of ten, popular support decreased by roughly 10 percent. Americans wanted the casualties to stop and began to doubt that Truman could find an end to the war.

The crisis between MacArthur and Truman developed because the two leaders disagreed on the war’s ultimate goals. MacArthur, schooled in the American military tradition, believed that the only legitimate aim in war was total victory. In his mind, since the Chinese chose to involve themselves in the war, their bases beyond the Yalu were legitimate targets for the UNC. His proposals to bomb Chinese staging areas in Manchuria, to destroy Chinese port facilities, and to use Chinese Nationalist forces in

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100 McCullough, *Truman*, 845-47

Korea were all intended to destroy what MacArthur perceived as threats to his command and Asian stability. The general had lived in the Far East for nearly fifteen years and was preoccupied with Asia.  

Unlike MacArthur, the president had to examine the Korean crisis in broader terms. Truman viewed events in the Far East as only part of the struggle against Communism and focused much of his attention on maintaining the West’s delicate balance with the Soviet Union in Europe. He also understood the mood of the country better than MacArthur and weighed the impact of a larger war on the American people. Following MacArthur’s return to Washington in the spring of 1951, the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations held hearings on the military situation in the Far East. Calling MacArthur, Secretary of Defense Marshall, Secretary of State Acheson, the Joint Chiefs, and others, the Senators attempted to place blame for the setbacks in Korea. Although MacArthur’s testimony at first boosted his popularity and damaged the president, the later witnesses did much to clarify the truth of the situation and to demonstrate the general’s insubordination. By the end of the hearings, most Senators and media observers supported the president’s decision to recall MacArthur. However, the changing attitudes toward MacArthur did not mean that the public or the Congress were any less critical of Truman or his handling of the Korean War.  

In April, while the Truman-MacArthur controversy was ending, Ridgway and the

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102 Perrett, Old Soldiers, 284.

103 Senate Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, Military Situation in the Far East (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1951); Truman, Trial and Hope, 440-50; McCullough, Truman, 852-54.
Eighth Army conducted several limited offensives, advancing roughly ten miles north of the 38th Parallel to a position called Line Kansas. The EUSAK then continued to move forward and entered a region known as the Iron Triangle. On 22 April, just days after Ridgway assumed command of all United Nations forces in Korea, twenty-one Chinese and nine North Korean divisions launched an attack in western and eastern Korea. The enemy directed its main effort at Seoul, forcing Lieutenant General James Van Fleet, Ridgway’s replacement as Eighth Army commander, to order a fighting retreat that continued until his forces reached prepared defensive positions just north of Seoul. The Chinese forces withdrew after their first offensive had lost momentum and began to refit and refurbish. On 15 May the Chinese and North Koreans launched a coordinated attack on the UNC defensive line. Shifting their focus from the region around Seoul, the enemy next attacked in the east central region. Through a redistribution of forces and the might of American artillery and air power, the EUSAK halted the enemy advance. Van Fleet, unwilling to allow the enemy time to prepare for another attack, ordered the Eighth Army on the offensive. His forces caught the Chinese and North Koreans recovering from their most recent offensive and pushed them north. By 31 May, units of the Eighth Army were just below line Kansas. For the next two weeks, the EUSAK continued to advance and by mid-June occupied both line Kansas and line Wyoming on the lower portion of the Iron Triangle.\textsuperscript{104}

The dramatic moves that characterized the Spring of 1951 were the last such movements of the war. The president and his advisors ordered Van Fleet to take

\textsuperscript{104}Mosson, \textit{Ebb and Flow}, 368–77.
advantage of the natural defensive ground that ran between the Kansas-Wyoming lines. UNC forces were to fortify their positions and wait for negotiations. While the EUSAK and other UN forces prepared their positions, the Chinese and North Koreans moved into their own defensive line opposite the Kansas-Wyoming lines. The “yo-yo” war in Korean ended in May 1951 and a new type of war, characterized by small unit actions and attrition warfare, descended on the peninsula.105

Distracted by the MacArthur-Truman controversy and the Chinese-North Korean spring offensive, the military did not reevaluate its censorship process until the middle of June. Ridgway, implementing the recommendations of the Eighth Army’s Chief of Public Information, removed censorship responsibilities from tactical commands and transferred them to the UNC Headquarters in Japan. He established a single censorship office in Tokyo, with a detachment in Korea to transmit copy from the field to Japan. The Eighth Army (and the other service commands) acted only as advisors. By centralizing procedures, the military sped up the flow of news and ensured greater uniformity in the application of censorship procedures.106

However, journalists continued to publish stories that violated operational security. One of the simplest, but most effective, methods journalists used to circumvent censorship was “20 Questions.” A correspondent would phone in a cleared story to his bureau chief in Tokyo. After the reporter had transmitted the story, the chief in Tokyo would begin to ask the correspondent seemingly innocent questions. The two used a prearranged code

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106 Vorhees, Tales, 112-5.
during the question and answer conversation to convey sensitive information about the current military situation and upcoming operations. As part of his recommendations to General Ridgway, the Chief of Information of the Eighth Army had suggested that the military take control of all forms of communication in the war zone. Despite precedents for such action, Ridgway never implemented the recommendation. Without control of the means of communication between Korea and Japan, the military found it difficult to eradicate completely security violations. Because the United States was not fully mobilized for war -- neither politically nor mentally -- control over communications and other areas never approached the levels that characterized the total national commitment to World War II.\(^{107}\)

Newsmen also were free to speak and write whatever they choose once they left the Korean Theater. Several correspondents, upon returning to the United States, embarked on highly publicized and well attended speaking engagements. These correspondents used such opportunities to release information that the FEC had not allowed them to make public while in the war zone. Without a sense of total commitment to the war in Korea, journalists felt more able openly to criticize the military and the war. At other times, the domestic press of the United States published information gathered from sources outside the Far East that was potentially useful to the enemy. *Newsweek* magazine published the Eighth Army's order of battle, complete with unit locations and strength, not once but twice.\(^{108}\) When the Department of Defense and the Secretary of the


\(^{108}\) *Newsweek* (18 June 1951); *Newsweek* 9 (October 1951).
Army complained to the editors of *Newsweek*, the magazine's editors responded that they had gathered the information contained in both their stories from sources in Washington. The editors also assumed that since military officials had provided the information, the magazine was free to publish it. Although the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army had offices for the review of domestic stories about the war, those offices could not compel news organization to submit their stories for censorship before publication.109

To satisfy the Washington press corps' demand for information on the war, the Department of Defense originally attempted to conduct spot briefings on the situation in Korea. However, deficiencies in communication technologies meant that the information that the Pentagon provided was "old" by the time the briefings in Washington took place. Journalists realized that the best and most up-to-date information came from the theater of operations and not from the military leadership in the nation's capital. Recognizing the ineffectiveness of the DoD briefings, the Secretary of Defense shifted their focus from operational information, which was left to the theater command in Tokyo to release background information. Without a centralized, national system of censorship and information management, journalists in the United States were able to publish stories that

109 On 26 June 1950, the Secretary of Defense had assigned the Department of the Army as the executive agency responsible for maintaining and coordinating the briefings of the Department of Defense, with Maj. General Floyd Parks, the Army's Chief of Information, in charge. The other services provided personnel to round out Parks' staff. Additional officers had been obtained from the Armed Forces Information School to fill out a briefing section. Col. Frank Dorn, "Briefing the Press," *Army Information Digest* 6 (1951), 236-41.
would not have passed the censors in the Far East.\footnote{Ibid.}

As military leaders in Washington and the Far East attempted to refine information procedures, the Soviet delegate to the UN, Jacob Malik, announced on 23 June 1951 that the U.S.S.R. believed that the warring nations could settle the Korean War through negotiations. Communist China soon endorsed Malik’s proposal. Reacting to the Soviet initiative, President Truman authorized UN Commander General Ridgway to arrange for armistice talks. Negotiations began on 10 July 1951 at the town of Kaesong. The delegates from the two sides agreed that although they were now engaged in finding a solution to the conflict, the war would continue while negotiations progressed. The beginning of negotiations signaled a new phase in the conflict. The war became one of attrition rather than movement. Each side fortified its positions and except for infrequent, brief, localized battles, the front remained relatively stable for the remainder of the fighting. Within three weeks of the first meeting, the delegates to the armistice talks had determined which points they needed to settle to achieve a cease-fire.\footnote{Walter G. Hermes, \textit{Truce Tent and Fighting Front} (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), 15-32.}

Even before the start of the armistice talks, General Ridgway had intended to permit reporters to cover the negotiations. Ridgway invited reporters to Kaesong and he furnished several railroad cars — including a dining, kitchen, and refrigerator car; an office and communications car; and several sleeping cars — for the correspondents’ use. The general assumed that reporters would have access to the negotiations themselves.
However, when Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, chief negotiator for the United Nations Command, informed the Communist representatives at the first plenary session that the UNC wanted accredited journalists to be present during the negotiations, they protested vehemently. Turner Joy threatened to break off the talks unless the Chinese and North Korean agreed to the presence of the reporters. When faced with this stern support for the press, the Communists relented and allowed journalists to cover the negotiations.\textsuperscript{112}

Despite initial headway, the talks soon ground to a halt as the Communist delegates delayed the proceedings. Their strategy may have been to stall progress so that their military forces could strengthen their positions and gain an edge in the negotiations. On 22 August, the Chinese and North Korean delegates broke off the talks altogether.\textsuperscript{113} The UN Command hoped that new attacks would force the Communists back to the negotiating table. Some of the best known battles of the Korean War took place during this limited-objective campaign. Journalists reported from places named Heartbreak Ridge, Punchbowl, and Bloody Ridge where the bitter fighting demonstrated that although negotiations had begun, the war continued. By the last week of October the UN forces had advanced five to seven miles, moving north of Line Kansas-Wyoming. Shortly after these gains the Communist representatives returned and negotiations resumed on 25 October at Panmunjom, a tiny settlement seven miles southeast of Kaesong.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{112} Mossman, "Press," 18-9.

\textsuperscript{113} Hermes, \textit{Truce Tent}, 46-52.

\textsuperscript{114} Although it seems likely that the military gains of the UNC influenced the actions of the Communist, it is difficult to say to what degree Van Fleet's successes had in the timing of the return of the Chinese and Korean negotiators. Hermes, \textit{Truce Tent}, 80-
When the delegates agreed on 27 November to a demarcation line coinciding with the current position of the opposing forces, the hope for a quick settlement rose. The delegates placed a thirty-day limit during which time they had to settle all other matters before the armistice would take effect. Several issues remained before delegates could finalize an armistice agreement, especially the status of prisoners of war following the ending of hostilities. The UNC delegates proposed that prisoners choose which side they wished to return to after the end of the war. The Communists opposed such a repatriation plan. Although neither side was willing to give ground on the issue of repatriation, each did agree to extend the thirty-day waiting period. This deadlock continued through May 1952.

The relationship between the press and the military during the negotiations was often strained. Several members of the press, either directly or indirectly, aided the Communists. Two in particular -- Wilfred Burchett, an Australian correspondent of the Paris communist paper Ce Soir, and Alan Winnington of the Leftist London Daily Worker -- helped to disseminate information favorable to the Chinese and North Koreans. While negotiators were locked in meetings, correspondents gathered outside. Winnington told

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115 The UNC's proposal of voluntary repatriation was in accordance with Geneva Convention guidelines that had been signed in 1949. According to the Convention, prisoners of war were to be given a choice in repatriation proceedings and that any prisoner who did not wish to return to their homeland could simply be set at liberty. Mark W. Clark, From the Danube to the Yalu (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 240-5.

116 Hermes, Truce Tent, 112-34.
American newsmen, "You are on the losing side, you know, old boys." Acting in the words of General Clark as "Red Agents," Winnington and Burchett attempted to turn the opinion of American journalists against their country and the United Nations. They pointed out that while the United States represented the most mechanized nation in the world, it could not overcome the poorly equipped and armed nation of China. "The spirit of communism and the common man," Winnington told U.S. reporters, "... had risen above mere mechanical power." Winnington and Burchett were not lying to their American counterparts. Instead, they released highly biased information, timed to coincide with delicate moments in the negotiations and to undermine the credibility of UN negotiators. During the sensitive prisoner of war negotiations, these two journalists provided pictures and names of Allied prisoners that American papers quickly published. According to Clark, their purpose was to increase pressure on the U.S. government to find a quick end to the war so that American boys could return home. Despite the efforts of newsmen like Burchett and Winnington, most Western journalists dismissed the efforts of Communist-leaning reporters to influence their opinions.

At Panmunjom, General Clark, hoping to end the impasses over the prisoner exchange, suggested that the two sides exchange sick and wounded prisoners. The Communists negotiators did not respond immediately, waiting until the end of March 1952

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117Clark, Danube to the Yalu, 217.

118Clark, Danube to the Yalu, 218.

to respond to Clark’s proposal. In their response, the Communists accepted the limited exchange of prisoners and went further to suggest that the exchange could be the first step in the solving the whole prisoner of war problem. The two sides’ agreement on the exchange of prisoners marked the beginning of a new round of productive talks. The first exchange of prisoners, Little Switch, took place in April.120

On 7 May 1952, events occurred that caught the world’s attention and brought the prisoner of war situation to a head. On the small island of Koje-do off Pusan, inmates of UNC Prison Camp No. 1, acting under orders smuggled into the camps from the North Korean commanders, enticed the U.S. commander in charge of the camp, Brigadier General Francis T. Dodd, into the compound and captured him. The inmates hoped to trade Dodd’s life for an admissions that the UNC had mistreated prisoners, particularly during the initial screening process to determine repatriation. The overall Communist objective was to discredit the UNC repatriation proposals.121

Ridgway quickly sent a new commander to Koje, Brigadier General Charles F. Colson, whose mission was to gain Dodd’s release and to suppress the prison uprising. Colson, pressured by the FEC for a speedy resolution of the crisis, obtained Dodd’s release but in the process signed a statement that granted all of the prisoners’ demands. The statement amounted to an UNC admission that there had indeed been “instances of bloodshed where many prisoners of war have been killed and wounded by UN forces.”


During this tense time, General Ridgway received his transfer to command of NATO forces. General Mark W. Clark replaced Ridgway as the commander of the Far East Command. Clark took a decisive stance on the Koje-do crisis. He immediately repudiated Colson’s statement and called for an inquiry into the conduct of both Colson and Dodd. Clark also appointed Brigadier General Haydon Boatner, an Asian affairs expert who had served as General Joseph Stillwell’s Chief of Staff in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II, as commander of the UN prison of war camps on Koje Island. Boatner moved decisively to make sure that the events of May would never occur again. The new commander divided the prisoners into smaller, more secure camps that were isolated from outside communication and easier to control. Boatner completed his plan on 10 June and the immediate crisis on Koje was settled. However, the issue of repatriation continued to hamper the progress of Armistice negotiations.122

During the POW crisis in the spring of 1952, the press legitimately criticized the military’s handling of the press. For a brief time the military barred all correspondents from visiting the island. Only one newsman, Sanford L. Zalberg, managed to reach the island. Zalberg, representing the International News Service although accredited to Reuters, observed events for eight hours before the military, in his own words, “firmly but politely” returned him to the mainland. Censors delayed the release of his story for twenty-four hours, when, with the approval of his Tokyo bureau chief, the FEC released the story as a pool report for all news services. When Clark replaced Ridgway during the

Koje-do crisis, he instructed the EUSAJK to make prompt and factual official announcements of all events and developments not only about Koje-do but about every POW camp under UN control. Press representatives accused the Eighth Army PIO of deliberately withholding information about the situation in the camps. The PIO accepted the charge but felt his actions were justified. The military released no information regarding the riot of 10 April 1952 on the contention that the publicity would become a factor in the armistice negotiations and might adversely affect other military operations in progress.\textsuperscript{123}

While the military might have been justified in their reasoning about the impact of the story on the negotiations, they paid a heavy price for keeping the press in the dark. When the story finally came out, the press jumped on it. Journalists treated it as an exposé. Because the military “sat on the story,” the press assumed, rightly or wrongly, that the U.S. and UN commands were covering-up information. The events on Koje-do also damaged the international position of the United States and the United Nations. Colson’s admission that the UN had mistreated prisoners of war caused many governments to question UN assertions that a large portion of the North Korean and Chinese prisoners did not want to return to their home countries. Although Boatner succeeded in squelching the uprisings, the Communists won an important propaganda victory on Koje-do and used it during the continuing negotiations.\textsuperscript{124} By the middle of

\textsuperscript{123} Clark, \textit{Danube to the Yalu}, 35-8.

June, the negotiators had settled the prisoner repatriation problem. Negotiators agreed that each side would have the opportunity to persuade those captives refusing to return to their homelands to change their minds.\textsuperscript{125}

As talks continued and the prisoner of war crisis developed, the soldiers at the front endured thunderous artillery duels, frightening night patrols, and brief but intense skirmishes. The war in Korea began to resemble the trench warfare characteristic of the First World War and popular support for both the conflict and President Truman remained startlingly low as the war dragged on and Americans continued to die. The first half of 1952 was a troubling time for the United States. Perhaps expressing frustration at the stalemate in Korea, the relationships between the president and the people and the government and industry deteriorated. Truman, who had enjoyed a nearly 50 percent approval rating shortly after the war began, received a favorable rating from less than a quarter of the public in January 1952. Truman’s close connection with the stalled war caused many Americans to examine possible alternatives to Democratic leadership. In January, General Dwight D. Eisenhower -- World War II hero of Normandy, President of Columbia University, friend of powerful Republicans, and the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in Europe during negotiations that produced the North Atlantic Treaty -- announced that he was willing to accept the Republican party’s presidential nomination if the people wanted him. Eisenhower, whom Democrats until January 1951 had hoped to snare as their own presidential candidate, was one of the most respected public figures of his time and posed a grave political threat not only to Truman, but also to Democratic

\textsuperscript{125}Hermes, \textit{Truce Tents}, 414-9; Clark, \textit{Danube to the Yalu}, 240-57.
control of the Executive that had begun twenty years before. The Republicans, led by Senator Robert Taft, realized that American discontent over the handling of the Korean war made the war a central theme in their efforts to end Democratic dominance in the White House.  

In addition to the threat from the Republicans and the Eisenhower campaign, a war production crisis troubled Truman during the first half of 1952. The steel industry -- an essential component of the nation’s war production effort -- had been engaged in bitter negotiations with the Congress of Industrial Workers (CIO) since November 1951. The CIO demanded a wage increase for steel workers. To offset the cost of increased wages the industry wanted the government to raise the price the government paid for steel. Truman attempted to bring the two sides together, but his efforts failed to produce real results. The crisis came to a head in March 1952 when the federal War Stabilization Board (WSB) issued its recommendations that the steel industry pay higher wages, increase workers fringe benefits, and guarantee union access to the industry. The steel companies predictably balked at the recommendations, asserting that the proposed package would nearly double the price of steel. The business community and the popular press sided with the steel industry and claimed that the settlement would wreck the economy. Truman was not fully convinced the WSB’s recommendations were the best answer but felt he had little choice but to accept them. 


\[127\] *Newsweek* (21 April 1952), 33-34, 37; *Business Week* (19 April 1952), 180. For a complete discussion of the steel crisis see Maeva Marcus, *Truman and the Steel Seizure*
The steel industry did offer their workers a new contract during the first week of April, but with increases and benefits substantially below the WSB recommendations of March. The United Steelworkers voted to strike effective 9 April. Truman, convinced that the steel executives were greedy and unreasonable, determined to head off the strike before it could begin. On the evening of 8 April 1952, the president appeared on national television and announced that he was seizing the nation’s major steel mills at midnight. Reaction to his drastic move was immediate. The steel executives, major business organizations, the media, and many in Congress attacked Truman’s actions, accusing the president of assuming dictatorial powers. They immediately attempted to have the seizure nullified in the courts, arguing that the Constitution did not give the president inherent power to seize property. On 29 April, U.S. District Court Judge David A. Pine ruled that the president’s seizure of the steel plants was “illegal and without authority of law.”

Truman immediately had the Justice Department appeal the District Court’s ruling, winning a stay of Judge Pine’s order and succeeding in having the Supreme Court agree to review the dispute. In the interim, the government continued to operate the seized mills.

One week later the Supreme Court ruled on the case, *Youngstown Sheet and Tube*

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Company v. Sawyer. On 2 June 1952, the Court affirmed Judge Pine's decision and declared the president's actions unconstitutional. Truman had no choice but to hand control of the mills back to their owners, causing 600,000 steel workers to walk off the line. The president went before Congress, seeking legislation authorizing him to seize the mills once again until the two sides could reach a settlement. Congress demurred and instead urged the president to invoke existing legislation to find a solution. Truman refused and tried to place the blame for the crisis on the Congress. The strike lasted for fifty-three days and caused economic disorder across the country. On 24 July, Truman directly intervened and the strike ended. The steel crisis affected more than just war production; and in its wake, Congressional leaders, industrialists, journalists, and the public once again questioned the growth of executive power and the leadership of President Truman. Truman provided his critics with an easy campaign issue, sped the erosion of public support for the Korean War, and alienated members of his own administration. Under the weight of all the criticism and pressures, Truman decided that he would not seek a second full term. On 29 March, while attending the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, he composed a short hand-written note. "I shall not be a candidate for re-

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130 Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, et al. v. Sawyer (343 U.S. 579). Charles Sawyer was Secretary of Commerce at the time of the case.

131 Ibid; Pierpaoli, Truman and Korea, 170-71; Marcus, Truman and the Steel Seizure Case, 108-09, 130-227. Although the strike's disruption was not as great as predicted, it did inflict heavy casualties on certain industries, with auto makers taking the hardest hit. As the strike continued, its effect on the economy pushed more and more people out of work. See Wall Street Journal, 9 June 1952, 1-2; New York Times, 3 July 1952, 5A.

132 Pierpaoli, Truman and Korea, 172.
election. I have served my country long and I think efficiently and honestly. I shall not accept a renomination. I do not feel that it is my duty to spend another four years in the White House.”

Truman did not publicize his decision for several months, but during the second half of 1952 he fought a losing battle to keep the presidency in the hands of the Democrats.

As the 1952 presidential election approached, the war in Korea became a major issue in the campaign. General Eisenhower remained in Europe during the first half of 1952, claiming that while not actively seeking the Republican nomination he stood ready to serve his country as always. On 1 June, Eisenhower returned to the United States as a full-time candidate. Citizens for Eisenhower offices opened across the country even before the general had announced his return. Eisenhower’s many friends in the media backed his campaign and published editorials critical of the Democrats and Truman. Often editors like James Reston of the *New York Herald Tribune* focused on the war in Korea and claimed Eisenhower would be able to achieve a “decent armistice.” On 5 July, Eisenhower won the Republican presidential nomination, defeating Senator Robert Taft. Truman had announced his intentions not to run and the Democrats nominated Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson as their candidate. Eisenhower and his vice-presidential candidate, Senator Richard Nixon of California, conducted a tough campaign. While Eisenhower usually refrained from direct attacks on Truman or Stevenson, Nixon concentrated on \( K_1 \), \( C_2 \) (Korea, Communism, and corruption) and called Stevenson a

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132 A photograph of Truman’s note appears in Illustration Section III, in *Truman Administration*. See also Truman, *Trial and Hope*, 488-91.
graduate of Dean Acheson’s “Cowardly College of Communist Containment.” The high point of Eisenhower’s campaign came on 24 October 1952 in Detroit, when he announced that, immediately after his election, he would “forgo the diversions of politics and concentrate on the job of ending the Korean war. . . . That job requires a personal trip to Korea. I shall make that trip. Only in that way could I learn how best to serve the American people in the cause of peace. I shall go to Korea.” Many Americans, long tired of the seemingly endless struggle in the Far East, believed that a new president with vast military experience would dramatically alter the situation in Korea and elected Eisenhower in November 1952.

The president-elect quickly made good on his campaign promise to go to the front. General Clark, as the UN and U.S. commander in Korea, prepared a detailed plan for Eisenhower of what would be necessary for the UNC to defeat the Communists. However, Clark and the country soon realized that Eisenhower, like Truman, was not willing to risk an expansion of the war but hoped to end the conflict with an honorable armistice. However, unlike Truman, Eisenhower placed a limit on his patience. In a strongly worded warning, the new president stated that if progress toward an armistice were not forthcoming, the United States was prepared “to move decisively without inhibition in our use of weapons, and would no longer be responsible for confining

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hostilities to the Korean peninsula.\textsuperscript{137}

After Eisenhower's visit to Korea, the armistice talks progressed while fighting at the front continued. As January turned into February and then April, UN and Communist negotiators crept toward an agreement acceptable to both sides. In May 1953, Chinese forces launched limited attacks against Eighth Army outposts. On 10 June the Chinese attacked South Korean positions in force and penetrated two miles behind the UN line. The 10 June attacks could have been the last of the war if South Korean president Syngman Rhee had not intervened. On 18 June Rhee, unhappy that the UN was not willing to continue fighting for the unification of the Korean peninsula, released thousands of North Korean prisoners who had refused repatriation. The South Korean people quickly offered shelter to the "escaped" prisoners and foiled all U.S./UN attempts to recapture the North Koreans. Although Rhee had acted without either the knowledge or approval of the UNC, the Chinese and North Koreans held the UNC responsible for the action. For more than a month, the delegates at Panmunjom worked to repair the damage Rhee had caused.\textsuperscript{138}

During that time, the Chinese and North Koreans continued their offensive. Although the Eighth Army counterattacked, it did not recover all of the Communist gains. Large scale actions ended on 20 July 1953, and one week later, at 10:00 a.m. local time, the chief delegate from each side signed an armistice agreement in Panmunjom. Fighting ceased twelve hours after the signing of the document. In thirty-seven months of fighting,

\textsuperscript{137}Quoted in Clark, \textit{Danube to the Yalu}, 231.

\textsuperscript{138}Clark, \textit{Danube to the Yalu}, 273-4.
the UNC suffered 550,000 casualties, including almost 93,000 killed. The United States, by far the largest contributor of forces to the United Nations Command after South Korea, lost 33,629 men killed, 103,284 wounded, and 5,178 missing or captured during the war.\textsuperscript{139}

The Korean War was the first major engagement between the United States and the Communist world during the Cold War. Caught unprepared militarily, industrially, and mentally by the start of the war, the United States struggled during the first three months of the conflict to stave off defeat. No one had thought that a major ground war would occur in 1950. President Truman led the United States and the United Nations into a war which neither was prepared to fight. The lack of foresight and military preparedness became clear during the first days of the war when North Korean forces easily overran Task Force Smith. Initially, the public rallied behind the president and the limited objectives of the United Nations. After the Inchon landings, Truman faced a tough decision. The people called for a World War II style victory and his military leaders assured him that such a triumph was possible. Heady with optimism, Truman altered the war’s strategy when he authorized MacArthur to make a drive for the Yalu and to conquer North Korea. Success blinded Truman, his military advisors, and the nation to the danger that loomed just across the river. Despite clear warnings from China, Truman and MacArthur rushed head-long into a disastrous new war. Chinese intervention forced Truman to alter the war aims once again, readopting the limited objectives that he had abandoned in September 1950.

\textsuperscript{139}Hermes, Truce Tent, 459-78.
As the war continued, the government, the military, the public, and the press became even more divided. During the first six months of the war, the press chafed first under the absence of military control and later complained that the military had imposed unreasonable censorship. MacArthur, unwilling to accept the limited nature of the war, openly challenged the president's power to make foreign policy. The conflict between the two leaders led to the most famous and damaging crisis of the Truman administration. The public, disappointed that stalemate had replaced victory as the nation's goal, attacked Truman. Congressional opposition to the president's handling of the war became vociferous, and industry focused more on profits than on national unity and wartime needs. General Eisenhower's election in 1952 reflected in part a repudiation of Truman and his leadership during the Korean War. Unlike the Second World War — which had been longer, more threatening to national survival, and more costly — national unity during the Korean War dissolved.

As national unity crumbled, the military and the press confronted each other on the Korean battlefields. The military and government's failure to plan for another war led to many of the problems that existed between the military and the press during the initial stage of the conflict. Unlike World War II, where military and governmental agencies existed before Pearl Harbor to handle the press and the management of information, neither General MacArthur nor his superiors had established any type of organization needed to deal with reporters in a combat zone. The military/press relationship developed in a haphazard way as the military situation changed. When the Communists had the upper hand, the military attempted to control the press. Conversely, when the U.S. and
UNC began to drive back the North Koreans after the Inchon landings, the press enjoyed greater freedom and tolerance.

The relationship between the military and the press was far from ideal during the Korean conflict. The initial policy of journalistic self-censorship proved inadequate from the beginning. During the first six months of the war, newsmen published much information useful to the enemy. The blame for this lay at the feet of both the military and the newsmen. In all previous modern wars, the press had proved unable to regulate itself. The military had often recognized the institutional inability of the media to refrain from releasing information without some sort of outside control. To imagine that things would be different in Korea was nonsensical. The press also shared some of the blame. Despite initially unclear instructions about what types of information were sensitive in nature, the guidelines from the military improved steadily. By 1951 new instructions were available to remove much of the ambiguity, but, the release of militarily sensitive information continued. Only with the imposition of formal censorship did the situation begin to improve. However, once the military imposed censorship, it went beyond just restricting sensitive information. MacArthur used censorship to control attitudes toward the military as well as to safeguard military secrets. Following MacArthur’s recall, the situation improved, but as one scholar noted, the military and the media “never reached an equilibrium of protecting security and letting the entire truth -- minus security information -- be told.”

The military’s policy toward the press in Korea fluctuated between no control and near total censorship. The lack of planning for the press and absence of any

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140 Horrell, “MacArthur,” 63.
centralized system or organization to manage the news, both in the Far East and in the United States, limited the effectiveness of any information policy in Korea.

The Korean War was part of a transitional period. Situated between the era of international cooperation during World War II and the height of the Cold War, the conflict in Korea shared similarities with both eras. The modern age of limited warfare, experienced for the first time in Korea, demonstrated the difficulties in maintaining support for a war in a democracy with a free press. The steady decrease in public support for the war and President Truman showed that the public would not blindly support military action. As John Mueller demonstrated in his book, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, popular support in limited wars was tied to casualties. Additionally, the lack of a clear strategy and the shifting war aims of President Truman denied the public the unifying focus that had kept the nation together during the Second World War.
Chapter 4
Unclear Aims:
The President, the Military, the Press
and the Loss of Public Support for the War in Vietnam

On 27 February 1968, CBS News broadcast a television special titled, "Report from Vietnam by Walter Cronkite," capturing an audience of some nine million Americans. Cronkite, a celebrated reporter from World War II and a leader in the evolving world of broadcast news, had originally supported American efforts in Vietnam. He and many others had accepted and endorsed the U.S. policy of containing Communist aggression in Asia. Cronkite had just returned from the battlefields of Southeast Asia where he had witnessed the war at its height in the winter of 1968. Cronkite opened the program with an introductory statement shot from amid the rubble of Saigon. The special continued with narrative and film clips of recent combat and its aftermath, alternating optimistic interviews with pessimistic appraisals of the war effort. Following the final station break, Cronkite confronted the camera from behind his desk in New York to deliver his personal assessment. In beginning his closing address to the American people, Walter Cronkite, the "most trusted man in America," made it clear that what he was about to say was his opinion, and then began speaking in a voice that nearly everyone in America recognized and respected.

Who won and who lost in the great Tet Offensive against the cities? I'm not sure. The Viet Cong did not win by a knockout, but neither did we. The referees of history may make it a draw. Another standoff may be coming in the big battle expected south of the Demilitarized Zone. Khe Sanh could well fall with a terrible loss of American lives, prestige and morale, and this is a tragedy of our stubbornness there: but the bastion is

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no longer a key to the rest of the northern regions and its is doubtful that the American forces can be defeated across the breadth of the DMZ with any substantial loss of ground. Another standoff. On the political front, past performance gives no confidence that the Vietnamese government can cope with its problems, now compounded by the attack on the cities. It may not fall, it may hold on, but probably won’t show the dynamic qualities demanded of this young nation. Another standoff.

... It seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate. This summer’s almost certain standoff will either end in real give-and-take negotiations or terrible escalation; and for every means we have to escalate, the enemy can match us, and that applies to the invasion of the North, the use of nuclear weapons, or the mere commitment of one hundred or two hundred or three hundred thousand more American troops to the battle. And with each escalation, the world comes closer to the brink of cosmic disaster.

To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe, in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To suggest we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable pessimism. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion.

On the off chance that military and political analysts are right, in the next months we must test the enemy’s intentions in case this is indeed his last big gasp before negotiations. But it is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out, then, will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could.

This is Walter Cronkite. Good night.1

Walter Cronkite’s assessment of the war reverberated throughout the country. His stunning comments on the war in Southeast Asia characterized the growing opposition to the war from the press and segments of the American public. A White House aide reported that President Lyndon Baines Johnson remarked, “If I have lost Cronkite, I’ve lost middle America.”2

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2Cronkite, Reporter’s Life, 258.
Despite the stunned reaction from the President of the United States, the war would continue. By the time the United States withdrew its forces from Indochina, more than 58,000 Americans would have lost their lives in Vietnam and the country would emerge battered and wounded from the war, leaving the United States humbled and more divided than at any point since the Civil War. How had a conflict that was relatively unknown in 1960 created such unrest within the country that had withstood greater threats during World War II? Why had the public and the press, so supportive of U.S. military action during the global struggle twenty-five years before, turned against the war, the military, and the nation's political leaders? What had the military and the government done, or failed to do, during America's longest war that led to the loss of media and public support? Those questions endured long after the final helicopter ascended from the U.S. Embassy's roof in Saigon -- seven years after Walter Cronkite made his fateful broadcast in February 1968.3

The United States' involvement in Vietnam had begun in the 1940s. Following the end of World War II, the former colonial powers France and Great Britain attempted to regain control of their overseas possessions that the Axis powers had occupied. France claimed sovereignty over French Indochina. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had originally proposed that a United Nations trusteeship replace France's control over its

Southeast Asian colony, but he eventually backed away from his insistence on international control of Indochina. A month before his death, the president agreed to allow France to retain control of its former colony. Five months later and less than a month after the end of World War II, a little known Vietnamese nationalist named Ho Chi Minh issued a declaration of Vietnamese independence on 2 September 1945. Ho, who had settled in France and joined the French Communist Party following World War I, became the embodiment of the struggle in Indochina that was to last for the next thirty years. Initial attempts at negotiations between Ho’s nationalists and French colonialists broke down, and the armed struggle for Indochina began in November 1946.¹

The “Europe first policy” of the United States -- with its emphasis on countering Soviet designs in Central, Southern and Western Europe -- initially shielded the Truman administration from becoming directly involved in the Franco-Vietnamese dispute. The eight-year war for Vietnam that followed the dissolution of talks between Vietnamese communists and the French foreshadowed many of the problems that the United States would face in the 1960s and 1970s. Superior French firepower on the ground and in the air enabled them quickly to seize and hold the cities and major towns throughout

¹Even before his death in 1945, Roosevelt had yielded his position to two other compelling considerations grounded in regions far removed from Indochina. First, American strategy during World War II gave priority to Europe and required the cooperation of France in North Africa. American policy after the war needed France’s agreement to accomplish the postwar economic reconstruction of Western Europe and defend the West against Soviet military power. Second, American demands for an UN trusteeship of Indochina contradicted U.S. refusal of the same status for the Pacific islands that American forces had captured during the war against Japan. George McT. Kahin, Intervention: How America became Involved in Vietnam (New York: Anchor Books, 1987), 1-34.
Indochina, but the Vietnamese forces (the Vietminh) dominated most of the rural
countryside. French forces, if large enough and adequately supplied, could penetrate
almost any region of the country, but when the French regrouped to attack elsewhere, the
Vietminh was usually able to reassert its authority. The commander of French troops in
Vietnam, General Jacques Philippe LeClerc, soon recognized that no solution was possible
through military force alone. In January 1947 he stated, "Anti-Communism will be a
useless tool as long as the problem of nationalism remains unsolved." 9

Unlike the Korean War that had begun when the North Korean Army invaded
South Korea, the conflict in Vietnam was much more complicated. During the First
IndoChinese War, 6 the French military attempted to combat nationalist forces and guerrilla
units under the control of Ho Chi Min. The conflict in Southeast Asia had more in
common with a civil war than with a more conventional struggle between two nations.
Although Western powers like France had some experience with such conflicts, the war in
Vietnam blurred the line between combatant and civilian, and had little resemblance to
modern Western forms of warfare. Neither Communist sentiment nor dreams of conquest
dominated Ho Chi Min's struggle to unite his country and free it from colonial rule. Ho

5Quoted in Kahin, Intervention, 24.

The First Indochina War, lasting from 1947 until 1954, describes the struggle
between the Viet Minh forces of Ho Chi Minh and the French. The Second Indochina
War, more commonly known as the Vietnam War, pitted insurgents and North
Vietnamese regular forces against the Government of South Vietnam and United States
and other allied forces. Although neither the start nor the end of the Second Indochina
War was as definite as the dates of the first war, the conflict lasted from roughly 1957
until 1975 when North Vietnamese forces overran South Vietnamese forces and
controlled both halves of Indochina.
and his followers were prepared to resist any power, endure any hardship, in their nationalist struggle."

For the first three years of the Franco-Vietnamese struggle, the United States government and press paid only cursory attention to the events in Southeast Asia. However, changes in Asia quickly altered American attitudes. The Communist victory in China in 1949 awakened the Truman administration to the threat of Communist expansion throughout the region. By the early 1950s, Truman was committed to a policy of containment that he hoped would halt the growth of Communist influence around the globe. The opening of relations between the Soviet Union and Ho, and the continued

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8 The most dramatic example of Truman's containment policy was the U.S.-led war against North Korean aggression in 1950-1953. The Korean War, and other U.S. military interventions around the world, were the most active components of Western containment. Other examples of the containment policy were the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe following the end of World War II, the deployment of U.S. aid and advisors to Greece, and the support of the Chinese nationalist forces after their withdrawal to Formosa (Taiwan). The first clear articulation of America's containment strategy was George Kennan's "Long Telegram." Kennan, a junior official in the U.S. embassy in Moscow, wrote in 1946, that Soviet foreign policy was an "amalgam of Communist ideological zeal and old-fashioned tsarist expansionism." According to Kennan, the friction between the Soviet Union and the United States was not the product of some misunderstanding or faulty communications, but inherent in the Soviet Union's fearful perception of the outside world. The international view of the Soviets caused them "to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it." Kennan elucidated his arguments from the "Long Telegram" in July 1947 when he anonymously published an article titled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in *Foreign Affairs*. In his later piece, Kennan stated that the only way to defeat the Soviet strategy of domination was by "a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world." See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 446-72 for a general history of the birth of U.S. containment
military troubles of the French against the Vietminh, prompted the U.S. to offer aid to the French. By 1954, Washington was paying for nearly 80 percent of all French military expenditures in the war.⁹

However, this large influx of money and matériel was not enough to overcome the problem that General LeClerc had identified in 1947. From 1951 until 1954, the Vietminh combined political organization in the countryside with guerilla warfare and conventional military operations. French public opinion gradually turned against the war that seemed to offer no hope of victory. During this time, U.S. news organizations began to station reporters in Vietnam and other areas of Southeast Asia. Journalists like Robert Shaplen and Harold Isaacs of Newsweek, Bernard Fall of The Nation, Larry Allen and Forest Edwards of Associated Press, and James Robinson of NBC arrived in Vietnam during the French struggle with Ho Chi Min.¹⁰ The end for the French came in 1954 at the outpost of Dien Bien Phu where General Vo Nguyen Giap led Vietminh forces who surrounded the French bastion and, despite superior French firepower, won a decisive victory. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his military advisors contemplated using American policy. See also George Kennan, “Long Telegram” from Moscow, 22 February 1946, in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1969), vol. VI, 666-709; “X” (George F. Kennan), “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” Foreign Affairs, 25 (July 1947), 575-82.

⁹American strategists hoped to develop the European Defense Community as an outgrowth of NATO. The EDC was a way to strengthen Western Europe’s defense capabilities through the rearmament of Germany. French cooperation was essential to any such plan. See Kahin, Intervention, 40-45.

air power to support the French but, fearing the domestic and international repercussions of such a move, remained passive as the Vietminh won the military phase of the First Indochina War.\textsuperscript{11}

While the Vietminh were militarily victorious at Dien Bien Phu, they suffered defeat at the peace conference held later that same year in Geneva. Influenced by China and the Soviet Union, Ho’s representatives accepted a temporary partition of Vietnam with national elections scheduled for 1956. The 17th Parallel divided the Indochinese peninsula, with Ho as leader of the northern Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In the South, the United States backed a government headed by Ngo Dinh Diem. In the two years between the end of the war and the scheduled elections, the government of South Vietnam (GVN) and its American allies worked hard to establish a separate nation, undermining much of the Geneva Accords.\textsuperscript{12} With the U.S. backing his position, Diem ignored the agreement to hold national elections in 1956 and took steps to secure his power through a ruthless and highly effective campaign of repression, rooting out former Vietminh operatives living in the south.\textsuperscript{13} American leaders recognized the threat that

\textsuperscript{11}Kahin, Intervention, 44-65; Herring, Longest War, 3-42.

\textsuperscript{12}There is considerable disagreement between scholars over whether the establishment of a truly separate government in the south and the failure to hold elections because of GVN’s existence violated the Geneva Accords. Kahin maintains that the United States violated the conditions of the treaty that it witnessed. Herring offers a less definitive opinion on this matter. He does concede that the spirit of the treaty was violated, but comes short of arguing for a violation of the letter of the law. See Kahin, Intervention, 66-92; Herring, Longest War, 38-42. See also Kenneth H. Williams, “Peaceful Unification Denied: The Failure to Hold All-Vietnam Elections in 1956,” M.A. Thesis (Lexington, KY: 1988).

\textsuperscript{13}Kahin, Intervention, 84-93.
Vietminh insurgency posed to South Vietnam. President Eisenhower responded to the renewal of hostilities, increasing U.S. aid to Vietnam and sending military advisers to help train South Vietnamese troops. In early 1956, the United States assumed full responsibility for the training and supplying of the South Vietnamese Army and established the Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) in Saigon to build Vietnamese forces into an effective force.\(^{14}\) South Vietnam became the cornerstone of U.S. containment policy in Asia. Ever since the end of the Second World War, the United States had pursued an international policy of containing communism within the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern/Central Europe, China, and other peripheral areas like Cuba and North Vietnam. When Ho Chi Min began to accept aid and advice from the Communist superpowers -- China and the Soviet Union -- the United States immediately reacted by offering to support the South Vietnamese government. America’s knee-jerk reaction to Ho’s relationship with Communist nations was typical of the time when the Cold War threatened to turn hot and U.S. presidents and military leaders feared communism and Communist expansion as much as they had fascism during World War II. However, despite the desire to stop the spread of communism, few Americans -- either in government or in the press -- paid much attention to the growing conflict in Southeast Asia, and everyone misunderstood the nationalistic nature of the conflict between Ho’s forces and the government of South Vietnam. Much of America’s attention was focused inward. Still recovering from the limited war in Korea and focused on Communist threats

\(^{14}\)Herring, *Longest War*, 57.
in Europe, the U.S. public had little knowledge of events in Indochina. But Eisenhower's decision to increase aid and deploy U.S. advisers to the region was an important first step in escalating American involvement in Southeast Asia.

Following Diem's crack down in 1956, the Vietminh teetered on the edge of extinction in the south. In 1957, the desperate remnants of the Vietminh launched an unexpected rebellion that was to mark the beginning of the Second Indochina War. The Vietminh attempted to salvage what was left of its organization and regain the momentum of its 1945 revolution against the French. Cadre leaders reactivated intelligence and propaganda networks positioned to spread agitation throughout rural villages. They found willing supporters in the countryside peasants who resented the government's tactics and its failure to enact meaningful land reforms. Agitation quickly increased. The Vietminh assassinated nearly 700 government officials in 1957. U.S. correspondents in the regions covered the reemerging struggle in Vietnam but concentrated their stories on the Communist menace, praising Diem as one of Asia's noblest leaders and supporting American policy to contain the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. Although reporters criticized the U.S. mission in Saigon for waste and mismanagement, most journalists supported American efforts to preserve the fledgling South Vietnamese government against Communist aggression.

During the late 1950s, North Vietnam was only gradually able to recommit

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resources to the struggle in the south. From 1957 until 1959, the DRV modernized its armed forces with the assistance of the Communists superpowers of China and the Soviet Union. Aid from Communist nations and strong leadership from Ho allowed North Vietnam to establish firm control over its portion of Indochina. In 1959, Ho’s government formally authorized the resumption of the struggle for a united and independent nation. At first the DRV provided supplies and matériel to the Vietminh and its successor, the NLF, formed in December 1960. The NLF (also known as the Vietcong or VC for Vietnamese Communists in the Vietnamese language) was a populous-based organization that, while led by Communists, appealed to all people in the South who disliked the policies of Diem and wanted independence for a unified Vietnam. During this period, special crews worked hard to establish a secure supply route from the north that would eventually become known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The trickle of men and supplies from the DRV that began in 1957 gradually increased and in 1960 the North commenced its new policy of an armed struggle against the Diem government in the south.\(^1\)

President John F. Kennedy saw the struggle in Indochina as a way to test new military doctrines meant to control the extension of communism in revolutionary struggles.\(^2\) Drawing on the British experience in Malaya and U.S. operations in Greece

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\(^2\)Even before JFK became president he was an outspoken supporter of U.S.-GVN relations. In a much quoted statement, then Senator Kennedy said, “The fundamental tenets of this nation’s [the United States’] foreign policy . . . depend in considerable measure upon a strong and free Vietnamese nation.” Kennedy went on to say, “Vietnam represents the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the keystone in the arch, the finger in the dike,” and if the “red tide of communism” washed over it, much of Asia would be threatened. Quoted in Herring, *Longest War*, 43.
and the Congo, the U.S. military developed counterinsurgency doctrines. Kennedy and his advisors believed that so-called "brush-fire" wars represented part of the Soviet strategy for world domination. Communist leaders like Nikita Kruschev believed that they could avoid nuclear confrontations with the Western allies and weaken the American-led free-world through wars fought on the periphery of world attention. In response to this threat from the Soviet Union and China, the Kennedy administration replaced Eisenhower’s New Look defense policy -- which emphasized massive nuclear retaliation over conventional military operations -- with a strategy of "Flexible Response" that allowed the U.S. to use the military at varying levels of commitment consistent with the crisis at hand. Flexible Response, unlike the Eisenhower policy of massive retaliation, did not force the United States to rely on the destructive potential of nuclear weapons in every showdown with communism. Vietnam provided the test ground for the United States’ new policies to resist the expansion of international communism.19

Between 1961 and 1963, Kennedy committed the U.S. to his counterinsurgency strategy in Vietnam. American military and economic aid rose dramatically in this period, as did the number of U.S. advisors in Vietnam. During Eisenhower’s administration, U.S. military personnel in Vietnam had never numbered more than a few hundred. By 1963, Kennedy had stationed 16,000 U.S. advisers in the South. The counterinsurgency effort in Southeast Asia fought the NLF on several levels -- the United States provided military supplies, which often included the latest weapons and matériel in the American arsenal, to the South Vietnamese Army (Army of the Republic of Vietnam or ARVN); U.S. Army

19Herring, Longest War, 43-72; Kahin, Intervention, 122-136.
personnel helped train ARVN forces; and American Special Forces, a new component of the military that enjoyed the particular favor of Kennedy, worked closely with rural leaders to formulate and implement reforms. In the countryside, where the NLF was strongest, American and Vietnamese officials began the Strategic Hamlet program. Within the hamlets, the South Vietnamese Army concentrated the population of several villages in hopes of protecting them from guerrilla infiltration and attack. Hamlets were also supposed to provide a means to win the loyalty and trust of the people. Recognizing the adverse effects of the Diem government’s policy of terror, American advisers helped to change Vietnamese policy toward the people — reforming land distribution policies, holding local elections, establishing schools, and increasing the availability and quality of medical aid. The U.S. hoped that such programs would persuade the people that life under the South Vietnamese government was better than that offered by the NLF. American strategists also saw hamlets as a way to isolate the NLF from potential bases of support and make it possible to hunt the insurgents with superior mobility and firepower, two elements that the United States provided in abundance. The massive infusion of American support and aid boosted South Vietnamese morale and effectiveness but went widely unreported in the American press. The spring and summer of 1962 went very well for the ARVN, and for the first time the forces of South Vietnam held the initiative.

Despite the growing involvement of the United States in the war in Vietnam, the

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American public and the press remained largely unaware of the crisis in Southeast Asia. The public's and press' failure to comprehend the increasing entanglement of U.S. forces in Vietnam resulted from a deliberate policy of the government and the military. U.S. officials in Saigon and Washington told reporters that South Vietnam forces were fighting the Communist aggression while the American advisors provided only aid and training. In hopes of strengthening this contention, the U.S. encouraged the South Vietnamese government to handle the release of information to the press. This policy seemed to work best for both the U.S. and South Vietnam. By allowing the South Vietnamese government and military to control information about the war, American leaders in Saigon were usually able to de-emphasize U.S. activities and promote dubious South Vietnamese successes. South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem had always been sensitive to preserve his country's independent image, and by retaining control over information policy he managed to foster the belief that South Vietnam was an equal partner with the U.S.

The relatively small number of reporters covering the war in Vietnam allowed the military to conduct much of its work away from public scrutiny. Even when US military officials wished to provide more information to the press about certain operations, political considerations forced them to follow South Vietnamese guidelines. Often U.S. Army information officers had to tell reporters that they had "been ordered by the Vietnamese Joint General Staff not to talk to you about this subject."  

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22 Lewy, America in Vietnam, , 183.

While these news blackouts did not always meet with press approval, the U.S. government chose -- for political reasons -- to accept the Diem government’s handling of the press. Many within the American executive branch understood that such restrictions on the press had the potential ultimately to hurt American popular support for the war against communism in Vietnam. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara advocated an easing of press restriction and suggested that the U.S. mission in Saigon should respond to the newsmen’s complaints by releasing as much information as possible to journalists.24 Nevertheless, McNamara’s suggestions did not cause an opening of relations between the government and military and the media. Instead, the U.S. Information Agency and the State and Defense Departments established a set of guidelines that solidified the press policy in South Vietnam. The press guidelines, outlined in State Department Cable 1006, stressed the American desire to present the war as essentially a South Vietnamese affair. While it would be impossible to curb completely the natural bent of American journalists to focus on the actions of U.S. forces, the cable stated that “it is not . . . in our interest . . . to have stories indicating that Americans are leading and directing combat missions against the Viet Cong.” Just as stories that described the role of American forces would always exist, so too would stories critical of the South Vietnamese handling of the war. To this end, the U.S. mission in Saigon was to point out to journalists that “frivolous, thoughtless criticism” of the South Vietnamese regime was detrimental to U.S. efforts. To prevent critical stories, the U.S. government instructed American advisors in Vietnam not to allow

reporters to accompany forces on military missions that might provide the unfavorable news stories that the United States hoped to avoid.25 The new rules were justified as an attempt to give local U.S. officials in Saigon more flexibility in dealing with journalists. Despite the government and the military's desire to promote "maximum cooperation" with the press, the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam used Cable 1006 as justification to operate without interference from journalists and to preserve military security. In the end, the U.S. mission increased its already excessive classification policy to such a degree that it denied newsmen access to entire sections of the war.26

Journalists in South Vietnam quickly recognized the change in the information policy. Shortly after the military implemented the new guidelines, they began to complain to their readers about the new policy. Homer Bigart, veteran correspondent of World War II and reporter for the New York Times, wrote that sources that gave him unflattering information about the Diem government were "tracked down and muzzled." He also noted that American officials "upbraided correspondents" who did not write with the optimism of the U.S. leadership "for a lack of patriotism." Another Times correspondent, David Halberstam, offered his own views to support those of his colleagues. He wrote that the new information policy displeased some U.S. officers. "American officers in the field and flying helicopters," Halberstam wrote, "believe that Americans at home have too


26Msg, State 1006 to Saigon, 21 Feb 62; Moss Report, 12.
little knowledge and understanding of what is going on in Vietnam. The American policy of downplaying the role of U.S. units in Vietnam forced reporters to choose between ignoring reality or publishing stories that contradicted official statements. This conflict between patriotism and professional considerations frustrated journalists, causing some to become resentful of the U.S. military for placing them in such an awkward position.

From the beginning of the American involvement in Vietnam, there had been a tendency both in Saigon and in Washington to release official claims of progress when those closest to the action, often journalists, realized that the situation was uncertain. In spite of the policy’s inherent problem, American leaders believed it was well founded. If officials acknowledged that the war was going badly, the Congress and the American people might question the appropriateness of further U.S. aid. In Vietnam, if journalists published stories that the war was not going well, the Diem regime would become even more difficult to deal with and the Communists would widely broadcast the failure of the U.S.-led opposition. The U.S. military and diplomatic missions in Vietnam found themselves attempting to manage news for two governments, two publics. To contain the possibly detrimental consequences that bad news would bring, U.S. officials in Vietnam attempted to steer journalists away from military setbacks and toward areas of success. For the most part, the journalists in Vietnam saw through the official efforts at redirection and became more determined to find the "true" story. Reporters noted that the influx of

American advisers to South Vietnam after 1961 had improved the capabilities of the South Vietnamese Army by centralizing logistical functions, developing a communications network, improving intelligence gathering, and restructuring the country's training system. New equipment provided by the United States also improved the fortunes of the South Vietnamese in battle. The U.S. also pointed to greater success in the pacification program. So successful was the pacification program that one official spokesman said that by 1963 South Vietnam had reclaimed control of much of their country. Statistics supported the results. In what would become the benchmark of success in a war without clear cut battle lines, percentages and kill numbers replaced territory seized from the enemy as the measure of the war's progress. In the Mekong Delta, a traditional Communist stronghold, Viet Cong-initiated attacks had dropped from 3,338 between January and June 1962 to 2,769 between July 1962 and January 1963. In that same period, the percentage of the population under enemy control in the region had decreased by 8 percent.\textsuperscript{28}

While official spokesmen were touting the success in South Vietnam, journalists adopted a more cautious outlook. Some like the \textit{New York Times}' Bigart and \textit{Newsweek} reporter François Sully remained staunchly opposed to the Diem administration and U.S. efforts in South Vietnam. Others, like Halberstam of the \textit{New York Times} filed stories cautiously supporting the claims of progress. Halberstam noted in several dispatches from Vietnam that the new equipment — in particular helicopters — had a direct impact on the

new found success of the South Vietnamese military. However, the gains the new weapons provided were short lived because the Viet Cong learned the limitations of the new technology and overcame the South’s brief advantage. As successes became less dramatic and frequent, the journalists took note and wrote stories critical of the South Vietnamese Army’s performance. At this time a split began to develop within the U.S. mission in Saigon. Many at the top levels, both on the ambassadorial staff and in the higher ranks of the military, continued to voice optimism, believing that success in battle would win the peasantry over to the Diem regime. However, many junior officers expressed the opposite view. Lower-ranking U.S. officers believed that the Diem regime was not doing enough to win the hearts of the people and thought that the U.S. would have to increase its commitment in Vietnam. Because most journalists spent more time with junior grade officers than with the highest ranking U.S. officials, the negative view became more prominent in their reports.

Three examples from the early period of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam illustrate the American leaders’ attempts to mask the extent that the U.S. military was actively fighting in the war and the internal failings of their South Vietnamese ally. In January 1963, the U.S. presence in South Vietnam was still relatively small. The total force


reached 11,300 men, but the field advisors numbered fewer than 4,000 men and officers. Proportionately, the press corps that covered the war in Indochina was also still small. The nature and dimensions of the war in 1963 were such that reporters and the most important U.S. military advisors and many of their subordinates knew each other. Perhaps the most colorful figure at the time for Western correspondents was John Paul Vann, a U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel advising the ARVN 7th Division. Because of the success of the division, reporters often accompanied it on operations or met up with it shortly after it had concluded an operation. On 2 January 1963, elements of the ARVN 7th Division began a sweep near the village of Ap Bac, attempting to find a Viet Cong radio transmitter hidden somewhere nearby. For many months U.S. advisors had told reporters that they wished that just once the VC would stand and fight instead of always retreating into the dense jungle. On 3 January 1963 the U.S. soldiers got their wish, although with unexpected consequences.\footnote{Neil Sheehan, \textit{A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam} (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 270. Sheehan, a former reporter for UPI during the Vietnam War, wrote his account of Vann and the U.S. Army Colonel’s experiences in Vietnam more than ten years after the end of the war. However, Sheehan’s book remains an excellent source of information about the early interaction between reporters and U.S. advisors in the field.}

From the very beginning, the operation went wrong. Reporters in Saigon heard about the trouble early on the afternoon of 3 January. Gathering information from sources at an American Army aviation company based at Tan Son Nhut Airport, they pieced together what had happened near Ap Bac. The Army airmen told reporters that VC gunners had hit eight helicopters, wounding at least four U.S. crewmen. The news got
worse as more information trickled in from the field. By late afternoon, Malcolm Browne of the Associated Press wrote a piece stating that “Ap Bac was America’s largest defeat in Vietnam” up to that time and other reporters rushed to gather information first hand. Later that day, AP’s Peter Arnett and David Halberstam of the New York Times talked with returning helicopter pilots, learning that the VC had succeeded in hitting fourteen of fifteen helicopters participating in the operation; five ships went down on the battlefield. Three Americans were known dead. Two of the dead were pilots of downed helicopters and the third was an Army captain advising the Vietnamese ground troops. Initial reports indicated that Vietnamese troop losses may have numbered as high as one hundred.\textsuperscript{32}

Neil Sheehan of United Press International, Nick Turner of Reuters, and Nguyen Ngoc Rao, a Vietnamese reporter for the UPI, had driven out to Ap Bac the night of the battle to talk with the American advisors who had survived the engagement. They met with LTC Vann who gave a candid assessment. Drawing the reporters away from his fellow American officers and the Vietnamese troops, he told the journalists that the guerrillas had stood and held their ground despite an assault by armored tracks and heavy pounding from air units and artillery. “They were brave men,” Vann said. “They gave a good account of themselves today.”\textsuperscript{33} Sheehan, Turner, and Rao drove back to Saigon after talking with Vann and cabled their reports to their home offices.

The following day, more reporters gained access to the battlefield. Arnett and


\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
Halberstam, upon learning that their competitors had beaten them to the scene of the action, enlisted the aid of Steve Stibbens of *Stars and Stripes* (the military newspaper) to drive them out to the battlefield. Sheehan and Turner had returned to the scene and traversed the field with Brigadier General Robert York (USA), who had flown down to talk with Vann and see the scene of the battle. Upon returning from the field, Sheehan found General Paul Harkin, commander of U.S. advisors in Vietnam, at the airstrip nearby, who had flown down for a briefing from Vann. Harkin was wearing a clean, starched uniform that was free from grime of battle and told the reporters, "We've got them in a trap and we're going to spring it in half an hour." Harkin's comments amazed the two journalists who had just returned from circling the battlefield in a helicopter and had seen that the area was quiet. Earlier reports from Vann and his men had confirmed that the Viet Cong were long gone. After Harkin departed, Vann approached the reporters and spoke with them. Harkin's visit seemed to remove Vann's restraint from the previous night and he spoke more candidly to the reporters, recounting what he viewed as South Vietnamese acts of stupidity and cowardice. "It was a miserable damn performance," Vann said. "These people [the ARVN troops] won't listen. They make the same goddamn mistakes over and over again in the same way." The failure of the Vietnamese to pursue the VC as they withdrew from the field particularly angered him. "We begged and pleaded and prayed for the paratroops to come in on the east, but when they finally came in they were deliberately put on the western side." Vann's subordinates

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Sheehan asked York for his assessment of how the guerrillas had fared. "What the hell's it look like?" he replied, a bit annoyed by the inaneness of the question. "They got away -- that's what happened." Quoted in Sheehan, *Bright Shining Lie*, 274.
provided the reporters with additional information. By the end of the day, the journalists had a dynamite story that gave a different view of the battle from the one General Harkin had expressed earlier.\textsuperscript{35}

The battle of Ap Bac was an eye-opening engagement. For the military, they had gotten their wish and engaged the guerrilla forces of the Viet Cong in a set-piece battle. However, the poor performance of the Vietnamese forces made it clear that they were not yet capable of defeating the guerrillas without more direct military assistance from the United States. Officers like Vann, who had operated closely with the Vietnamese troops, recognized that the corruption of the South Vietnamese government and military made it difficult to find motivated and aggressive commanders to lead their troops against the VC. For reporters, Ap Bac also served as a revelation. The battle was the largest story of the war to date. Many of the characteristics of press coverage of the war were evident at Ap Bac. Reporters like Turner, Sheehan, and Rao were able to gain access to the battlefield through use of their own vehicles. Arnett and Halberstam took advantage of transportation provided by the military. They had nearly unlimited access to the field of battle and the troops that took part in the action. The reporters also saw how soldiers from Saigon had clearly different views from those who actually fought the enemy and

\textsuperscript{35}Arnett, \textit{Live}, 98. All of the journalists understood that the information that Vann and his men gave them was potentially career ending. They did their best to protect the soldiers from official retribution. Direct quotes were attributed only as coming from an “American officer.” However, a headline writer for the \textit{Rochester Democrat & Chronicle}, the hometown newspaper of Vann’s wife, picked up his forthright description of the performance of the Vietnamese forces. Sheehan’s dispatch ran on the front page under the headline “A Miserable Damn Performance.” Vann’s mother-in-law saw the headline and immediately recognized her son-in-law’s flair for a candid phrase and mailed a copy of the paper’s front page to her daughter in Texas. Sheehan, \textit{Bright Shining Lie}, 277.
quickly learned that the views of front-line soldiers did not always coincide with their commanders back at headquarters. Reporters soon came to rely more on the views of company and field grade officers who faced the enemy daily than those of officers based in Saigon.\footnote{John Paul Vann received a reprimand from the U.S. Army for speaking out about the Battle of Ap Bac. Vann would eventually resign from the Army in frustration, although he would return to Vietnam as a civilian working for the U.S. Agency for International Development and continued to fight the Viet Cong. Vann died in a helicopter crash in 1972 while traveling across the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. See Sheehan, \textit{Bright Shining Lie}, for a complete history of the career of John Paul Vann.}

In the United States, headlines and editorials brought the action in at Ap Bac and in the rest of Vietnam to the front pages of American newspapers, foiling official attempts to minimize the shortcomings of the South Vietnamese Army. In a speech in mid-February 1963, U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam Frederick Nolting asked journalists to refrain from “idle criticism, from snide remarks and unnecessary comments and from spreading allegations and rumors which either originate from Communist sources or play directly into Communist hands.”\footnote{Quoted in Arnett, \textit{Live}, 98.} The South Vietnamese government was often openly hostile to the press. The hostility of the South Vietnamese government and reluctance of U.S. officials to anger Diem’s government helped the community of correspondents in Saigon to come together.\footnote{Ibid.}

Later in 1963 a second event highlighted the problems of fighting and covering the Vietnam war. Besides the difficulties in the field, the press corps in South Vietnam
witnessed serious flaws within the government of Ngo Dinh Diem. During the Spring and Summer of 1963, civil unrest in South Vietnam pitted the Buddhist majority against the Catholic minority that controlled the country. More than 80 percent of the country was either Buddhist or Confucian, but that majority held only a small portion of local and national leadership positions. In December, the government ordered that all religious flags be taken down in the old capital of Hue, effectively barring Buddhists from flying flags to commemorate the birthday of Buddha on 8 May. While the military forced the Buddhists to remove their flags in May, Roman Catholic flags continued to fly. Buddhist monks began to give critical speeches denouncing the mainly Catholic Diem government. Large crowds gathered to hear the speeches and marched down the main road of Hue. A local security officer ordered his troops to stop the demonstration, with some government forces firing into the crowd. In the resulting melee, eleven people died, including several children, and many more suffered injury.  

At first journalists reported the official version of the event, which blamed Communist agitators for starting the incident. According to Peter Arnett, the “whole incident would have been forgotten if the Buddhists had not come to [reporters] directly.” The Buddhists realized that if they could reach the Western press corps, they could turn world opinion and, most important, American opinion against the Diem regime. Reporters soon shifted from the government view of the crisis to one more sympathetic to the Buddhists, inadvertently causing more unrest. By the middle of June, the religious

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40 Ibid.
protesters were routinely calling members of the Saigon press corps to advise them of planned demonstrations. On 11 June, Malcolm Browne of the AP, responding to a tip from a protestor, witnessed an act that shocked the world. Three monks stepped out of a gray sedan and several hundred marchers formed a circle in the middle of a Saigon intersection. An elderly monk, Thich Quang Duc, seated himself on the ground and folded his hands. His two fellow monks quickly poured gasoline over his head and robes. Thich lit a match in his lap and then folded his hands in the lotus position as the flames enveloped him. Brown clicked pictures of the self-immolation and quickly sent them and a story back to the United States. The unrest continued throughout the summer. While the world watched the South Vietnamese nation self-destruct, some within the press criticized what they saw as biased reporting from the Saigon press corps. After a later incident, the New York Herald Tribune criticized the Saigon-based reporters like Peter Arnett for not stopping the immolation of a young man. "Perhaps I could have prevented the immolation by rushing at the monk and kicking the gasoline away if I'd had my wits about me," Arnett later explained. "As a human being I wanted to," the journalist continued, "as a reporter I couldn't. If I had stopped him, the secret police who were watching from a distance would have arrested him immediately and carried him off to God knows where... If I had attempted to prevent them doing this I would have propelled myself directly into Vietnamese politics; my role as a reporter would have been destroyed along with my credibility."31 William Hammond correctly noted in his history of the military and the media in Vietnam that by becoming involved as spokesmen for the Buddhists, members of

31 Arnett, Live, 119.
the press like Arnett had already lost their objectivity. Journalists' professional viewpoints changed during the 1960s. Before that time, reporters had often expressed sympathy with the actors they wrote about in their stories. During the Vietnam War, most journalists accepted the view that they were simply objective observers who could not intervene in the action they were reporting. However, as Arnett's involvement during the Buddhist uprisings of 1964 showed, journalistic objectivity was never complete.42

The third event that brought the war in Vietnam into the public eye occurred after the assassinations in November 1963 of Presidents Diem of South Vietnam and John F. Kennedy of the United States. Shortly before his death, Kennedy had recommitted the U.S. to containing communism in Asia and made South Vietnamese independence the mark of American success. The Kennedy administration continued to claim that U.S. forces were serving in Vietnam in an exclusively advisory role, while in fact U.S. involvement was increasing. Attempts at denying the involvement of U.S. forces in fighting the war severely hurt the U.S. mission's credibility. American officials in both Washington and Saigon believed that there was no reason to inform newsmen that U.S. airmen were flying combat missions for the South Vietnamese Air Force. Such information could have damaged South Vietnamese morale and played into the hands of Communist propagandists. Officially, American combat pilots were in South Vietnam only to train their South Vietnamese counterparts and not to fight the war themselves. General Emmet O'Donnell, commander of the U.S. Pacific Air Force, admitted to reporters that American pilots did accompany South Vietnamese forces into combat but

only to advise their trainees in a practical context.\textsuperscript{43}

O'Donnell's story was not true. Few South Vietnamese pilots could fly the B-26 bomber and fewer could conduct bombing missions in that type of aircraft. While South Vietnamese personnel did accompany American pilots on missions, most were low-ranking enlisted men who sat out of the way while the American pilot did the work. As the air missions increased in frequency and intensity, U.S. casualties began to grow. By early 1963, U.S. pilots flew more than a thousand air sorties per month. When a South Vietnamese B-26 bomber crashed near Saigon, the Associated Press reported that a U.S. pilot and copilot had been aboard the aircraft with a South Vietnamese observer. The AP reporter surmised that the presence of the two Americans suggested that American forces were flying the planes because the South Vietnamese had too few trained pilots. Journalists had uncovered the U.S. mission's attempts to mislead the press about U.S. involvement in the war and undermined their credibility again.\textsuperscript{44}

In March 1964, five months after Lyndon Baynes Johnson had succeeded Kennedy as president, a young Air Force Captain named Edwin "Jerry" Shank died in Vietnam when his plane, a B-26, crashed into the jungle. He had served in Vietnam for over eighteen months before his death, acting as one of more than 15,000 American advisors to the South Vietnamese military. Despite the claims of U.S. officials in Saigon and Washington, American servicemen like Shank were taking an active role in the war.

\textsuperscript{43}Hammond, 1962-1968, 16-17.

\textsuperscript{44}[AP], "Vietnamese B-26 Crashes While on Strafing Mission," New York Times, 9 Apr 63.
Although his death was not remarkable in itself, Shank's widow's decision to release portions of his letters to several popular newspapers and news magazines catapulted the story into the news. Mrs. Shank first gave her letters to the *Indianapolis Star* in the same month her husband lost his life. On 28 March the *Star* published excerpts from the letters. Shank had written his family once, and often twice, a day since he had deployed to Vietnam. In his letters he gave his assessment of his assignment, the nature of the war, and the value of his South Vietnamese allies. Two months after his death and the first publication of his letters, *U.S. News & World Report* picked up the story and reprinted extracts from them. While most of the passages contained Shank's vivid accounts of combat and his not-unexpected complaints about equipment, one section detailed the pilot's responsibilities as a "trainer" for the South Vietnamese air force. This section laid out a first-hand account of the frustrations involved in fighting a war that the American people did not know about and the anger that Shank felt as a result.45

20 Jan. 1964

... I have never been so lonely, unhappy, disappointed, frustrated in my whole life. None of these feelings are prevalent above the other. I guess I should say loneliness overshadows the others, but that's really not true.

I am over here to do the best job possible for my country -- yet my country will do nothing for me or any of my buddies or even for itself. I love America. My country is the best, but it is soft and has no guts about it at all.

I'm sure nothing will be done over here until after the elections. Why? Because votes are more important than my life or any of my buddies' lives. What gets me the most is that they won't tell you people what we do over here. I'll bet you that anyone you talk to does not know that American pilots fight this war. We -- me and my buddies -- do everything. The Vietnamese "students" we have on board are airmen basics. The only

45Phone interview with Mrs. Edwin G. Shank, Jr., 27 April 1998.
reason they are on board is in case we crash there is one American "advisor" and one Vietnamese "student." They're stupid, ignorant sacrificial lambs, and I have no use for them. In fact, I have been tempted to whip them within an inch of their lives a few times. They're a menace to have on board... 46

Shank noted in his next letter that he had been under considerable stress when he wrote to his wife on 20 January. He had flown fifty missions without a break and admitted that it was "telling on [his] nerves and tempter." 47 Nevertheless, his revelations and views stunned many in the nation, including some within the Department of Defense. Although other major news organizations did not immediately pick-up the story, by mid-April nearly every major newspaper in the United States was running pieces on the Shank letters and the extent of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Most of the news accounts focused on the issue that American soldiers were fighting and dying in Vietnam with inadequate equipment. The stories also pointed out that Shank's letters contradicted the official position that American soldiers were serving only in advisory and training roles. In a news conference on 22 April, House Republican Minority Leader Charles A. Halleck of Indiana (Shank's home state), cited the letters as proof that the executive branch and the military had not fully informed the American public about the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. "Let's have the whole brutal business out on the table," Halleck urged. Halleck challenged the official view that U.S. service men were serving only as "instructors" while evidence was


mounting "that many of them are engaged in actual offensive operations." Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine inserted the U.S. News & World Report article on the Shank letters into the Congressional Record, adding a comment that urged the government to be more candid with the American people. "There is a genuine need, a desperate need, for the American people to be told the truth on the Vietnamese war," Smith stated. "They are not getting the facts from the government." The story remained alive when Life magazine reprinted the letters under the title "We Fight and Die, But No One Cares" on 8 May.

The Defense Department responded to the charges stemming from the Shank letters, but with little success. The Air Force defended its planes and stated that it rebuilt each one before shipping it to South Vietnam. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Arthur Sylvester successfully proved that Life magazine had selectively edited and altered the letters to make them appear more critical. He also attempted to paint Captain Shank as a disgruntled officer who was perhaps suffering from battle fatigue. Neither the Office of the Secretary of Defense nor the U.S. Air Force ever gave proof to support Sylvester's charges.

Despite these efforts, the Defense Department did not address the underlying issue.

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49 U.S. Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 88th Congress, 2d session, 27 April 1964, 8889.

50 "We Fight and Die, But No One Cares," Life, 8 May 1964, 34B.

51 Phone Interview with Mrs. E. G. Shank, 27 April 1998.
that the Shank letters raised -- that the government had not fully informed the American
people about the level of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. The controversy soon grew
to include all services and not just the Air Force. On 13 May 1964, relatives of soldiers
and airmen killed in Vietnam took out a full page advertisement in the *Washington* (D.C.)
*Star* listing the names of the 127 Americans killed in Vietnam since January 1961. In a
statement included with the list, the group claimed that they did not believe that it was a
full accounting of those who had lost their lives in Vietnam. "We believe this list is not
complete," they wrote, "and that many more Americans have been killed by Communist
bullets in Vietnam than has been reported by the Department of Defense."52 The Shank
letters showed the American people for the first time that a "credibility gap" existed
between the government descriptions of what was happening in Vietnam and what soldiers
and reporters witnessed first hand.53

The three incidents -- the battle of Ap Bac, the Buddhist uprisings, and the
publication of the Shank letters -- showed several very important things about the war in
Vietnam: the poor performance of the South Vietnamese military and government was
forcing the United States to become ever more deeply involved in the war, the South
Vietnamese government was in danger of losing the last shred of support from their own
country, and the U.S. government was not openly communicating this increased level of


53 Phone Interview, Mrs. E. G. Shank, 27 April 1998.
commitment to the American people. Individually, the incidents were relatively minor
events, but collectively they demonstrated the core problems that plagued the United
States during its involvement in Vietnam. The defeat at Ap Bac was only one engagement
but showed the poor quality and the deficient leadership rampant in the South Vietnamese
military. The Buddhist uprising highlighted the religious discrimination of the Diem
government but also showed the lack of connection between the ruling party and the
people of South Vietnam. The Shank letters spoke of one man's service to his country but
also highlighted the failure of the government and military to inform the people of the use
of military personnel to wage an undeclared, undebated war. The problems highlighted by
these three episodes remained and worsened throughout the U.S. involvement in the war.

Although most still supported containment of Communist expansion in Indochina and the
preservation of an independent South Vietnam, they had come to realize that the weakness
of the South Vietnamese government and military made victory an unlikely outcome.
Many urged that the United States take a more active role in the conflict, believing that
such action was the only way to bring the war to a quick conclusion. The Johnson
Administration, however, was divided over the future course of the war. The Joint Chiefs
of Staff urged the president in January 1964 to allow them to develop and execute plans
designed to achieve outright victory. Johnson was reluctant to take such a dramatic move
and decided to commit only those forces necessary to keep South Vietnam from losing the
war. His decision relinquished the initiative to the enemy and depended on a stable,
capable government and military in South Vietnam -- something that was unrealistic and
never achieved. Just days after Johnson made his decision regarding American strategy in Vietnam, the government of Diem’s successor General “Big” Minh fell to a military coup led by General Nguyen Khanh. Despite assistance from the United States mission in Saigon, the South Vietnamese government never achieved the stability it needed to combat the Viet Cong insurgency successfully or defeat the North Vietnamese invasion.54

In April 1964, Secretary of Defense McNamara and President Johnson adopted a policy of “graduated overt pressures” against North Vietnam, hoping to dissuade the Communist leaders in Hanoi from continuing their attacks on the South. The three-phased plan called for (1) air and ground strikes within South Vietnam, that included the pursuit of enemy forces into the border regions of Laos and Cambodia; (2) “tit for tat” air strikes, airborne and amphibious raids, and aerial mining operations against North Vietnamese targets; and (3) increasingly severe air strikes and other actions against North Vietnam that went far beyond the “tit for tat” concept.55 Over the next year Johnson and McNamara chose targets in retaliation for North Vietnamese attacks against U.S. forces and began applying the strategy of graduated pressure.56 Despite the clearer definition of U.S. policy, the press grew more critical of U.S. strategy in Vietnam. On 13 May 1964, the Wall Street Journal published an editorial titled “Error Upon Error” that observed, “it is almost impossible to figure out U.S. strategy” and declared that “the evidence shows the

54H.R. McMaster, Dereliction, 64-65.

55Historical Division of the Joint Secretariat, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, part 1, chap. 9, 35-39.

56McMaster, Dereliction, 93.
lack of any plan."

In early June, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell Taylor, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk met with the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam Henry Calbot Lodge and commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, General William Westmoreland at Honolulu to discuss the situation in Vietnam. The two participants from Saigon assured their Washington colleagues that the deterioration of the South’s stability had leveled off and presented a plan for a new pacification program directed at eight critical provinces. Much of the discussion at the Honolulu conference focused on the desirability of a congressional resolution validating the Administration’s policy and on the importance of public opinion.

Justification for such measures came a month later when U.S. naval forces reported that North Vietnamese patrol boats had attacked two U.S. ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. Following the reported attacks, Johnson sought, and received, Congressional support for an expansion of the U.S. role in Vietnam. Focused on domestic issues, the president hoped to resolve the conflict in Vietnam “without resort to wider action” and “with the least possible loss of life either by Americans or Vietnamese.”

However, in the wake of the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin and domestic pressure to do something, Johnson ordered retaliatory strikes against North Vietnamese bases in mid-August 1964. This action galvanized American popular support for the president. Only a few weeks before the U.S. bombing missions against the North, polls had shown

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58 Quoted in McMaster, Dereliction, 118. See McMaster, Dereliction, 107-18.
that only 58 percent of the sample had approved of Johnson's handling of the war.
Following the attacks, that figure jumped to 85 percent. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution
provided Johnson with the mandate he needed to escalate American involvement in the
war gradually. However, despite the wider role of U.S. forces in the war, the president
and the military continued to downplay U.S. commitment to South Vietnam.

Johnson was acutely aware that despite the positive public response to his handling
of the Gulf of Tonkin crisis, a growing sense of national unease was developing over his
policies in Vietnam. As a consequence, he was reluctant to take any action that might
bring the conflict into the spotlight after the Gulf of Tonkin incidents. Following the
passage of the congressional resolution in August 1964, he tried to focus national
attention away from international events and redirect it toward the domestic agenda he
hoped to pass during his second term. However, the continued instability of the South
Vietnamese government forced him to authorize more action. Although the president's
advisors had previously viewed South Vietnamese instability as a reason to delay or forgo
action against North Vietnam, between August and September 1964 they began to argue
that the growing internal unrest in the South necessitated increased American involvement,
seeing such action as the only way to preserve a non-Communist government in Saigon.
McNamara and Taylor, who had replaced Lodge as the ambassador to South Vietnam,
urged the president to authorize a bombing program against North Vietnam. Despite

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59 Louis Harris, "Public Solidly Behind Johnson on Vietnam," *Los Angeles Times*,
10 August 1964.

60 McMaster, *Dereliction*, 145-52.
having accepted the concept of graduated response to North Vietnamese actions, Johnson was reluctant to actually escalate U.S. actions in part because he was campaigning for reelection on a platform that included the position that he was trying to end the conflict in Vietnam without escalating American involvement. In October, as the presidential campaign was winding down, Johnson told crowds in New Hampshire that his administration would "start dropping bombs" only as a "last resort" and that he planned to "get [the South Vietnamese] to save their own freedom with their own men." On 25 November, just weeks after voters elected Johnson to the presidency, a *New York Times* editorial reminded the nation of his campaign promise about Vietnam and suggested: "If there is to be a new policy now, if an Asian war is to be converted into an American war, the country has the right to insist that it be told what has changed so profoundly in the past two months to justify it."

In the first week of December 1964, the *Washington Post* printed an editorial echoing the *New York Times* editorial of November. Reports from journalists in Vietnam had made it clear by that time that South Vietnamese forces could not stop the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army from seizing the whole of Indochina without more direct assistance from the United States. Noting previous instances where press accounts showed the fallacy of official stories on the war, the paper called for the government to tell the country "exactly what the present predicament in South Viet Nam is." It recommended that the first step in finding a solution to the crisis in Southeast Asia was to

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61 Johnson quoted in McMaster, *Derelection*, 195.

tell the country the truth.\textsuperscript{63} Johnson delayed taking action either to clarify his policies or to escalate the war until February 1965. On 7 February, during a visit to Vietnam by presidential national security advisor McGeorge Bundy, Viet Cong demolition teams infiltrated Pleiku airfield in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam where Bundy was spending the night, unleashing an intense mortar barrage that killed eight American servicemen, wounded more than one hundred others, and destroyed twenty aircraft. In Washington, Bundy had often compared casualties in Vietnam with traffic-related injuries in the Capital area. However, confronted with the grim reality of war, he concluded that the president could not idly stand by and let Americans die without taking greater action to win the war. Upon his return to Washington, he urged the bombing of North Vietnam, escalating U.S. involvement.\textsuperscript{64} The Viet Cong attack on Pleiku forced Johnson to abandon his singular focus on domestic issues and climb the next rung on the ladder of graduated response -- expanding the bombing of targets in North Vietnam.

Despite government and military attempts to divert attention away from the escalation of U.S. involvement, reporters in Vietnam continued to write stories and produce pieces that clearly showed that U.S. forces were taking a more active role in the war without a clear objective. The journalists' access to information remained high, and despite criticisms of the military and others, they continued to use military transportation to travel almost anywhere in the region. The military had refused to impose censorship, recognizing that if they introduced such a policy, the South Vietnamese would assume a


\textsuperscript{64}McMaster, \textit{Dereliction}, 213.
greater role in dealing with the American press. Recognizing the danger of such an arrangement because of the South Vietnamese's hostility toward the press, the U.S. military relied on their own public relations efforts and the traditional support of the media.\textsuperscript{65} Despite the criticism of newsmen, policy makers understood that the press was essential to the war effort. Because the war was controversial and American public support fragile, U.S. leaders in Washington and Saigon believed that any attempt to impose censorship on the press would lead some to question whether the government was trying to manipulate the news about the war.\textsuperscript{66}

Instead of imposing censorship, the Johnson Administration opted for a system of voluntary guidelines for the press. The military drafted a set of guidelines, first issued in March 1965, meant to preserve military security without infringing upon the rights of the press. A loose, undefined quid pro quo system developed between reporters and the U.S. military. The military would provide journalists with information of upcoming events so that reporters could be present at the scene. The military in turn expanded its facilities and programs to accommodate the press. Journalists gained access to base post exchanges, daily briefings, special press camps, and military transport aircraft and other vehicles when traveling to and from the field. Journalists, in return, agreed to delay the release of information that could prove useful to the enemy.\textsuperscript{67} Television reporters also agreed not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65}Hammond, 1962-1968, 87-93.
\item \textsuperscript{67}"III Marine Amphibious Force Ground Rules," New Media Release 1968, Records of the Headquarters, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Military Assistance
\end{itemize}
to broadcast recognizable pictures of American dead.\textsuperscript{68}

Since February of 1965, U.S. aircraft had continued to bomb targets in North Vietnam. The increased U.S. action required new bases for American planes to carry out the ever increasing bombing missions. American and South Vietnamese forces built airfields to accommodate the planes needed to maintain pressure on Hanoi. However, the attack at Pleiku in February had shown that air bases in South Vietnam were vulnerable to attack. On 1 March 1965, Ambassador Taylor received permission from the South Vietnamese government to land Marines at the major American air and naval base at Danang. The next day, the \textit{New York Times} reporter Tad Szulc, quoting “administration officials,” revealed the president’s decision to deploy a Marine battalion “to guard air bases and other installations in areas where Vietcong guerrillas are particularly active.” The Marines, Szulc reported, “would not be sent into combat.”\textsuperscript{69} Despite Johnson’s decision to dispatch U.S. ground forces to the country, he still hoped to divert public attention away from the war and preserve support for his domestic agenda. However, when large numbers of U.S. troops deployed to South Vietnam, reporters focused on the growing role that the U.S. military was playing in the war. Although LBJ had tried to minimize his decisions to intensify and widen U.S. efforts in Vietnam, public and congressional opposition to his policy increased after stories reached the public that U.S.

\textsuperscript{68} Hammond “Media and the War,” 312.

ground forces were deploying to Vietnam. On college campuses and among liberal intellectuals, discontent quickly led to public outcries and demonstrations. After the release of a State Department white paper designed to prove North Vietnamese complicity in the insurgency in South Vietnam, students and faculty at the University of Michigan held the first "teach in" of the Vietnam War, voicing opposition to the president's policy. Because of the growing public opposition to his policy in Vietnam, Johnson released a statement on 25 March that emphasized the limited nature of American military actions in Vietnam and declared his willingness to "go anywhere at anytime and meet with anyone whenever there is promise of progress toward an honorable peace." On 1 April, Johnson held an impromptu press conference at the White House. At the meeting with reporters, he emphasized progress in getting the Great Society legislation through Congress. Reporters acknowledged the president's success on domestic issues but directly questioned him on Vietnam. Johnson responded by saying that he was only continuing the containment policies of his predecessors and fulfilling America's obligations under the Southeast Asia Treaty to protect South Vietnam from outside aggression. He cited the Tonkin resolution as a symbol of Congressional support for his policy and stated that he knew of "no division in the American Government" over Vietnam. He concluded his press conference by stating that those who publicly opposed his Vietnam policy and journalists who speculated about it disregarded "our soldiers who are dying" in Southeast Asia.71

70 Public Papers of the President: Lyndon Baines Johnson, 1965, Statement by the President on Viet-Nam, 25 March 1965, 130.

On 7 April, the president once again attempted to quiet opposition to his Vietnam policy. In a speech at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Johnson restated his war aim to preserve "the independence of South Viet-Nam and its freedom from attack" and stressed the continuity between his policies and those of his presidential predecessors. He promised that he would "never be second in the search for a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam" and proposed a comprehensive economic and public works development program for all of Southeast Asia if the North Vietnamese government would agree to allow South Vietnam to exist peacefully. The nation's objective in Vietnam -- "an independent South Vietnam -- securely guaranteed and able to shape its own relationships to all others -- free from outside interference" -- was not acceptable to Ho Chi Min who remained determined to unite all of Indochina under Hanoi's control.\(^2\) The day after the president gave his Johns Hopkins speech, North Vietnam responded to Johnson's proposals with several preconditions for any negotiations: that the U.S. had to withdraw unconditionally from Vietnam, that a new coalition government in the South (dominated by Hanoi) had to form to negotiate the unification of Vietnam, and until that government was formed, the Viet Cong's political arm, the National Liberation Front, would be a legitimate representative of the Vietnamese people. Although the North Vietnamese rejected Johnson's proposals only one day after his appearance in Baltimore, U.S. reaction to the president's speech was favorable. John Kenneth Galbraith, former ambassador to India and noted economist, wrote an open letter to the *New York Times* praising Johnson and the apparent reversal of

the conflict’s irrevocable military escalation. Galbraith expressed relief that the president was not embarking on an “infantry war in Asia.”

Despite the seeming break with the strategy of gradual escalation, while Johnson was speaking in Baltimore and Galbraith was writing about the avoidance of a land war in Asia, U.S. Marines were preparing to conduct “offensive killing operations” in Vietnam as additional forces were arriving in the region. U.S. involvement in the war increased on 8 March 1965 when two Marine battalions landed at Da Nang. As part of the Marine’s landing orders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had explicitly directed: “The U.S. Marine force will not, repeat will not, engage in day-to-day actions against the Viet Cong.” However, within a month of landing, the Marines were expanding their originally defensive mission to protect Da Nang. By early April, the president and General Westmoreland had modified the Marines’ mission to allow them to participate in “active combat.” New deployments of Marines and other units increased the American presence in Vietnam in April 1965. By the middle of the month, the total Marine troop strength had risen to nearly nine thousand. Privately, LBJ had redefined U.S. strategy to his political and

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73John Kenneth Galbraith quoted in McMaster, Dereliction, 260.

74The U.S. Marine Corps first landed forces in Vietnam on 8 March 1965 at the major harbor of Da Nang. At 0800 two battalions from the 3d Marine Division’s 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade began ship-to-shore operations. By evening, the Marines were digging in at the Da Nang airfield. Their assignment was to provide security and protection for the airfield and the harbor. For a complete discussion of the Marine landings on 8 March 1965 see Edward F. Murphy, Semper Fi -- Vietnam: From Da Nang to the DMZ, Marine Corps Campaigns, 1965-1972 (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1997), 1-12.

75Quoted in Murphy, Semper Fi -- Vietnam, 8.
military advisors as "killing more Viet Cong." On 8 April, Johnson had met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 8 April and directed them to find some way to "increase the Viet Cong kill rate within the framework of our present posture in Southeast Asia." This tactical mission became the strategic objective of the United States. Working from the most basic type of objective to the strategic level, the JCS concluded that with the current force levels, they could "kill more Viet Cong" only through the massive application of air power in the South. However, it remained unclear how the tactic of massive air attacks against an enemy who was intertwined with the noncombatant population would help to establish strategic conditions conducive to ending the war. Despite vast experience among the members of the Joint Chiefs, no one questioned the president's directive, allowing the country to pursue a flawed strategy that was based on faulty assumptions.\(^{76}\)

To fulfill the president's mission, the military increased air attacks against North Vietnam and Viet Cong bases. Johnson also authorized further troop movements to Vietnam with the U.S. Army's 173d Airborne Brigade arriving in Vietnam in April. By that time, U.S. Marines were regularly seeking out engagements with the Viet Cong in the Da Nang region.\(^{77}\) Johnson continued to combat domestic opposition by reminding his critics that by May 1965 "more than 400 Americans have given their lives in Vietnam," and that dissent against his policies was an attack against "those brave men who are

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\(^{76}\)For a discussion of the failure of the military leadership to appropriately advise the president on military strategy during the Vietnam War see McMaster, Dereliction, especially, 268-75.

\(^{77}\)Murphy, Semper Fi -- Vietnam, 9-11.
risking their lives for freedom in Viet-Nam. When Congress voted on additional funding for the military in May 1965, the resolution passed easily (408-7 in the House and 88-3 in the Senate). As one member of Congress observed, voting against the measure, after Johnson’s statements, would have been “like voting against the motherland.” The president’s approach to winning support and hushing opposition fostered the patriotic impulse to support the troops in Vietnam and allowed for greater involvement in the war.

Between 1950 and 1965, three U.S. presidents had maintained a consistent policy toward Vietnam. Each man -- Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson -- believed a free and non-Communist South Vietnam served American interests best. The belief became the central policy of each administration. Even though, the war aim of each government remained constant (the containment of Communist expansion and the preservation of an independent government in Saigon), each president changed the strategies used to achieve that aim. Under Eisenhower, the White House had limited American efforts to providing material and professional support for both the South Vietnamese military and government. When Kennedy succeeded as president, he escalated and refined American strategy, introducing more advisors to implement a pacification program to bolster public support for the Diem government within South Vietnam and decrease the effectiveness of the Communist guerrillas in the country. Lyndon Johnson continued many of his immediate predecessor’s policies but gradually began to escalate U.S. involvement, authorizing

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"Public Papers of the President: Lyndon Baines Johnson, 1965, 494.

"McMaster, Dereliction, 282-83."
American forces to conduct offensive operations. The search for a new and effective strategy to accomplish national goals blinded the U.S. leadership to the difficulties threatening the success of American aims. The South Vietnamese government's inability to form an effective army and win the support of the people doomed American efforts — no matter the strategy.

Throughout the nearly fifteen years of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the press had faithfully and increasingly chronicled the changing strategies. By 1965, however, some reporters in South Vietnam had begun to note that the strategies to win the war had begun to jeopardize the country's stated war aims. The failure of the South Vietnamese to form a stable, effective government limited the effectiveness of U.S. efforts and frustrated American leaders. When Johnson told his principle military advisors that their mission was to "kill more CV," he was losing sight of the country's war aims and weakening a legitimate grande strategy with an operational directive. The failure of either the president or his advisors to see the confusion of war aims and strategies led to many of the future problems. While the U.S. did not change its war aim, the Johnson administration lost sight of that aim when the president became obsessed with strategies. Although he was determined to keep American efforts limited, Johnson's decision to dispatch U.S. ground forces to South Vietnam in the spring of 1965 placed greater demands on the country -- demands the country was not prepared to meet.

In previous wars, the press had been very helpful to the government and military in preparing the public to support a war. Despite charges after the war that the press had opposed the war in Vietnam from the beginning, the U.S. press had initially submitted
pieces that were supportive of the U.S. aim to preserve a non-Communist South Vietnam. However, by June 1965 reporters regularly questioned official statements that downplayed the role of U.S. forces in the war. Although Johnson had authorized American ground forces to conduct offensive operations in Vietnam in mid-April, government and military spokespersons stated that U.S. forces were only conducting defensive security missions. While astute reporters in Vietnam wrote of the shift, the Johnson administration did not officially acknowledge the new mission until 8 June when Robert McCloskey, assistant secretary of state for public affairs, inadvertently let it slip that U.S. forces would be used in offensive combat operations. The next day, the New York Times published an editorial expressing disbelief that “the American people were told by a minor State Department official . . . , that, in effect, they were in a land war on the continent of Asia. . . . The nation is informed about it not by the president, not by a Cabinet member, not even by a sub-Cabinet official, but by a public relations officer.”

The White House attempted to claim that there had been no shift in the mission of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam, but its assertions rang hollow with the press. Journalists in Vietnam continued to describe the combat activities of U.S. Marine and Army units as they assumed greater responsibility for the fighting. The inaccuracy of official claims was evident to journalists. As General Westmoreland later recalled: “Reporters could see for themselves that the Marines and the 173d’s paratroopers were not sitting tight in their foxholes waiting for the enemy to come to them. They could easily see that American units were patrolling in some depth and sometimes engaging in full-scale offensive

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operations. On the day after McCloskey acknowledged the new U.S. role, Arthur Krock, columnist for the New York Times, wrote on the discrepancy between official claims and reality of the U.S. involvement in the war. Krock declared that the only reason McCloskey’s announcement had created a stir was “the administration’s evasive rhetoric on every occasion when our military role in Vietnam is expanded. . . . The self-evident purpose of the White House statement was to modify the . . . public conclusion that the primary mission of the United States troops in South Vietnam has been fundamentally changed.” The military’s mission in South Vietnam had begun “as strategic counsel and technical assistance within a government territory,” proceeded “to bombing outside that territory,” and moved “onward to ‘perimeter defense’ that inescapably [led] to ground combat, and finally [was] given authority for expansion into formal ground warfare.” Krock ended by quoting a line from Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland: “‘The question is,’ asked Alice to Humpty Dumpty, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’”

Although reporters regularly published stories contradicting government and military claims, official spokespersons continued to state that U.S. forces were operating only in supporting and defensive roles in Vietnam.

Throughout the first half of 1965, Johnson had committed U.S. forces to an air war against North Vietnam and placed American ground units into combat in South Vietnam. The rationale of graduated pressure -- that incremental intensifications of the

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81Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports, 135.

war were reversible and therefore the Johnson Administration could pursue the policy at low cost -- had committed the United States to conflict before the president had prepared either himself or the country for a war in Asia. Blinded by his focus on domestic issues, he treated Vietnam as a nuisance he hoped would go away. However, the war would not go away, and by June 1965 Johnson had placed himself in an unwinnable position. After equating opposition to U.S. commitment in Vietnam to the abandonment of American soldiers on the front lines, the president could not deny military requests for additional forces. As General Westmoreland’s command became more involved in offensive operations against the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong guerrillas, the need for additional combat units grew until by the end of July the number of U.S. troops scheduled to deploy to South Vietnam had grown to more than 120,000. By the summer of 1965, the United States was no longer debating whether the country would become involved in a war in Asia but how long U.S. forces would continue to fight in Vietnam. On 28 July 1965, President Johnson held a news conference in the East Room of the White House. “I have asked the Commanding General, General Westmoreland, what more he needs to meet this mounting aggression,” Johnson said. “He has told me. We will meet his needs.” The increase in forces -- Westmoreland had asked for 75,000 additional troops -- was significant, but necessary, the president explained, adding that “additional forces will be needed later, and they will be sent as requested.” Johnson again denied reports that U.S. forces were already engaged in offensive operations and claimed that his moderate course

\[83\text{McMaster, Dereliction, 298-99.}\]
would allow the U.S. to "find some solution that would substitute words for bombs." 84

The president's misleading assertions during the escalation of American involvement in the war led to the widening of the "credibility gap" and contributed to the public's distrust of and opposition to the Vietnam War. Contrary to the president's assurances that he was attempting to find some end to the war, American involvement in Vietnam increased.

As more U.S. soldiers deployed to the region, the number of reporters covering the war also grew. Between 1960 and 1967, the number of journalists accredited to cover the war in South Vietnam grew from ten to more than four-hundred and fifty. Of the over four hundred journalists present in Vietnam at the end of 1967, one hundred and seventy-nine were Americans. 85 Despite the increasing number of accredited journalists in South Vietnam, most newspapers in the United States relied on the major wire services -- Reuters, UPI, and AP -- for the bulk of their coverage of the war. Even newspapers that augmented wire service accounts with their own reporters kept numbers to a minimum. News magazines and television networks consistently had a larger presence in Vietnam. This disparity had more to do with the type of news organization than with interest in the war. News magazines and television networks relied on larger staffs to produce news stories that often offered more in-depth coverage of the war on a less demanding deadline.


85 Ibid. According to MACV records, there were 464 reporters accredited in January 1968. While 179 were Americans, the vast majority came from other nations. 114 of the 464 were South Vietnamese, and 171 represented other nationalities. These journalists represented more than 130 news organizations from Joon-Gan Ilbo of South Korea to Stern of West Germany and Agence France-Presse.
than newspapers; and not all of those accredited as journalists were actually working reporters. Fewer than one-third were correspondents, while the remainder were camera operators, sound men, stenographers, translators, secretaries, other media support personnel, and wives of journalists who sought accreditation in order to take advantage of post exchange privileges.  

After the deployment of large U.S. ground forces to South Vietnam in July 1965, reporters spent more time out in the field covering the war. However, only about forty journalists accompanied U.S. forces on any given day. Often the reporters traveling with U.S. ground forces were television journalists and technicians who had to be out in the field to gain the pictures of combat that their producers demanded. Others were members of the wire services (UPI, AP, Reuters) or parts of the newspaper staffs that were willing to finance multiple reporters to cover the war. Most journalists tended to cover the war from Saigon and other major regional capitals or military headquarters. Reporters understood that they could talk to troops as they returned from the fighting and still benefit from daily press briefings and conversations with higher ranking officers if they stayed close to the command units. The poor communications system of South Vietnam and the need to keep in touch with their editors back in the United States compelled many journalists to remain near their offices in Saigon.  

Television coverage of the war in Vietnam was something new. Although there

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86 Hammond "Media and the War," 313.

had been TV cameras in Korea, television journalism was still in its infancy in the early
1950s. By the mid-1960s, the majority of U.S. households had television sets and
watched the national, nightly news programs that began in 1963. Television cameras
brought the intensity of war to the home front as was not possible in earlier wars. In July
of 1965, the III Marines Amphibious Force, under the command of Lieutenant General
Lewis Walt, was operating near the airbase of Da Nang. The Marines soon began to
patrol the surrounding countryside. During one of these patrols, a young CBS newsman,
Morley Safer, accompanied the Marines as they searched for Viet Cong members. On the
outskirts of the village of Cam Ne, the Marines received sporadic harassing fire coming
from mud huts nearby. When the Marines returned fire they set off several secondary
explosions (signs that their rounds had detonated other types of ammunition or mines) and
destroyed several huts surrounded by trenches, concealed firing positions, and connecting
tunnels. During the course of the firefight, several of the huts had ignited. Others,
according to the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Verle E. Ludwig, caught fire
due to flame throwers or demolition. According to Ludwig, his men made sure that all
civilians were out of the huts before the Marines destroyed the shelters. As far as he
knew, only three civilians suffered injury and one, a ten year old boy, died during the
exchange of fire between the Marines and the VC.

Safer, one of the first television correspondents permanently stationed in Vietnam,

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89 After Action Report, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine, III Corps, United 5 Aug. 1965,
History and Museums Division, HQ, U.S. Marine Corps, 07A25065, Cam Ne Film
Incident.
presented a different version of the operation. In a cable to his producers in New York, Safer informed them that film would be arriving in the next few days that would show Marines deliberately burning huts. Safer said that the Marines at Cam Ne had orders "to burn the village to the ground" if they were fired on. When that happened, they responded with a heavy concentration of fire power and moved into the village and completed the destruction of 150 huts with everything from flamethrowers to Zippo lighters. Safer summarized the action at Cam Ne:

Prior to the burning, townspeople were urged to abandon their shelters in English... [Not understanding,...]... they remained in their positions. This reporter offered services of South Vietnamese cameraman to give desired instruction in native tongue. Marines had no official interpreters, only three Vietnamese who spoke no English. Defense Department says all our troops constantly reminded of need to protect civilians. Marines have lost men helping civilians in the Danang area.

Safer's cable so disturbed CBS producers that they instructed their anchorman to introduce the evening news broadcast by reading Safer's message.90  Safer's piece set off a flurry of stories that examined the impact of U.S. operations on civilians. When the film from Cam Ne arrived in New York, it contained a shot of a marine, his rifle at his waist, lighting a hut with his cigarette lighter. According to the report that Safer filed with the footage, the Marines burned a few huts in retaliation for being sniped at by unseen foes.

Shortly after, [Safer explained], one officer told me he had orders to go in and level the string of hamlets that surround Cam Ne village. And all around the common paddy fields [camera focuses on a roof being lit by a flamethrower] a ring of fire. One hundred and fifty homes were leveled in retaliation for a burst of gunfire. In Vietnam like everywhere else in Asia, property, a home, is everything. A man lives with his family on

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ancestral land. His parents are buried nearby. These spirits are part of his holdings. . . . Today's operation shows the frustration in Vietnam in miniature. There is little doubt that American fire power can win a military victory here. But to a Vietnamese peasant whose home means a lifetime of backbreaking labor, it will take more than presidential promises to convince him that we are on his side.91

Safer's piece demonstrated early in the war the power of a picture. While the impact of the visual image was not new to Vietnam, several photographs became symbols of what the war was to become. Yet, like the television broadcasts of the time, they offered only worm's-eye view of the war. Although the war in Southeast Asia was the first television war, broadcast journalism was still in its adolescence.92

Many commentators on the Vietnam war have claimed that television coverage of the war contributed to the eventual erosion of American popular support for the war. Such arguments conclude that images of U.S. forces fighting and dying in Vietnam, broadcast directly to the home of the American public, shocked and disillusioned the people of the United States. While these assertions may have been true for some Americans, television does not appear to have had any measurable impact on the public at large. On the charge that television brought the horror of the war to the American public, media historian Lawrence Lichty noted that between 1965 and 1970 less than 5 percent of all evening news film reports showed real violence -- actual combat close up with casualties -- from Vietnam. The majority of television coverage showed U.S. service men


disembarking from helicopters in tall grass. The camera would then capture the U.S. infantry spreading out across the field or hill in search of the enemy. Only when the action came close to a landing-zone did the television newsmen capture fighting. Two factors determined the nature of television coverage: the way the war itself occurred and the technological limitations of the medium. Because the United States military fought the war in random, short engagements, camera crews had difficulty covering it. The U.S. military conducted many thousands of operations during a month, but only a few actually made contact with the enemy and then often at night. These were not ideal conditions for television journalists who relied on time to set up equipment and light to see the action. The size of cameras and the other equipment necessary to film a sequence of action required several technicians. Camera equipment during Vietnam was large and not very mobile. In a well-known photograph of Walter Cronkite, three technicians walked in front as the newsman interviewed a battalion commander of the 1st Marines on 20 February 1968. One technician carried the camera, another controlled the power to the camera and the sound recording, while the third directed a jeep that was moving the camera operator in front of Cronkite. The elaborate set-up needed to conduct even a simple interview limited the effectiveness of television coverage.93

In the United States, editors and producers further limited what they showed from Vietnam. Because their news programs depended on advertisers for revenues, television executives and directors had to ensure that they did not offend and lose their viewers with

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overly graphic material. Only when extremely compelling or vivid footage was available, did television networks broadcast shocking portrayals of the war. The time to transmit footage from the war zone often gave reporters the opportunity to warn their producers about the content of their films. Vietnam was not a war covered live. Correspondents sent most of the footage they shot of the war directly from Vietnam to the United States. Once in the U.S., the networks developed and edited the film. When it finally arrived in New York, it was often several days old. The time delay meant that most pictures that were used in a piece offered visual images of only the general theme of the story and not immediate, firsthand accounts of the action. Not until 1967, when satellite transmission stations were established in Japan for the coverage of 1968 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, did the situation improve. From then on, the networks would fly their film to Tokyo for developing and “instant” satellite transmission to New York. Even then, however, the situation was still not perfect. The costs of satellite time and the unreliability of the system often imposed additional delays on the transmission of the film.94

Throughout the period of increased American involvement in the Vietnam War, reporters, both print and broadcast, tended to file stories that reservedly supported the U.S. effort to preserve South Vietnamese independence.95 Despite this generally supportive stance, the contradictions at the root of U.S. strategies continued to trouble some within the press corps. As the controversy over the Shank letters showed, the media

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94 Thompson, “Media vs. Military,” 47.

recognized the differences between official statements regarding the progress of the war and the first-hand accounts that journalists received from soldiers who engaged the enemy. The strategy President Johnson adopted in 1965 continued to cause this contradiction. Johnson believed that the conflict was necessary to stem the expansion of communism and preserve South Vietnamese independence, but he feared that neither the U.S. people nor the Congress possessed the will to wage a successful war in Vietnam for such an end. Combined with his dedication to domestic politics over international relations, Johnson’s doubts about the nation’s commitment dictated his war strategy. The president adopted a policy of gradual increases in American involvement that he hoped would shield the country from a decisive debate on the war while also allowing him to continue his domestic social reforms. Additionally, Johnson’s strategy of incremental escalations followed the tenets of limited war. Limited war theorists believed that such actions would contain Communist aggression without instigating hostilities between the United States and North Vietnam’s allies, the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China.96

Johnson’s strategy was successful in that he was able to conduct the war on his terms, but it ceded the initiative to the North Vietnamese. Additionally, his actions harmed official credibility by postponing unpopular decisions and making others only after weighing public and press reaction. The result was a record filled with many inconsistencies and contradictions. This unclear policy led to charges from the press that a credibility gap existed between the government’s statements and its actions. Following

96 For an in depth analysis of the failings of Johnson’s strategy for the Vietnam War see McMaster, Dereliction.
the introduction of U.S. ground forces into the war, new problems complicated Johnson's already flawed strategy. Johnson, for domestic and international reasons, elected to limit the ground war geographically to South Vietnam and refused to authorize air attacks on Viet Cong and North Vietnamese staging areas in Laos and Cambodia or ports of entry for the material aid from China and the Soviet Union. These strategic choices forced the U.S. military to relinquish control of the war to the enemy.\(^7\)

The North Vietnamese also proved to be a people willing to sustain large casualties without any noticeable loss of will. They endured heavy losses and continued to field more men than the United States could ever hope to overcome. In South Vietnam, the political instability and the corruption that ran rampant in both the government and the military diminished the effectiveness of America's ally in the war. Reporters published and broadcast stories that described battles repeatedly fought over the same ground, South Vietnamese forces' unwillingness to engage the enemy, and the growing disillusionment of American soldiers with the war. The effects of Johnson's flawed strategy -- the loss of initiative on the battlefield, reporters' critical coverage of the war, and the growing cost of lives -- gradually turned American public opinion against the war.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) Mueller, *Public Opinion*. Mueller's central thesis was that rising casualties, and not the impact of the media, eroded American popular support for the war. He found similar effects during the Korean War. Mueller's findings are supported by many subsequent studies. See for example Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp, 1996) and Mark Lorrell and Charles Kelley, Jr. *Casualties, Public Opinion, and Presidential Policy during the Vietnam War* (Santa Monica, CA:
became more and more vocal in the United States during 1966. Some prominent Civil
Rights leaders believed that the conflict was a hindrance to the struggle of black
Americans for racial equality. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference called for a
serious examination of whether U.S. forces should withdraw from South Vietnam in April
1966. Shortly afterwards, Senator William Fulbright warned in a widely publicized speech
that the United States was falling victim to the same fatal over extension that had led to
the downfall of ancient Athens, Napoleonic France, and Nazi Germany. In May 1966,
eleven thousand Americans protested in Washington, D.C., demonstrating support for
congressional candidates pledged to opposing the war. During the same time, anti-draft
demonstrators disrupted activities at U.S. military installations across the country and
slogan-chanting youths disrupted trading on the New York Stock Exchange. Marxist
professor of history Eugene Genovese made headlines when he proclaimed that the United
States should not fear Communist ascendancy in South Vietnam. Rather, Genovese
argued, the U.S. would never experience racial harmony at home until it stopped making
war upon the colored nations of the world.99

The antiwar movement capitalized on journalistic accounts of the war that showed
U.S. forces in the worst light. Since June 1966, U.S. aircraft had been attacking strategic
targets near Hanoi, despite the high concentration of residential areas near the targets.
Although the June attacks had destroyed portions of these civilian communities in Hanoi

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99 For a survey of the antiwar movement's activities during 1966, see Lester A.
184, 302.
and sparked antiwar demonstrations around the world, American reaction had been minor. The government succeeded in convincing the American public that the attacks were necessary to impede the flow of men and materiel into South Vietnam. The *Washington Post* commented that the raids were overdue and polls showed that the public approved of the attacks by a margin of nearly five to one. When the military began a new series of intensified attacks on Hanoi in December, the result was much different. The first attacks occurred on 2 and 5 December with more following on 13 and 14 December against targets less than six nautical miles from Hanoi. The North Vietnamese official news organization, Radio Hanoi, announced after the raid on 13 December that American jets had attacked the North Vietnamese’s capital’s suburbs and residential areas. Soon, United Press International reported that the Soviet news agency, *TASS*, was making the same claims. The Department of Defense denied claims and asserted that, “the only targets scheduled for attack in the Hanoi area during [the 13 December raid] were military targets which had been previously picked.”

The statement might have satisfied the press if Western visitors to the areas of attack had not corroborated Hanoi’s claims. Less then two weeks after the attacks, Harrison E. Salisbury, the *New York Times* assistant managing editor, reported from Hanoi that U.S. air attacks had indeed struck civilian areas and inflicted great damaged, causing large numbers of deaths. Salisbury’s revelations inspired Congressional leaders opposed


to the war to call for an investigation of the bombing, with some urging the president to halt all air attacks in both North and South Vietnam. Others in Congress, who supported the war, called for the military to level Hanoi and expand the bombing to other areas of North Vietnam. The same split occurred in the media between hawks and doves. Johnson found himself under attack from both escalationists and antiwar supporters. Walter Cronkite of CBS News was caustic in his criticism of the Johnson administration’s handling of the situation. He castigated the poor public relations of the Pentagon, asserting that there was no more flagrant example of the widening credibility gap than the assertion that American bombers “were not attacking population centers in North Vietnam.”

As opposition to the war increased and an acceptable conclusion grew more remote, President Johnson struggled with the U.S. commitment to Vietnam. He pressed his advisors to devise some way to demonstrate that the war was being won and not falling into a stalemate. The Department of Defense began to measure success in Vietnam through body counts. In the field, U.S. commanders reported after each engagement the number enemy killed and wounded. As the Defense Department began to emphasize body counts, it encouraged military leaders to exaggerate positive numbers. Many within the military found the process dishonorable but had no option but to comply with the system. As the Defense Department attempted to find some measure that would show success in


Southeast Asia, members of the Johnson administration began to doubt privately the possibility of victory in Vietnam. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara himself remarked in closed testimony before Congress that the bombing campaign against North Vietnamese supply routes through Laos was incapable of stemming the flow of supplies the Communist forces needed to continue the war indefinitely. 103

As talk of stalemate increased, Johnson began a public relations campaign to bolster public support. This campaign had three main points. It was to show the American people that the South Vietnamese armed forces were competent, that American programs were achieving their ends, and that sufficient progress was occurring on all fronts to justify an optimistic outlook. 104 However, the president did not undertake any fundamental justification of the war or the United States’ war aims. To assist in getting his message out, Johnson enlisted the aid of key military leaders from Vietnam. In April 1967, General Westmoreland returned to the United States to give his personal assessment of the war. Johnson had asked Westmoreland to address the annual meeting of the AP Managing Editors Association in New York City and discuss public support for the war. During his speech, Westmoreland observed that the Communists had failed to understand the role that debate played in American democracy. Seeing every antiwar protest as

103 Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 286. McNamara appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee’s Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee on 25 August 1967. He was preceded by many high ranking military officers including members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. McNamara’s testimony contradicted the earlier witnesses and led to an estrangement between the civilian and military leadership of the Defense Department.

evidence of crumbling U.S. morale, the general asserted that demonstrations tended to
harden enemy resistance at the cost of American and South Vietnamese lives. As an
afterthought, Westmoreland described the burning of an American flag during an earlier
demonstration in New York City’s Central Park, adding that he and his men were
"dismayed . . . by recent unpatriotic acts here at home."105 Reaction to the general’s
speech was immediate. Members of Congress and reporters attacked Westmoreland and
the president for equating dissent with treason. Senator George McGovern of South
Dakota suggested that the president and his military leaders were attempting to lay the
blame for their failures on their critics and charged that the Johnson administration had
brought Westmoreland home to stifle criticism of the war. Columnist Walter Lippman
criticized LBJ’s use of Westmoreland as the war’s PR spokesman, writing that the
justification of administration policy was the province of politicians and not generals. He
added that the Communists would surely see Westmoreland’s visit as confirmation that
President Johnson had failed to unite the country behind his policies, a fact that could only
be of great comfort to them.106

Following Westmoreland’s visit to the United States in April 1967, the Johnson
administration and the military promoted the virtues and sacrifices of the South
Vietnamese in an attempt to improve the image of the war. Focusing on the pacification
program, Westmoreland and his information director Barry Zorthian began a new public


relations campaign to counteract the news media's negative reporting. Zorthian refined
statistics on the war for release to the press, and Westmoreland notified all American unit
commanders to be alert for occasions to emphasize positive developments. "It should be
the goal of each component's command information program," he wrote, "to so
indoctrinate our servicemen that they will 'talk up' civic action . . . not only when talking
to newsmen but in their letters and on their return to the United States." Whenever
possible, Westmoreland continued, "progress should be attributed to South Vietnamese
efforts. Only thus can we hope to dispel the frequent assertion at home that the effort in
Vietnam is largely an American operation." 107 While, Westmoreland's and Zorthian's
attempts did produce some positive news stories, the press continued to focus on the
problems with pacification programs and the failings of the South Vietnamese government
and army. 108

Much of the press' attention focused on the South Vietnamese Army's
ineffectiveness. In April 1967, Peter Arnett of Associated Press observed that "all of the
present Vietnamese generals fought on the French side in the Indochina war, and the . . .
stigma of having once belonged to a defeated army has never really been erased from the
Vietnamese officer mentality." Arnett asserted that the introduction of U.S. ground forces
into the war had caused many Vietnamese generals to relax their efforts and, as a result,
South Vietnamese forces were fighting even less than they had two years earlier. Arnett


concluded that the South Vietnamese Army lacked the strength, the unity, and the morale needed to defeat the Communists.\textsuperscript{109}

Westmoreland and the information officers of the USMACV attempted to combat views like Arnett’s by focusing attention on positive accomplishments of South Vietnamese Army leaders and units. However, such actions accomplished little. Field officers were too busy fighting the war to deal with public relations. South Vietnamese military leaders proved incapable of handling a major public relations efforts, perhaps believing that higher headquarters would interpret favorable news stories as an attempt on their part to curry favor with the Americans prior to launching a coup. The realities of the war also worked against efforts to show that the South Vietnamese were indeed doing their utmost to win the war. Members of the military provided the newsmen with some of the most critical assessments of the South Vietnamese Army. On 7 August 1967, an unidentified American Army general gave an interview to R. W. Apple of the \textit{New York Times}. \textquoteleft\textquoteleft Every time Westmoreland makes a speech about how good the South Vietnam army is," the officer told Apple, \textquoteleft\textquoteleft I want to ask him why he keeps calling for more Americans. His need for reinforcements is a measure of our failure with the Vietnamese."\textsuperscript{110} During nine of the first thirty weeks of 1967, U.S. casualties outnumbered those of the South Vietnamese, and by May 1967, American casualties

\textsuperscript{109}Peter Arnett, \textquoteleft\textquoteleft South Viet Army Lacks the Strength, Unity, Morale," \textit{Washington Star}, 21 April 1967.

exceeded the number of South Vietnamese youths drafted into the army.\footnote{Hammond, 1962-1968, 295.}

Despite Westmoreland's efforts to portray the South Vietnamese military in a positive light, the ineffectiveness of ARVN forces was apparent to any newsman in Vietnam. Numerous articles appeared in U.S. publications noting the failings of South Vietnamese forces to engage the enemy. Tom Buckley, writing for the *New York Times*, compared a South Vietnamese Platoon with a U.S. unit. The South Vietnamese were well dressed and freshly shaved while the Americans were unshaven and unwashed after many days in the field. Members of the U.S. unit talked with Buckley and described their South Vietnamese counterparts. "'We're not heroes,' [the Americans told Buckley], ... 'but we stay and fight if we have to. If there's trouble today, you just watch the ARVN's. They'll *didi mow.*' (The phrase is corrupt Vietnamese, known to every G.I. It means, approximately, 'bug out,' or run away.)\footnote{Tom Buckley, "The Men of Third Squad, Second Platoon, C Company, Third Battalion," *New York Times Magazine*, 5 November 1967, quoted in Hammond, 1962-1968, 296. For other examples of critical U.S. press accounts of the South Vietnamese Army see David Halberstam, "Return to Vietnam," *Harper's* (December 1967); Tran Van Dinh, "A Look at the Vietnamese Armies," *Christian Science Monitor*, 15 June 1967; "The War: Taking Stock," *Time* (14 July 1967), 20; "The War in the Delta," *Newsweek*, (14 August 1967), 28.}"

The presidential election in South Vietnam deflected media attention away from problems with the South Vietnamese Army in September 1967. Although the press was prepared to find fault with the election process, the Johnson administration took great pains to ensure that it was democratic. Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thieu won election as the new president of South Vietnam, demonstrating that perhaps for the first
time since the Diem regime the Saigon government was growing more stable. Although
the election failed to address many of the underlying problems that had plagued the Saigon
government since the beginning of U.S. involvement in Vietnam during the 1950s, the
peaceful, orderly election impressed American observers and provided Westmoreland and
President Johnson with a clear example of improving conditions in South Vietnam.\footnote{113}

A month after the election of Thieu, General Westmoreland again returned to the
United States, supposedly to discuss how the United States could make maximum
progress during the next six months. Although the official rationale for the general’s trip
was logical, most within military circles believed that Westmoreland had returned to
counter criticism of the war and to bolster the president whose popularity was
plummeting. In November 1967, Johnson’s popularity was at an all time low. Polls
conducted by Louis Harris indicated that public confidence in the president had plunged to
23 percent and George Gallup noted that 46 percent of the American public believed that
U.S. involvement in Vietnam was a mistake.\footnote{114} Westmoreland gave a speech at the
National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on 27 November 1967, assuring the reporters
that the war in Vietnam was progressing well for the United States and its ally, South
Vietnam. The Communists, Westmoreland asserted, had not been able to launch a major
offensive for the past year and were limited in where they could use their large forces. He
assured the journalists that the South Vietnamese forces were improving and that U.S.

\footnote{113}{Herring, \textit{Longest War, Longest War}, \textit{???} \\

\footnote{114}{Louis Harris, “Public Confidence in President Plunges to an All-Time Low of
23%,” \textit{Washington Post}, 23 October 1967; George Gallup, “46% Now Feel Viet War is
troops would be able to begin phasing down their level of commitment and to turn a larger share of the fighting over to the South Vietnamese within two years. "It is significant," he said, "that the enemy has not won a major battle in more than a year. In general, he can fight his large forces only at the edges of his sanctuaries. . . . His guerrilla force is declining at a steady rate. Morale problems are developing within his ranks." There was "light at the end of the tunnel." The press gave the general's comments wide coverage and most journalists believed that at last the war was finally drawing to a close. Johnson took advantage of Westmoreland's success to distinguish between two types of dissenters -- responsible critics like those members of Congress who disagreed with his policies, and the members of the antiwar movement whose actions the president described as "storm troopers' bullying" and "rowdyism."

Although some media organizations continued to criticize the president and his policies in Vietnam, the majority of the press accepted the optimistic pronouncements of Johnson and Westmoreland. The Washington Star ran headlines touting the near end of the war. On 27 November the paper ran under the heading, "In a Military Sense the War is Just about Won," and the next day, "The Enemy in Trouble -- 18 Months and No Big Victory." Bob Considine of the Philadelphia Enquirer challenged the president's critics


to "stop griping. We're winning the lousy war. It is not, repeat not, a stalemate. The enemy has not won a substantial land battle for more than two years." In the more reserved *New York Times*, James Reston reviewed Westmoreland's themes in an article and commended the general as an effective administration spokesman. Westmoreland was "careful in [his] estimates," Reston asserted, "modest in [his] manner, and as factual as anybody can be in reporting on such a complicated war with so many different fronts."\(^{117}\)

The president's public relations campaign had an immediate impact on public opinion. By December, Johnson's approval ratings had increased by eleven points. However, just as he was regaining aggregate support from the country, the antiwar movements increased its activities. In New York City, the police arrested 604 demonstrators who had disrupted activities at the city's largest U.S. Army induction center. Across the country, angry students at California State College, Los Angeles, ejected representatives of Dow Chemical Company, one of the makers of napalm, from the school's placement office. In Washington, D.C., Senator Fulbright began his publicized hearings on the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, revealing for the first time that Johnson officials had prepared a draft resolution justifying military action in South Vietnam even before the attacks occurred. Out of Saigon, Bernard Weinraub of the *New York Times* published an article, based on leaked sources in Vietnam, that enemy terrorism and propaganda in South Vietnam were on the rise. Weinraub also noted that many South Vietnamese were turning against the United States, believing that America had become a threat to their

national sovereignty.\textsuperscript{118}

Yet despite the continued opposition to the war, many Americans remained willing to support it, believing that some sort of acceptable conclusion was possible in the near future. Public opinion polls in 1967 had shown a gradual loss of public support for the war in Vietnam. Several polling agencies asked respondents whether or not they felt that “the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam.” In early February 1967, 52 percent stated that they felt that Johnson had made the right decision sending U.S. forces to Southeast Asia, while 32 percent believed that the president had made a mistake. During the next six months, public support dropped eight points (with only 44 percent still believing that introducing American forces had been the correct decision) while the number believing that the escalation of U.S. involvement had been a mistake rose to 46 percent, a change of nearly 15 percent. After Westmoreland returned to Washington in November 1967 and stated that he saw progress and an eventual end to U.S. involvement, popular support for the war again increased to nearly fifty percent, but opposition remained nearly constant. The polling data suggest that as U.S. involvement grew and American casualties increased public support for the ill-defined war diminished. As had happened during the Korean War, public opinion decreased steadily as more U.S. soldiers lost their lives in the war. The efforts of Westmoreland, Johnson, and other administration spokesmen to counter the decline of popular support was temporarily successful in stemming the downward trend in public support for the war, but as the United States

continued to escalate its involvement in Vietnam, and more servicemen lost their lives, more Americans turned against the war.\textsuperscript{119}

The actions of the people’s representatives in Washington reflected trends in public support for the war. In Congress fewer than 30 of the 100 Senators and 50 of the 435 Representatives had gone on the record opposing the war. Most expressed the opinion that they were “staying loose” as long as possible before taking a stance on the war.\textsuperscript{120} The media also remained uncommitted. During January 1968, the Boston Globe conducted a survey of editorial opinion among thirty-nine major U.S. metropolitan daily newspapers with a combined circulation of over twenty-two million. It found that seven -- the Charlotte Observer, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Detroit Free Press, the Kansas City Star, the Los Angeles Times, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, and the Richmond Times-Dispatch -- had moved during the previous year from support for the administration’s war policies to criticism. Four other papers -- the Chicago Tribune, the Cincinnati Enquirer, the New York Daily News, and the St. Louis Globe-Democrat -- had moved in the opposite direction, advocating escalation of U.S. involvement and stronger military action against North Vietnam.\textsuperscript{121}

By the beginning of 1968, large sections of the American government, media, and public still remained undecided about what the United States’ policy toward Vietnam should be. The president’s public relations campaign of November and December 1967

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\textsuperscript{119} Mueller, Public Opinion, Table 3.3.


had succeeded in slowing the erosion of support for the war in Vietnam, but dramatic
events would shortly occur that would change the nature of the war. In January 1968,
Communist forces attacked the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon and most of the major
provincial capitals in a coordinated offensive during the Tet Holiday celebrating the lunar
new year. The Tet Offensive stunned reporters in both South Vietnam and the United
States. Already dubious of the Johnson administration's claims of success, many
journalists felt that the Tet Offensive only reinforced their skepticism. Following Tet,
many within the press corps adopted a stance of disbelieving announcements from the
government and military, unless they could verify official statements independently. This
new distrust led most of the Saigon press corps to portray the Tet Offensive as a stunning
Communist victory, even though the U.S. military claimed that the enemy had been
resoundingly beaten. The military's assertions were technically correct. During the ten
weeks of the offensive beginning with the attacks of 30 January and lasting until the relief
of Khe Sanh in March, the United States succeeded in defeating the most coordinated
North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacks of the war. Despite initial shock, U.S. and
South Vietnamese forces regained control of the cities and inflicted large casualties on the
enemy. In the Battle of Hue, the North Vietnamese, by their own account, lost more than
1,000 men killed and several times that number wounded while U.S. and South
Vietnamese force lost 266 killed and more than 1,200 wounded. The Tet Offensive also
failed to inspire the people of South Vietnam to rise up against their government, the main
aim of the Communists. Military spokesmen attempted to point out these facts, but many
journalists failed to give them the attention they deserved. Announcements like those of
Walter Cronkite in February 1968 convinced many journalists and government leaders that Tet had been a defeat and final victory was impossible. Historians have since proven that the military’s claims of victory were correct, but perceptions that the Tet Offensive had succeeded lingered for many years.\footnote{Oberdorfer, 331; Peter Braestrup,\textit{ The Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington} (New York: Anchor Books, 1978). Braestrup’s book offers both analysis of Tet and a collection of primary documents that outline how the press covered the crisis and how the government of the United States and Vietnam reacted.}

Although the Tet Offensive had stunned many within the American leadership, aggregate American public opinion did not change dramatically as a result of the attacks. In response to a Gallup poll question, “In view of developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to fight in Vietnam?” Americans for the most part indicated that they had suspended judgement for the time being. The percentage of respondents answering “yes” was 45 percent, the same number that had given the answer in December 1967; 43 percent answered “no,” a decrease of 3 percent from the previous poll; and 12 percent declined to offer an opinion, and increase of 3 percent. The poll numbers suggested that the public was uncertain of the wisdom of American involvement, but Americans had not repudiated the war or the Johnson administration’s policies. Most polls actually indicated that Americans had rallied aggressively around the president after the Tet Offensive. In January 1968, 58 percent of the people that Gallup polled considered themselves hawks on the war and 27 percent doves, with 17 percent voicing no opinion. By February, at the height of the offensive, 61 percent identified themselves as hawks, 23 percent as doves,
and 16 percent held no opinion. In a similar pattern, the number of Americans who expressed confidence in U.S. military policy in Vietnam, rose from 61 percent in December 1967 to 74 percent in February 1968. And despite pessimistic press coverage, 43 percent of respondents told the Harris organization that they believed the United States would still win, 39 percent expected some sort of stalemate, and only 3 percent considered defeat a possibility.\(^{123}\)

While public support for the war remained firm during the first weeks of February 1968, popular support for the president faltered. President Johnson failed to use his power as the nation’s leader to contradict the assertions of the press and support his military’s view of the offensive. Johnson had been the most consistent supporter of the war in Vietnam. Following the January offensive, he made only a few statements to the press and offered little in the way of leadership on the war. The president’s failure to act decisively left both the American public and the Congress without leadership. Although few within the American public wanted to withdraw from Vietnam, polls indicated that support for Johnson’s handling of the war had fallen sharply. Disapproval ratings for the president’s handling of the war rose sharply from 47 percent in January to 63 percent by the end of February.\(^{124}\)

The lack of leadership from the White House impacted public support for the war. The impression of indecision that resulted from Johnson’s public disappearance decreased


the public's aggressiveness. By the end of March, the percentage of those expressing confidence in American policies in Vietnam had fallen from 74 to 54 percent, and the number of Americans considering the war a stalemate had risen from 39 to 42 percent.\footnote{Roper, "What Public Opinion Polls Said," in Braestrup, \textit{Big Story!}, 1: 687.} Johnson finally began to take action in March 1968. He ordered his new Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, to conduct a wide-ranging study of U.S. policy in Vietnam. Clifford concluded that the war was damaging to the U.S. and that the country must decide whether it was wise to continue fighting. Johnson, unwilling to abandon the South Vietnamese, decided on a fresh approach. On 31 March 1968, he addressed the country, announcing a bombing halt on North Vietnamese targets in hopes of drawing Ho Chi Min to the negotiating table. In the same address, Johnson stunned the nation by stating that he would not seek a second term and instead would devote his attention to the search for peace.\footnote{Braestrup, \textit{Big Story!}, 465-507.}

Just four days after Johnson made his overture to the North Vietnamese, the government in Hanoi signaled its willingness to begin negotiations. The start of peace talks in Paris signaled the beginning of a new phase in the war. General Westmoreland and his command were well aware that the talks would be long and difficult, with the enemy trying every device to strengthen his position. The United States would have to continue to fight while negotiators met to find an acceptable solution to a conflict that had been waged for over twenty years. America's experience in Korea had shown how difficult it was simultaneously to fight and negotiate. Westmoreland knew that he had to
maintain the morale and offensive momentum of U.S. and South Vietnamese forces while doing, as he put it, "as little as possible to give aid and comfort to critics by rocking or appearing to rock the negotiations boat."\textsuperscript{127}

In November 1968, Richard Milhouse Nixon won election to the presidency of the United States. Johnson's policy shift in March and the opening of negotiations in May 1968 had left few options for the new president on his policy toward Vietnam. During his campaign, Nixon had hinted that he possessed a plan that would allow the United States to leave Indochina through "peace with honor," signaling new war aims for the United States. The U.S. would continue to fight for South Vietnamese independence, but it would also attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement to the war while de-escalating its involvement in the conflict. When Nixon took office in January 1969, he began a gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam. Public opinion polls showed support for his contradictory aims, and the American public increasingly viewed the war in Vietnam as a long, bloody conflict that could not be won as the military had fought it under Johnson. Polls showed that the public felt that the United States needed either to take drastic steps to win the war or to withdraw from the conflict before more lives were lost. Nixon, unwilling to escalate the war, continued the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from the area. However, he was not prepared to admit defeat and lose support from a substantial part of the nation that wanted an honorable peace.\textsuperscript{128}

The antiwar movement in the United States also became more vocal during


Nixon’s presidency. Less than one year after he won the White House on a platform that supported reduction of American commitment to Vietnam, a series of nonviolent, nationwide demonstrations occurred, protesting the continued American involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Called the “Moratorium,” the protests attracted wide media coverage and were highly critical of Nixon and the military. In Washington, D.C., alone tens of thousands of demonstrators marched. The Moratorium’s coordinated activities were the largest, most organized protests of the war. Nixon viewed the demonstrations as an attack on his policies and as damaging to his efforts to bring the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table. He directed much of his anger toward the media whom he blamed for siding with the antiwar movement without giving appropriate covering to his accomplishments. By October 1969, the same month that the Moratorium movement began, Nixon had overseen the beginning of troop withdrawals from Vietnam and on 9 October not a single American serviceman died in combat -- a watershed event. However, Nixon believed that journalists ignored those achievements and focused excessive attention on the demonstrators.129

With the president publicly committed to peace, the slightest perceived deviation from that course brought immediate and vociferous denouncement from critics in the Congress and in the antiwar community which included prominent figures. As one scholar of the period notes, the media “took their cues, as always, from news makers, . . .”

causing the tone of the coverage to become more critical of Nixon and the war.\textsuperscript{130} This was most evident in television news programs. This shift in emphasis was not a product of the media. As Daniel Hallin showed in his study of the media during the Vietnam War, 49 percent of all domestic criticism of the war on television came from public officials, while only 16 percent originated in the commentaries and interpretations of reporters.\textsuperscript{131} Journalists were simply mirroring the change within society. By 1969, over half of the respondents to polling questions viewed the war in Vietnam as a mistake.\textsuperscript{132} The media naturally picked up on the mood of the nation and reported it.\textsuperscript{133}

To counter what he felt was the loss of the media and the possible loss of the people, Nixon decided to bypass the “hostile” press. On 3 November 1969, he addressed the country via television. In his speech, the president asked for the support of the “great silent majority.” He concluded:

\begin{quote}
I pledged in my campaign for the Presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge.

The more support I can have from the American people, the sooner that pledge can be redeemed; for the more divided we are at home, the less
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{130}Hammond, “Media and the War,” 320.

\textsuperscript{131}Hallin, \textit{Uncensored War}, 201.

\textsuperscript{132}Mueller, \textit{Public Opinion}, 56.

\textsuperscript{133}Hallin, \textit{Uncensored War}, 213. Hallin describes the tendency of the media to pick up on the mood of the nation and its leaders as the “mirror” effect. “The behavior of the media,” Hallin wrote, “is intimately related to the unity and clarity of the government itself, as well as to the degrees of consensus in the society at large. This is not to say that the role of the press is purely reactive . . . But it is . . . that the administration’s problems with the “fourth branch of government” resulted in large part from political divisions at home, including those within the administration itself, which had dynamics of their own.”
likely the enemy is to negotiate in Paris.\textsuperscript{134}

Reaction to the "Silent Majority" speech was favorable and on the next day the president met with the speech's writer, William Safire, to discuss his address. Safire later recalled that the president said: "My object was to go over the heads of the columnists in this speech. We have been getting reaction from across the country, and it's been pretty good. We've got to hold American public opinion with us for three or four months and then we can work this Vietnam thing out."\textsuperscript{135} In an effort to maintain the momentum that his televised appearance had garnered, Nixon directed his vice-president, Spiro Agnew, to continue the attack on antiwar demonstrators and critics of his Vietnam policies. On 19 October, Agnew had remarked that the Moratorium represented a prevailing "spirit of national masochism . . . encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs." Less than two weeks after Nixon's address, Agnew delivered a speech at the Midwest Republican Conference in Des Moines, Iowa. Carried live on national television and covered extensively by print organizations, Agnew's November speech directly attacked the news media's coverage of the war and the president.

\ldots The purpose of my remarks tonight is to focus your attention on this little group of men who not only enjoy a right of instant rebuttal to every Presidential address, but more importantly, wield a free hand in selecting, presenting and interpreting the great issues of our Nation [on evening newscasts.]

\ldots A small group of men, numbering perhaps no more than a dozen "anchormen," commentators, and executive producers, settle upon the twenty minutes or so of film and commentary that is to reach the


\textsuperscript{135}Nixon-Safire conversation quoted in Maltese, \textit{Spin Control}, 54.
public. . . . [They] draw their political and social views from the same sources. Worse, they talk constantly to one another, thereby providing artificial reinforcement to their shared viewpoints.

The views of this fraternity do not represent the views of America.\textsuperscript{136}

Agnew’s speech presented the Nixon administration’s opinion of the press, especially broadcast news organizations. He stressed that television news programs thwarted “our national search for internal peace and stability” by concentrating on bad news to the detriment of the good. Agnew also blamed television for the spread of antiwar agitation, asking, “How many marches and demonstrations would there be if the marchers did not know that the ever-faithful TV cameras would be there to record their antics for the next news show?” He concluded his address to the Iowa Republican Conference as Nixon had ended his televised remarks on 3 November, by appealing to the average American. “The people can let the networks know that they want their news straight and objective. . . . This is one case where the consumer can be the most effective crusader. . . . The great networks have dominated America’s airwaves for decades. The people are entitled to a full accounting of their stewardship.”\textsuperscript{137}

Two days after Agnew delivered his diatribe, 250,000 citizens marched on Washington in the largest antiwar demonstration to occur in the nation’s capital to date. Print journalists covered the event and were sympathetic to the marchers. Television networks, however, gave the march itself little time and instead focused on the

\textsuperscript{136}U.S. Congress, House, “Address to the Midwest Regional Republic Committee Meeting,”\textit{ Congressional Record}, 115: 34043-049.

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid.
government's security precautions and the few incidents of violence that occurred at Dupont Circle, north of the White House, and on the streets surrounding the Justice Department's downtown offices. Contrary to the characterizations of Agnew, television coverage of the march was not a platform for the marchers' cause. The demonstration's leaders complained that television news had distorted the nature of the event, ignoring the substantive remarks of the speakers and using only the sort of platitudes that fit easily into a television format that favored brevity and impact over thought.138 Broadcasters' decisions on how to cover the March on Washington were not in reaction to the Vice-President's speech, but were instead made because of limited resources and previous commitments. However, their focus on the outbreaks of violence in Washington and Agnew's speech served to separate the actions of the relatively small group of demonstrators from the larger American population. In the days following Agnew's speech and the demonstration in Washington, more than 100,000 television viewers contacted the networks to complain about news coverage, and news critiques of the antiwar movement increased.139 Nevertheless, the public support for the war continued to decrease. Although the public had briefly rallied behind the newly elected Nixon, with support for the war rising to 39 percent in February 1969, by the fall of that year only 32 percent of the public believed that the United States had not made a mistake in becoming


139 Hammond, 1968-1973, 166-67; Hallin, Uncensored War, 199-201. Hallin found that in a survey of television news stories dealing with the antiwar movement negative statements about the movement by reporters and commentators outnumbered positives by a ratio of 2 to 1.
involved in the war.\footnote{Mueller, \textit{Public Opinion}, Table 3.3.}

Throughout the Nixon presidency, the United States military gradually withdrew from Vietnam. Shortly after Nixon replaced Johnson in the White House, General William Westmoreland had turned his command over to fellow Army officer General Creighton Abrams. Abrams found himself attempting to fight an increasingly limited war, with fewer forces and a less effective ally. American forces in Vietnam during the period of Vietnamization under Abrams were not the same as those that had first gone off to fight in 1965 and 1966. Drug abuse, racial tensions, and disciplinary problems characterized the military of the late sixties and early seventies. Officers like Colin Powell and H. Norman Schwarzkopf, who would lead the U.S. military’s reemergence in the 1980s and 1990s, were shocked when they returned to Vietnam and witnessed the change in the soldiers during the period known as Vietnamization. Media focus on the military’s problems alienated many officers who had previously been cooperative with journalists.\footnote{Powell and Schwarzkopf served two tours each in Vietnam. Powell’s first tour ran from Dec. 1962 through November 1963; his second from July 1968 through July 1969. Schwarzkopf’s tours were in 1965-66 and 1969-70. Both men noted the change in troops from their first tour to their second. They cited racial and drug problems as major obstacles during their later assignments and both worked hard to remedy the crises during the late 1970s and 1980s. See Powell, \textit{American Hero}, 77-101, 126-45; H. Norman Schwarzkopf \textit{It Doesn’t Take a Hero: the Autobiography} (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 120-52, 167-200.} Perhaps the best example of the deterioration of American fighting forces after the Tet Offensive occurred in March 1968 when a unit under the command of First Lieutenant William Calley massacred innocent civilians at the village of My Lai. Although rumors of the
atrocities had circulated around Saigon for six months, the story became public only when a reporter in the United States, Seymour Hersh, broke it. Part of the reason for the delay was due to the Department of Defense’s restriction of information about the incident. But news organizations showed a surprising reluctance to publish facts about the massacre even after Hersh pieced together the story. He presented his finding to both *Life* and *Look* magazines, but they turned him down. Hersh finally published his findings in the less well-known, antiwar Dispatch War News Service. Only then did the major news organizations pick up on the piece and turn it into a major story. Following the publication of the My Lai massacre, antiwar leaders used the incident and the military’s apparent cover-up as examples of the immorality of the U.S. efforts in Vietnam.¹⁴²

During the same period, the journalists covering the war also changed. Many of the original band of reporters who had spent years in Vietnam covering the Diem regime and the escalation of the war had left Saigon for safer assignments or positions of more responsibility. In their place, new journalists, who often felt more affinity with antiwar protesters than with U.S. soldiers, began to cover the war. Having witnessed the success of Halberstam, Sheehan, and Arnett in pointing out the inconsistencies of the war, this new breed of Vietnam war correspondent was much quicker to doubt the military’s assessment of the war. And just as the number of journalists and the number of stories on the war had risen as U.S. troops deployed to Vietnam, they also fell as American forces left. The public and the press paid less attention to the fight as other issues, like racial

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issues in the United States and peace negotiations in Paris, attracted the attention of the news media. While events could still draw the press to Vietnam, there was not the intensity of coverage that had been present during the pre-Tet period of the war. As the executive producer of NBC’s Huntley-Brinkley Report, Robert J. Northshield later explained, “The trend was away from Vietnam.”

Throughout 1970 and 1971, Nixon continued to order the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam while trying to maintain pressure on the North Vietnamese government in the hopes of forcing them to accept a negotiated settlement favorable to the United States. Nixon and his spokesmen also continued to laud the improvements of the South Vietnamese military under the program of Vietnamization that developed as American forces turned over the burden of the war. Reporters, who at first accepted the official position, began to investigate the Administration’s assertions. They found that although some units of the South Vietnamese armed forces had improved, many still relied on the superiority of U.S. fire power and the leadership of U.S. advisers. Nixon attempted to gain more time for negotiations by ordering the invasion of Cambodia in 1970 to halt the flow of supplies through the nominally neutral country. Some journalists supported his decision and claimed that it was long overdue. Others, though, condemned the president for claiming to lessen U.S. involvement when he was simultaneously widening the war. The invasion of Cambodia also revived the antiwar movement in the United States. Protests erupted on college campuses and in major cities. Some news organizations that

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143 Northshield quoted in Hammond, “Media and the War,” 322.
had previously supported Nixon turned against the president after the invasion. While the press increased their critical assessments of the president and the war in Vietnam, they did not completely abandon their support for the United States’ effort in Southeast Asia. During the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, AP correspondent Peter Arnett filed a piece that described American forces looting of the small Cambodian town of Snoul. The international press widely used the story. However, in the United States, the section of Arnett’s story containing the account of the looting disappeared. The Managing Editor of AP at the time later explained that he had decided not to include that portion of Arnett’s story because he did not want to contribute to what he viewed as the unraveling of the nation.145

The largest battle between the Nixon administration and the press over Vietnam took place during 1971 in New York City and Washington, D.C., not Saigon. Although enlisted men had always been able to talk with newsmen, only late in the war did several high-ranking civilian and military leaders began to talk with press and give their critical views of the war. During March, April, and May 1971, columnist Jack Anderson of the Washington Post wrote a series of articles that were based upon highly-classified information. The articles included revelations about the U.S. Air Force’s efforts to influence the weather to block the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Pentagon’s programs for domestic surveillance, contingency plans for bombing North Vietnamese harbors, and other secret military and political decisions that only someone with close ties to political


and military decision makers could have supplied.\footnote{Hammond, 1968-1973, 500.} Shortly after Anderson's articles began appearing, the New York Times began to run a series of pieces printing excerpts from a secret Department of Defense history of war-related decision making during the Johnson administration. The source for the Times' stories was a study of United States policy toward Vietnam that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara had commissioned in June 1967. Department of Defense officials had continued collecting documents for several years, and by 1969, the study included more than 7,000 pages of documents. On 13 June, the New York Times published its first article based on what eventually came to be known as the Pentagon Papers. The Justice Department, under President Nixon's direction, immediately sought an injunction to halt the publication of information from the Papers, claiming that the publication of the secret history of decision making on the war threatened national security. The Times "respectfully declined" Attorney General John Mitchell's request to desist from further publication.\footnote{McNamara, In Retrospect, 281. For a more in depth discussion of the Pentagon Papers legal actions see next chapter.} With the Washington Post also publishing portions of the secret documents, the Administration took the case to court. In a very short order it reached the Supreme Court of the United States. The Court ruled against the Nixon Administration and refused to order an injunction against publication. Although there was little in the documents that could have harmed U.S. strategic interests, the government's attempts to halt the publication of the Pentagon Papers on national security grounds deepened the level of distrust between the press and the Nixon
As the uproar over the invasion of Cambodia and the *Pentagon Papers* diminished, the press turned its attention increasingly away from the Vietnam War. U.S. forces committed to Vietnam had steadily dropped from a high of 554,000 in March and April 1969 to fewer than 141,000 in the first months of 1972. Statistical summaries that the military released to journalists showed than during some weeks there were fewer than ten American casualties of any sort. In April 1972, the North Vietnamese, sensing the precarious position of the South during the draw-down of U.S. forces, launched a coordinated attack from Cambodia and Laos against nearly the entire western border of South Vietnam. The Easter Offensive was the largest North Vietnamese attack of the war, consisting mainly of regular People's Army of [North] Vietnam forces supported by armor and artillery. Unlike the guerrilla attacks during the Tet Offensive of 1968, the Easter Offensive was a determined drive to destroy the South Vietnamese army and occupy the whole of Vietnam. The sudden invasion at first threw back South Vietnamese forces who no longer enjoyed the backing of U.S. ground forces. Knowing that the United States could not allow South Vietnam's defeat, Nixon authorized Abrams to do whatever was necessary to defeat the attack. Abrams used American air power to counter the North Vietnamese thrust, causing many within the press to claim that the president was once again escalating the war by approving raids against targets in North Vietnam and

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other areas bordering South Vietnam.\textsuperscript{149}

Public reaction to the new intensification of U.S. efforts in Vietnam revealed ambivalence toward the war that stood in sharp contrast to public attitudes during the Moratorium of 1969 and the March on Washington. By May 1972, 76 percent of all Americans wanted U.S. troops home by the end of the year and 60 percent were willing to sacrifice the current government of South Vietnam for a negotiated end to the war. However, Americans believed that the president was making progress toward the goal of ending the war. Nixon's approval rating increased during April, rising from 35 percent to 46 percent. A Gallup poll released on 25 April, noted that the question of increased bombings divided the public was almost evenly, with 47 percent of respondents approving of the action and 44 opposing it. In man-on-the-street interviews, news organizations found that most of the people they spoke with believed North Vietnam deserved to be bombed because it had committed a clear act of aggression.\textsuperscript{150} With the aid of U.S. air power, the South Vietnamese Army was able first to slow and then drive back the North Vietnamese and by the end of July 1972 had recaptured most of their lost territory.\textsuperscript{151}

With the end of the Easter Offensive, even the leaders in Hanoi seemed willing to compromise to end the war. In August, the negotiations in Paris took a productive turn


\textsuperscript{151}Herring, *Longest War*, ???
and by October the two sides had reached substantial agreement. The last challenge was to force the South Vietnamese government of President Thieu to accept the settlement. Thieu opposed the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces and aid, correctly understanding that his country could not withstand another invasion without American assistance. In addition to the negotiations, Nixon had to contend with the U.S. presidential elections in November. Not wanting to be drawn into an open debate with South Vietnam over the negotiations during the last run-up to the elections, Nixon announced that a “brief delay” was necessary before the negotiating teams could conclude the Paris Peace Talks. Thieu announced on 26 October 1972, just weeks before the end of the American presidential campaign, that he would not accept a peace agreement that left some portions of his country under the control of North Vietnamese forces and gave the Viet Cong a voice in the government. Nixon’s Democratic opponent, George McGovern, and other critics of the war began to compare the treaty’s provisions with demands the enemy had made at the start of negotiations in 1968. What, they asked, had the president accomplished in return for the intervening four years of blood and sacrifice? Nixon responded to his critics on 2 November in his first major, televised speech of the campaign. He confirmed reports that an agreement was close but cautioned that minor technicalities had delayed a final settlement and that an artificial deadline like the upcoming elections would not force final action. Nixon’s speech appeared to have countered doubts within the American public that the president had not fulfilled his campaign promise made in 1968 to find a solution to the war, and he won reelection on 6 November 1972 by a wide margin.152

Although Nixon had promised that only minor matters remained before the finalization of the negotiations in Paris, the talks continued through the end of 1972. President Thieu caused much of the delay, but North Vietnamese negotiators also contributed to the impasse by demanding new concessions and leaving Paris. In an attempt to allay South Vietnamese fears of abandonment and to demonstrate American power to North Vietnam, Nixon ordered a new series of bombings in mid-December. Termed the Christmas Bombings, the air operations began on 18 December when waves of B-52s struck targets in North Vietnam. By December 1972, the press had almost completely turned against the president. Nixon, nevertheless, remained determined to force the North Vietnamese to return to the negotiating table and secure an honorable peace. But because of his frustrations with the press, Nixon cut off nearly all sources of information about the attack. Proving once again to be his own worst enemy, Nixon left reporters little option but to accept North Vietnamese accounts of the bombing. The Communists provided numerous reports of excessive civilian casualties caused by the indiscriminate American bombing. Without a source for information that could counter the North Vietnamese claims, the U.S. press repeated the stories of civilians dying from U.S. bombs. This did not have to be the case. The Nixon administration and the military could easily have shown that U.S. airmen often placed their own lives at risk to put their bombs on target. The civilian casualties (1,318 were killed by North Vietnamese accounts, and 1,261 wounded), resulted mainly from attacks on legitimate military targets. The numbers were no where near what they would have been if the United States had indeed waged a campaign of indiscriminate bombing. Despite the further blows to his
credibility, Nixon succeeded in bringing the North Vietnamese to the peace table. When
the North Vietnamese ran out of anti-aircraft missiles on the tenth day of the bombing,
they signaled they were ready to negotiate. The United States and the North Vietnamese
concluded a peace treaty on 27 January 1973. The war in Vietnam had ended for the
United States, but the ghost of Vietnam would live on for nearly twenty years. 153

What had happened during the Vietnam War that turned the military and the media
against each other, alienated the people from both the government and the military, and
led to the first military defeat in United States history? During World War II and most of
the Korean War, relations between the military and the media had been relatively positive,
with both sides working on the assumption that if disagreements and frictions arose they
were less important than U.S. victory. In contrast, by the end of the Vietnam War, hardly
a vestige of the earlier cooperative attitude remained. With few exceptions the military
and the media were enemies. Similarly, during the nearly fifteen years of American
involvement in Vietnam, the public had become alienated from their government and their
military. Americans distrusted the president and his advisors and accused servicemen
returning from the war of being “baby-killers.” Unlike the Second World War and the
Korean Conflict, the United States emerged from the Vietnam War beaten on the
battlefield and divided as a country.

The result of the war was unexpected. Early reporters of the war like Neil
Sheehan, Malcolm Browne, and David Halberstam had written stories displaying a strong
sense of solidarity with Americans in the field. If they disagreed with U.S. efforts, they

did so on the basis of strategies and not policies. The containment policy that President Eisenhower had first adopted as the country’s war aim in Southeast Asia was popular with the press and the American public for most of the 1950s and early 1960s. In part because of journalistic support of U.S. policy, the military refrained from imposing formal censorship in Vietnam and instead instituted a system of voluntary guidelines that journalists adhered to much better than they had during the Korean War. Americans, although largely ignorant of early U.S. efforts in the region, resisted criticizing successive presidents and their policies until mid-1960s, nearly fifteen years after the first U.S. advisors arrived in South Vietnam.

With so few problems during the initial phase of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, what went wrong? The answer lies beyond the relationship of the military and the media. Its rests in the strategies of the Johnson and Nixon administrations. Both presidents chose to wage a war based on contradiction and complexity that neither man ever fully reconciled. American leaders viewed the struggle between North and South Vietnam in terms of the struggle between Communist and non-Communist powers, failing to understand the true nationalistic nature of the conflict. While Ho Chi Minh accepted aid from the United States’ ideological enemies, his desire to unite his country first and expel the perceived colonial successors to the French dominated his grand strategy. Johnson adopted a strategy of graduated uses of force, hoping to preserve the always unstable government of South Vietnam against the threat of Communist expansion. American efforts to stop the perceived Communist aggression from Hanoi became a symbol in the larger struggle between the United States and the Communist nations during the height of
the Cold War. Unlike World War II and Korea, no president provided the rationale and commitment necessary to lead the American people to a victory. President Johnson, in an attempt to preserve his aggressive social policy, attempted to shield the public from the war and failed to clearly articulate American war aims in South Vietnam until after U.S. forces were actively fighting the enemy. Because there was never an international mandate for U.S. action in Southeast Asia similar to the Atlantic Charter of World War II or the United Nations' resolutions of Korea, no President had clearly define American aims to the public. The closest that the country came to a debate and discussion on U.S. aims came in August 1964 during the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. However, unlike either of the two earlier wars, Congress in 1964 abdicated its power to check presidential power and gave Johnson a virtual carte blanche on his Vietnam policy. Congress' decision allowed it to both back the president and criticize his actions. However, it separated the action in Vietnam from further debate.

Despite the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, Johnson was initially unwilling to take any action to help the South Vietnamese that might threaten his domestic agenda. Only when it became apparent that the South Vietnamese would not survive without the introduction of U.S. ground forces did he escalate the war. As he climbed each successive step of escalation, Johnson attempted to keep the true nature of United States commitment from the American people, fearing that they would not support his widening of the war and that a national mobilization would weaken his Great Society. Although reporters chronicled the increases in U.S. involvement, the public remained largely unaware of the war until 1964 when the president authorized the dispatch of large ground units. In polls, the public
did not identify Vietnam as the nation’s most important problem until 1964. Even then, they remained split between domestic issues (race relations) and the growing war. However, between 1966 and 1972, Vietnam remained foremost in the minds of Americans as the greatest threat to the country.154

Americans had been slow to recognize the growing crisis in Vietnam in large part because of official attempts to hide the true nature of U.S. policy. Beginning with the Johnson administration and continuing during Nixon’s presidency, leaders in Washington and Saigon deliberately deceived reporters and the public about the nature of the war and U.S. involvement. For nearly two years, Johnson and his spokespersons claimed that U.S. servicemen were not actively fighting the North Vietnamese. Despite clear evidence from reporters in South Vietnam to the contrary, the president and the military continued to lie, fostering and building the credibility gap that disillusioned the press and eventually some of the American people. Reporters who could clearly see that American men were dying in ever increasing numbers grew frustrated and angry with official claims that U.S. forces were only “advising” their South Vietnamese counterparts. Pronouncements of success from U.S. officials also proved untrue. So much so, that when the North Vietnamese launched the Tet Offensive in January 1968, journalists quickly discounted official attempts to describe accurately the attacks as military failures. For most correspondents, such descriptions of Tet symbolized just one more official attempt to mislead them. Journalists rejected official claims and relied on their own limited observations to provide the substance of their accounts. As a result, the news media and the government began to

154 Ragsdale, *Vital Statistics*, Table 5-11, 239.
provide widely divergent versions of the war to the American people. The public
fluctuated between acceptance of one view over the other, but as the war continued, the
public gradually became more aligned with negative opinions of the war and their
government.

Complicating the press’ coverage of the war was the new broadcast medium of
television. In Vietnam, television for the first time served as a major source of information
for Americans during wartime. Early broadcast pioneers like Morley Safer and Walter
Cronkite brought vivid images of the war into American homes. Although studies have
shown that television did not dramatically influence popular opinion, military and
government leaders feared the new medium’s potential power. In an effort to combat
what they saw as biased reporting, leaders like President Nixon and Vice-President Agnew
used television to appeal directly to the public, bypassing the interpretive role of the
journalist. Such actions further alienated the press and widened the level of distrust that
developed between the two institutions.

In the end, the United States as a whole suffered because of the ordeal in Vietnam.
More than 58,000 American servicemen and women lost their lives during the war. Many
thousands of others were wounded, both mentally and physically. In an attempt to
understand how the war had been lost, the military, the government, the press and the
people looked for someone to blame. For the military, the easiest and most accepted
culprits were the journalists. Officers who had served in Vietnam believed that negative
press accounts had turned the nation against them. Many within the government also
adopted this view. Journalists blamed the military and the government for involving the
country in a war that had they had failed to understand or explain and had ultimately lost. Members of the media also accepted, and even reveled, in their assigned role, believing that their coverage of the war accomplished a great good in sparing the country from continued bloodshed. For the American people, the war in Vietnam was a period of great upheaval and uncertainty. Coinciding with radical changes in the racial and social structure of society, the war symbolized the dangers of an unchecked military, government, and media. Public distrust of all three institutions increased. The national angst caused by America’s longest war lingered long after the last U.S. soldiers left Vietnam. A ghost haunted the United States for the next twenty years -- appearing each time the country engaged in armed conflict around the world.
Chapter 5
Sailing the Stormy Seas in the Post-Vietnam World: Britain, the Falklands, and the First Major Test for a Democracy in Wartime after the Fall of Saigon

For roughly 150 years, British subjects had lived on the Falkland Islands, approximately 400 miles off the coast of Argentina. Since Britain asserted its ownership of the islands in 1833 through a show of force, Argentina had disputed British sovereignty. During the mid-1960's, the British Foreign Office began negotiations with Argentina, attempting to find a permanent resolution to the dispute. As hope for a negotiated settlement became more remote, the Argentinean government planned to seize the Falklands and the nearby island of South Georgia. The military leaders who ruled in Buenos Aires did not believe that Britain would respond strongly to such a move and counted on American neutrality to weaken any diplomatic outcry from London.¹ The dispute was strategically unimportant for both sides, with one commentator characterizing

¹The assumptions of the Argentine government, as will be shown, were wholly incorrect. While the United States initially tried to serve as a mediator in the dispute of the Falklands/Malvinas, the U.S. soon abandoned its neutral stance to side with its traditional ally, Great Britain. Great Britain, under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, reacted more quickly and more decisively than the Argentinean military junta anticipated. The long running dispute over ownership of the Falklands is not discussed at length here because of its lack of relevance on the larger issues of this work. The issues that led to the war are, however, important for a complete understanding of how the crisis evolved from diplomatic discussions to a shooting war. For an examination of these aspects of the Falklands crisis and a history of the British/Argentinean dispute see, G. M. Dillon, The Falklands, Politics, and War (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), especially chapters 1-4; Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands (London: W. W. Norton, 1983), and The Sunday Times of London Insight Team, War in the Falklands: The Full Story (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).
the war as "two bald men fighting over a comb."

In the early hours of 2 April 1982, Argentinean forces landed at Port Stanley, on East Falkland Island. Although the occupation of South Georgia a week earlier and Argentine statements had provided some foreshadowing, few in London believed that Argentina would actually move against the Falklands. Even when British leaders determined that the islands were in danger on 1 April, their remote location prevented the reinforcement of the Royal Marine garrison stationed there. The Foreign Office informed the governor of the Falklands, Rex Hunt, of the imminent invasion only thirteen hours before the first Argentine troops arrived on the islands. Troops continued to land and by 9:25 a.m., despite strong opposition, the Argentinean forces overwhelmed the British

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South Georgia is administered from the Falkland Islands for convenience sake, but is a direct dependency of the United Kingdom. This important legal distinction was not appreciated by many observers at the time, least of all by the British government. Because of its status as a direct dependency, South Georgia is not part of the Falkland Islands. Therefore, any claims that the Argentineans may have felt justified to make regarding their sovereignty over the Malvinas - based on geography or prior settlement - did not apply to South Georgia. The occupation of the small piece of land was simply a military invasion by one country of the sovereign territory of another nation. United Kingdom, Committee of the Privy Counselors, Falkland Islands Review, (The Franks Report) Report of a Committee of Privy Counselors, Cmnd. 8787, (1983), 48-55. Cited hereafter as The Franks Report.

4 Sunday Times Insight Team, 66-75; The Franks Report, 49-64.

5 Sunday Times Insight Team, 78. The time of events is given as local time unless otherwise specified within the text. The Falkland Islands (GMT-4) are four hours behind London time (GMT). Therefore, while the first landings took place at 4:30 a.m. in the Falkland Islands, it was 8:30 a.m. in London. The Franks Report, 68-71.
defenders. Within the next half hour, the Union Jack was lowered at the Government House in Port Stanley and the blue-and-white flag of Argentina flew over the Falklands. ⁶

Initial reports of the fall of the Falklands reached the British press by midmorning on 2 April. News agencies in Buenos Aires sent the first accounts of the invasion and surrender. In an address to the House of Commons at 11:00 a.m., Foreign Office spokesman Humphrey Atkins dismissed the reports as inaccurate. He was wrong, yet it was not until 6:00 p.m. that the Foreign Minister and the Defense Minister, Lord Carrington and John Nott, appeared before a hastily convened press conference to confirm that Argentina had indeed invaded the islands. The next day the House of Commons met on a Saturday for the first time since the Suez Crisis. ⁷ Members of Parliament expressed anger and frustration at the loss of the Falklands to a "tin-pot dictatorship." During the Saturday debate, both Conservative and Opposition spokesmen were unstinting in their criticism of the Thatcher Government's failure to anticipate the Argentine action, calling for the resignations of Defense Minister Nott, Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, and even Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Labour Party officials considered a motion of censure, condemning the government's handling of the crisis but supporting the recovery of the islands although not at the expense of residents' lives. The failure of the Thatcher government to prevent the Argentine seizure of the Falklands caused the greatest crisis

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⁶Sunday Times Insight Team, 10, 20, 84-92; The Franks Report, 74-72.

that the Conservative leadership had faced since its election three years before.  

The morning papers also lashed out at the government for allowing the capture of the islands. Britain's *Daily Telegraph* called the loss a "humiliation," the *Daily Mail* labeled it a "shame." The *Daily Express* devoted its entire front page Saturday to an editorial under the headline, "We MUST defend them." The strong stance of politicians and reporters reflected and reinforced public sentiment throughout Britain in the days following the invasion of the Falklands. However, underneath the outpouring of public emotion, reporters found that many Britons displayed a grim realization that even the strength of the large naval force that was preparing to sail was limited. Most recognized that military action would risk the lives of the 1,800 islanders whom the British wanted to protect. Intervention also raised the specter of a permanent, costly armed presence on the islands -- a prospect that worried Britons struggling during the national recession of the early 1980s that had left many unemployed and others fighting to survive the country's economic problems. "There's innocent people living on those islands who would almost certainly get hurt," said Barry Shelton, a printer. "Once we go in there, we'll be there forever and a day." Nevertheless, large portions of the public believed that the government and the military had to do something. In a local radio station poll taken on 4 April, more than three out of four respondents wanted the Government to take military action to regain the islands; 92 percent said that Britain had a moral obligation to protect

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9*Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1982; *Daily Mail*, 3 April 1982; *Daily Express* quoted in Rattner, "Britons."
the rights of Falkland Islanders to remain British. The question of the nation’s “honor” and cries that it had been irretrievably lost dominated much of the public debate. The islanders’ repeated assertions of loyalty to Britain stirred warm feelings and a sense of shared dismay at the pictures of the Argentinean flag being run up in place of the Union Jack. A British company said that a T-shirt islanders’ had commissioned months ago to display their loyalty was selling briskly in Britain. “They’re the same bloodstock as us,” said Ken Webb, a young printer, explaining why action was needed. During the first weekend of the crisis, some Britons displayed their feelings as overtly as the press had. Kevin Preen, a 23-year-old bricklayer, covered his car with slogans like “Argentineans Get Out!” and “Britain Is Spineless!” Then he locked himself in it in front of 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister’s office and residence. At the Argentine Embassy on Wilton Crescent, one of London’s most fashionable streets, angry Britons kept up a steady stream of demonstrations, illuminated at night by flaming torches. “The man on the street wants some action,” said Stan Longhurst, a 35-year-old former serviceman. “Government leaders have allowed us to become a joke.”

The crisis in the South Atlantic was Britain’s first major military challenge outside its home territories since the Suez Crisis in July of 1956. The disastrous handling of the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt had left many British leaders, both political and military, wary of undertaking military action abroad. The Suez Crisis had taught the British that waging a modern war without public support at home and abroad was extremely difficult for a democracy. Despite the efforts of the British Prime Minister, the Right Honorable

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Sir Anthony Eden, to maintain domestic and international support of the Anglo-French undertaking, opinion had turned against the British. Eden was unable to provide a convincing rationale for Britain's actions. Although the British and French forces had managed to seize control of the Suez Canal, London and Paris' unilateral actions shocked and outraged the international community. The Soviet Union threatened to come to the aid of their Egyptian allies if British and French forces did not abandon their positions. In Britain, the press soon began to question the wisdom of military involvement in the face of Soviet threats of reprisals. Public opinion turned against Eden and he resigned as Prime Minister on 8 January 1957, after U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower pressured the British and French forces to withdraw from Egypt. The instability of the region and the tense international situation complicated the Suez Crisis. Nevertheless, British leaders came out of Suez with the conviction that the country could wage a successful war only if the public, both domestic and international, understood and supported the actions of the government and the military.  

\[11\] Much work has been done on the British experience in the Suez Crisis. For a thorough study of the crisis, with extensive background on the British interests in the Middle East and Eden's efforts to gain support for his policies at home, see Kennett Love, *Suez: The Twice Fought War* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969). Also valuable as a general history of the Crisis is Roy Fullick and Geoffrey Powell's book *Suez: The Double War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1990). Of particular interest to this study is Tony Shaw's *Eden, Suez, and the Mass Media: Propaganda and Persuasion during the Suez Crisis* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996). Shaw examines how Eden tried to shape public opinion through the manipulation of information. He revises early assessments of Eden as an inept handler of the press. Instead, his analysis portrays Eden as initially very successful in framing the issue of Egypt's nationalizing of the Suez Canal. Eden was able to convince even the normally staid *Times* to support the most aggressive measures to protect British interests in the region. According to Shaw, Eden lost this support because of a lack of military preparedness and the failure to gain international support, particularly from the United States, for the British-French expedition to Egypt. Eden's failure to
The American experience in South East Asia also had a dramatic influence on how British officials dealt with the press during the Falklands War. Many in England accepted the view that America had lost the Vietnam War because of the negative impact that the media had had on public opinion. An American veteran of Vietnam turned military affairs correspondent for the British news magazine *The Economist* recalled that civil servants and soldiers told him, "This is why you Americans lost the Vietnam War, you had a free press." Executives at Independent Television News (ITN), stated that "the Vietnam analogy was a specter constantly stalking the Falklands decision makers and was invoked frame the crisis in a way that would sustain support within his own government and with the people ultimately led to his fall from power. Eden serves as a valuable foil to the efforts of Margaret Thatcher during the Falklands War.

The analyst was Jim Meacham. Robert Harris, *GOTCHA!: The Media, The Government, and the Falklands Crisis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), 62. Meacham gave evidence before the House of Commons Defence Committee after the war concerning the British government's public affairs efforts during the war. His statement regarding the comments of certain civil servants and ministry officials was unattributable and non-specific. Nevertheless, he did make clear statements regarding the misperceptions that the U.S. had lost the war in Vietnam because of the negative coverage of the press, asserting that the United States' strategy and not the media led to the defeat in Southeast Asia. See United Kingdom, House of Commons, Defense Committee, First Report 1982-3, *The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict* (1982), vol. 2, Q. 766. This report will be cited hereafter as HCDC Report, with the appropriate volume and reference given. It is necessary to give a brief explanation of how this work is cited. The report is divided into two volumes: the first is a summary of the Committee's findings, the second is a compendium of the evidence and statements taken during the course of the hearings. References to the first volume will be made to specific pages, given in roman numerals. For citations from the second volume, the reference either will be to a specific question (e.g., Q. 456) or to a page number for items of evidence (e.g., p. 123). This report constitutes the best single collection of primary sources dealing with the issues of the relationships among the military, the government, and the press during the Falklands War. Nearly all of the major players involved in the reporting of the war either gave testimony to the Committee or submitted written statements that the Committee published in the report.
privately by the military as an object lesson in how not to deal with the media." As early as 1970, the then Director of Defence Operations, Plans and Supplies at the Ministry of Defense, Brigadier F. G. Caldwell, stated at a Royal United Services Institute seminar that in the aftermath of Vietnam, the British should start asking themselves, "are we going to let television cameras loose on the battlefield?" As would happen again, the ghost of America's experience in Vietnam appeared. While not the sole determinant of British policy, America's experience in Vietnam, like Britain's own experience in the Suez Crisis, affected official attitudes toward the media and public opinion during the war over the Falklands. Members of the press used both conflicts as a gauge to measure the government and its leaders during the crisis over the Falklands.

During the same weekend in which Britons received word that Argentina had invaded the Falklands, the British government reacted quickly and clearly to the crisis in the South Atlantic. Prime Minister Thatcher directed her government first to win international support for its position on the dispute. In New York City, Britain's ambassador to the United Nations, Sir Anthony Parsons, used all of his skills as a diplomat to garner the international support that his country desperately needed. Addressing the UN's influential and powerful Security Council, Parsons sought a resolution denouncing the Argentinean invasion and calling for a return to the status quo ante bellum, with

\[13\] Ibid.

\[14\] Quoted in Harris, GOTCHA!, 64.

Britain governing the Falklands. The Council was heavily biased toward the Third World, and Britain had to collect ten votes in its favor without incurring the deathblow of the veto that any permanent member could deliver. Parsons, who had spent many of his nearly sixty years in government service — first as a soldier in the Second World War and later as a career diplomat in such places as Amman, Bahrain, and Teheran — went to the Security Council on the evening of Thursday, 1 April. "We call on the Security Council," he said at the meeting, "to take immediate action in order to prevent an invasion." The president of the Security Council, Kamanda wa Kamanda of Zaire, in a statement authorized by the council members, responded to Parsons' appeal and called on the governments of Britain and Argentina to "exercise the utmost restraint at this time and in particular to refrain from the use or threat of force in the region."

Parsons' efforts and Kamanda's statement provided the context in which the British ambassador introduced Resolution 502 on 1 April, only hours after the invasion. Written by the British delegation, the resolution called for an end to all hostilities, an immediate withdrawal of Argentine troops from the region, and an opening of talks

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16 The members of the Security Council in 1982 were Britain, the United States, France, China, the Soviet Union (the five permanent members), Uganda, Jordan, Panama, Guyana, Zaire, Togo (the nonaligned states), Japan, Ireland, Spain, and Poland. Much of the following section on British attempts to secure favorable international support during the Falklands crisis comes from the Sunday Times Insight Team, 109-126. While the basic ideas found in the Sunday Times book are supported by the work of other scholars, this source provides a more complete account than found in other sources. Specific citations will be provided when appropriate.

17 Quoted in Sunday Times Insight Team, 111.

18 Ibid, 112.
between Britain and Argentina to resolve the dispute diplomatically. The Security Council delayed its actions for twenty-four hours to allow Argentina's foreign minister, Nicanor Costa Méndez, to arrive in New York. During the next thirty-six hours, Parsons and his British colleagues worked diligently to secure the support of the Security Council members. France, Guyana, Zaire, and Togo sided quickly with the British. Panama led the pro-Argentinean faction. When Costa Méndez arrived at the UN, he succeeded in alienating some of the remaining council members through a condescending speech on the colonial nature of the dispute. Shortly after the Argentinean foreign minister's briefing, Uganda and Jordan both rejected the Argentine position and came out in support of the

19 The complete text of United Nations Security Council Resolution 502 reads as follows:

The Security Council, Recalling the statement made by the President of the Security Council at the 2345th meeting of the Security Council on 1 April 1982 calling on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to refrain from the use or threat of force in the region of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas).

Deeply disturbed at reports of an invasion on 2 April 1982 by armed forces of Argentina.

Determining that there exists a breach of the peace in the region of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas),

1. Demands an immediate cessation of hostilities;
2. Demands an immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas);
3. Calls on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to seek a diplomatic solution to their differences and to respect fully the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

The text of the resolution was fully approved by the Thatcher government in London before it was presented to the Security Council. *Sunday Times Insight Team*, 112.

resolution. Uncertainty remained as to how the Communist nations on the council -- the Soviet Union, China, and Poland -- would vote. In the end, all three abstained in accordance with the Soviet tradition of using the veto only when their interests were directly at stake. The final count was eleven for the resolution, one against (Panama), and three abstaining. The first battle for the Falklands was over, and Britain had succeeded in securing international support.\textsuperscript{21}

Following the success in the United Nations, the British government implemented a campaign to gain the support of certain key nations. First and foremost, Britain needed the backing of the United States. Led by the British ambassador and his staff in Washington, D.C., the propaganda\textsuperscript{22} effort focused on winning over American public and political opinion to the view that Britain was the rightful sovereign of the Falklands and that Argentina had illegally seized the islands against the expressed wishes of the local people. Not only did Britain need the political support of the Americans, but it also hoped to secure the material assistance of the United States in the event of a military confrontation with Argentina. Believing that the Reagan administration was wavering in its support of the British cause, the embassy personnel, under Ambassador Sir Nicholas Henderson's leadership, conducted daily meetings with Congressional leaders and

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid}, 114.

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Webster's New World Dictionary} defines propaganda as "any widespread promotion of ideas, doctrines, etc." The term is used in this sense and is not meant to convey any of the negative connotations that have been associated with the term in more general usage.
appeared on popular news programs to reinforce the British version of the crisis.\textsuperscript{23} As one embassy official told the \textit{Sunday Times} Insight Team after the war, "We always thought the people were with us, but I don't think we took the administration for granted for one moment."\textsuperscript{24} Throughout the campaign for American support, the British tried to show the Americans that Britain was serious in its intentions and that the traditionally close ties between the two countries were more important than American ties to Latin America.\textsuperscript{25}

With the passage of UN Resolution 502, Ambassador Henderson worked hard to convince the Reagan administration that it should abandon its neutral stance and support the British efforts. A ready ally to the British effort was U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, along with influential political leaders in both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. The American public quickly accepted the stance of Britain's Prime Minister Thatcher who had described the crisis in simple terms: Argentina had committed an act of unprovoked aggression and Britain had a duty to protect its territory.

\textsuperscript{23}From 2 April until the end of the war, Henderson gave more than sixty interviews and briefings to the American media, over half for television or radio. HCDC \textit{Report}, vol. 1, xix.

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid}, 115. The British concerns over the Reagan administration's close ties with Argentina were at least in part valid. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Jean Kirkpatrick, was an expert on South America with many close ties to governments there, especially in Argentina. Reagan had also pursued a policy of supporting some military regimes in both Central and South America in return for their help against communist insurgents. \textit{Time} (26 May 1982), 26-28.

and people. Henderson asserted that the ideals and interests of both Britain and America were essentially the same. By presenting the confrontation as a simple, black and white discussion of aggression, the British managed to bypass many of the longstanding issues that lay behind the Argentine seizure of the islands. Proof that the American public accepted this position can be seen in the results of a poll taken in mid-April in which 68 percent of polled Americans expressed support for Britain. By the end of April, after extensive efforts by the Americans to find a diplomatic solution to the Falklands crisis had failed, President Reagan announced that the United States would publicly support the actions of the United Kingdom. The United States, Reagan said, would supply material to Britain and America would impose economic sanctions against Argentina. "Armed aggression," stated the President, "of that kind must not be allowed to succeed." Unlike the Suez Crisis, the British succeeded in gaining international support for its strategic objectives.

\[26\textit{Sunday Times} \text{ Insight Times, } 114-118.\]

\[27\text{It is clear now that some officers within the U.S. Navy started to cooperate with the Royal Navy before the U.S. government openly sided with the United Kingdom. This action, however, was not universally supported by members of the Reagan administration. U.S. Secretary to the United Nations, Jean Kirkpatrick, called for the U.S. to support Argentina in the hopes that America would not alienate its new allies in South and Central America. See Hastings and Jenkins, } \textit{Battle for the Falklands}, \text{ chapter 7 for a discussion of American attitudes and assistance.}\]

\[28\textit{New York Times, } 30 \text{ April 1983. The British government also worked to gain the support of NATO and the European Commonwealth. Like the experience in America, British diplomats succeeded in convincing the European powers that its position was just. The E.C. imposed sanctions against Argentina on 9 April and a worldwide arms embargo began that same day. British efforts to isolate Argentina from the rest of the world succeeded. } \textit{Sunday Times} \text{ Insight Team, } 119-121, 140-143.\]
Despite the British government’s success in securing the support of foreign governments and peoples, no single plan had been formulated to win the backing of the British people. When Prime Minister Thatcher, as head of the war cabinet, authorized on 4 April the deployment of a sizable naval task force to the South Atlantic, no one knew how the British public would react.\(^{29}\) Public opinion had not yet solidified around any one course of action. However, most Britons were angry that the government had lost the Falklands to Argentina and wanted something done to rectify the situation. On the same day that the fleet sailed from Portsmouth (5 April), the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, resigned under pressure from his own party, the opposition, the press, and the public. In response to calls for action, John Nott, the Defense Minister, promised that the Government would “restore British administration to the Falklands even if we have to fight.” In her announcement that the fleet was sailing, Prime Minister Thatcher had stated clear aims: Britain was determined to regain possession of the Falklands, resist “naked aggression,” and protect the islanders from future attacks against their sovereignty. The Defense Minister went so far as to say that the government was willing to authorize the Navy to attack Argentine vessels attempting to resupply forces on the islands. Nott also tendered his resignation, but Mrs. Thatcher refused it, asserting that she needed him at his post “as our forces prepare for the possibility of armed action.”\(^{30}\)


Despite the loud, critical voices of the Opposition and some sections of the press condemning the government's handling of the crisis, Thatcher succeeded in producing a unified and clear war aim. The Prime Minister's leadership, after overcoming the initial shock of the invasion, was strong and sure. She provided the country with easily understood objectives that rallied the nation behind her decision to regain control of the Falklands. To ensure that the people of Britain supported the dispatch of the task force and the government's policy in the crisis, the government had to keep the public informed. The press was the best vehicle to do this, yet there were no clear guidelines on how to handle the media and present the government's message to the public. In fact, after the war, the Ministry of Defense chief spokesman Ian MacDonald commented with characteristically dry British humor, that he had locked himself in his room and thought about the problem for the lengthy period of five minutes. A plan did exist that might have helped clarify many of the problems that later developed between the military and the press. Written by the Army in the 1970s to provide guidelines for relations with the media during a limited operation that took the British military outside of its normal operating environment of Europe, the plan appeared to have had obvious relevance to the Falklands crisis. However, the Ministry of Defense's PR staff heard of the report's existence for the first time only after the war.

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32 HCDC Report vol. 2, Q. 922, 926, pp. 275-6, 369. The unfortunate position that the minders found themselves in was a product of lack of planning on the part of that the Ministry of Defence and was clearly demonstrated by MoD's failure to know of the existence of a document that might have eliminated at least some of the problems between
The public in Britain widely supported the government's course of action and war aims, although many may have hoped that a simple show of force would end the crisis. According to a poll taken in April, 78 percent of respondents agreed with Thatcher's decision to send the task force to the South Atlantic while only 16 percent disapproved. In another poll conducted in April, pollers asked that respondents choose from a list of the most likely outcomes of the crisis: Argentina will take her troops out of the Falklands and British sovereignty will be returned without a fight; Argentina will agree to lease the Falklands back to Britain without force being used; No diplomatic solution will be found in time, and Britain will have to fight a naval battle in the Falklands to regain its sovereignty; British troops will be forced to land on the Falkland Islands to reclaim the islands; Britain will be forced to back down and will never regain the Falkland Islands; Other; Don't Know. More than 40 percent of respondents replied that there would be a nonviolent solution to the situation. Twenty-five percent of those sampled believed that diplomatic efforts would fail and Britain would fight a naval battle over the islands. The same percentage believed that there would be land combat between Britain and Argentina.

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33 *International Index of Public Opinion* 1982-1983, Elizabeth H. Hastings and Philip K. Hastings, eds. (London: Greenwood Press), pg. 340. The wording of the poll was "Do you approve or disapprove of the decision to send a British fleet to the Falkland Islands?" *International Index of Public Opinion* will be cited hereafter as I IPO.
for possession of the Falklands. While Britons hoped for a diplomatic solution, they prepared themselves for the chance of armed conflict.

The government in Argentina, a military junta that controlled much of the daily life in the country, understood the power of the press and public opinion from the outset of the crisis in the South Atlantic. Argentinean Foreign Minister Nicanor Costa Méndez began meeting with a close circle of prominent Argentinean journalists in December 1981. Costa Méndez informed the journalists that the government was determined to recover the Falklands, no matter what the costs, by the end of 1982. On 17 January 1982, editorials began appearing in Argentinean newspapers reasserting the nation’s legitimate claim to the islands. Throughout January, leading columnists and editors wrote pieces that demanded that the flag of Argentina fly again over the Islas Malvinas. On the afternoon of 1 March, just one month before the invasion, Costa Méndez’s deputy, Gustavo Figuero, addressed an assembly of reporters. “If a [diplomatic] solution should not be reached [in the dispute between Argentina and Britain over the Falklands/Malvinas], Argentina maintains the right to end the system and freely choose the procedure it may deem most convenient to its interest.” The people of Argentina responded favorably to statements such as Figuero’s.

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34*IIPO 1981-1982*, 197. The polling question was “Which of these outcomes do you think is most likely?” Results for the seven choices: Argentina will take her troops out of the Falklands and British sovereignty will be returned without a fight (20 percent); Argentina will agree to lease the Falklands back to Britain without force being used (16 percent); No diplomatic solution will be found in time, and Britain will have to fight a naval battle in the Falklands to regain its sovereignty (25 percent); British troops will be forced to land on the Falkland Islands to reclaim the islands (25 percent); Britain will be forced to back down and will never regain the Falkland Islands (6 percent); Other (2 percent); Don’t know (6 percent). The sample size was 1018.

35Figuero quoted in *Sunday Times Insight Team*, 27.
At rallies and in response to public statements by government officials, the Argentinean public voiced loud support for the new belligerent tone regarding the Falklands. The leaders of the military junta understood that once they and the press had whipped public opinion to a frenzy there was no turning back. The year 1983 would mark the 150th anniversary of Britain’s seizure of the islands, and President Leopoldo Galtieri was determined that Argentina would free the Malvinas from “colonial rule” by that date. Galtieri felt confident he, unlike the British, had the backing of the Argentinean people to take whatever steps necessary to achieve that goal.36

When the first portion of the British task force, a carrier group built around the two small aircraft carriers HMS Hermes and Invincible, sailed from Portsmouth on 5 April, no one had a clear idea of how the press would cover the crisis. Initially, the Royal Navy refused to take any representatives from the media aboard its ships. Intervention from the Ministry of Defense (MoD) quickly changed naval policy, but only slightly. After rejecting a proposal to have the journalists meet up with the task force as it sailed, the MoD’s Press Office secured ten places on Navy ships — five for television reporters and their crew37 and five for the print media. The Ministry of Defense asked the Director of the


37The five television slots were allocated as follows: two correspondents, one each from BBC Television News and ITN, sharing a single cameraman and sound recorder; an engineer would accompany the fleet to test the possibilities of transmitting television and still pictures back to London. If the military had been willing to allow journalists to join the task force as it was en route to the South Atlantic, Ascension Islands would have been an ideal meeting place. The delay in dispatching the media possibly would have allowed the military, the government, and the media to work out a basic arrangement that would have had the benefit of more careful consideration and review. HCDC Report, vol. 2, Q.
Newspaper Publishers' Association, John Le Page, to select the print media representatives. To do that, Le Page placed the names of Britain's newspapers in his hat and had his wife draw the names of the organizations that would send correspondents with the task force. Not surprisingly, members of the press immediately attacked this process of selection. Editors of those papers not drawn from Le Page's hat appealed to Members of Parliament, Ministry officials, military contacts, and anyone else they thought could expand the number of slots allocated to the press. Finally, Bernard Ingham, chief press secretary to the Prime Minister, intervened and forced the Navy to accept more journalists. In the end, fifteen journalists sailed with the carrier group on 5 April. Four days later, thirteen more left England for the South Atlantic aboard the requisitioned liner-turned-troop transport, Canberra, bringing the total number of journalists who sailed with the task force to twenty-eight.38

In contrast to the press in America, where localization gives the media many small constituencies, the press in Britain had to appeal to a national audience and fight against steep competition.39 Because of the finite number of readers in Britain, the daily

4, 472-473.

38Robert Harris, GOTCHA!: The Media, The Government, and The Falklands Crisis (London: Faber and Faber, 1983): 15-24. Of the twenty-eight news personnel accompanying the fleet, ten represented broadcast organizations and eighteen were print journalists. Of the ten broadcast personnel, five were technicians and five were correspondents representing both radio and television networks.

39The vast size of the United States makes it difficult for any one media organization, whether in print journalism or in broadcast, to dominate nationally. Instead, local cities and communities support independent regional papers and broadcast stations. In Britain, the relatively small size of the country and its population makes it much easier for individual media sources to appeal nationally. See Deborah Holmes, Governing the
newspapers were constantly trying to lure subscribers away from competitors. In the beginning of the Falklands crisis, all British dailies responded belligerently to the Argentinean seizure of the islands, with each news organization trying to capture the national mood. On the same day that the Hermes and Invincible began their journey to the South Atlantic, the massive headline "WE ARE ALL FALKLANDERS NOW" graced the top of The London Times. The Times editorialized, "We are an island race, and the focus of attack is one of our islands, inhabited by our islanders." Quoting John Donne, it went on to say, "'No man is an island, entire of itself. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.' It tolls for us; it tolls for them." The less eloquent Daily Mail echoed the sentiment of The Times and spoke of a new found British national will. "Forcing Argentina to disgorge the Falklands is a bloody, hazardous and formidable enterprise. It can be done. It must be done. And Mrs. Thatcher is the only person who can do it. But she will have to show ruthless determination." Harkening back to the

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*Press: Media Freedom in the U.S. and Great Britain*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Special Study, 1986), 1-21, for a discussion of how the media differs in the United States and Britain. Holmes' book, a published version of a senior honors thesis at Harvard University, is valuable for certain types of information. In particular her understanding of the differences between American and British media and her access to key individuals involved with the handling of the press during the Falklands War makes her work important. Unfortunately, there are numerous factual errors that detract from the overall usefulness of this work. In particular, Holmes at times misidentifies ships engaged in combat and shows a lack of understanding of the demands of combat on military commanders in the field. Despite these drawbacks, Holmes still provides insights that are important to this study. See also, Harris, *GOTCHA!*, 41-45.

"The Times (London), 5 April 1982.

Daily Mail (London), 5 April 1982."
days of World War II, the *Guardian* proclaimed that the task force’s dispatch was “just” and invited the Members of Parliament to “contain their wrath and relish through the interminable weeks of impending conflict.”

While most of the British press attempted to inspire British national support for the Falklanders and the forces en route to the islands, the *Sun* struck a more strident stance. On the same day that the words of John Donne resonated in the press and Mrs. Thatcher was encouraged to stand firm, the *Sun* caricatured Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, as a mouse next to Churchill’s bulldog. Lord Carrington suffered from the perception that he had mishandled the Falklands crisis. In a poll taken shortly after the invasion, 34 percent of respondents said that their view of Carrington had gone down during the Falklands situation. Only Defense Minister John Nott attracted more negative attention, with 37 percent saying that their view of Nott had decreased. The following day, the attacks continued in the *Sun*. In an editorial entitled, “Show your iron, Maggie,”

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43 *Sun* (London), 5 April 1982.

44 *IIPO* 1981-1982, p. 359. Those in the sample were also asked about their feelings toward Margaret Thatcher. They responded with 27 percent saying that their view of the Prime Minister had gone down, while 12 percent said that it had gone up. In a follow-up poll, 48 percent of respondents called for Carrington’s resignation as Foreign Minister (45 percent said he should stay), while 43 percent believed that Nott should resign as Defense Minister (44 percent said he should not). Carrington did resign on 11 April. Nott offered his resignation, but Thatcher turned it down citing the need to maintain continuity during the crisis. The public’s negative view of Nott stemmed from the opinion that the military had been ill-prepared to fight a war such as the Falklands. In the years immediately preceding the crisis in the South Atlantic, John Nott as Minister of Defense had engaged in an aggressive effort to cut military spending, focusing many of the cuts on the Navy. *IIPO* 1981-1982, p. 359.; *Sunday Times Insight Team*, 100-101.
the Sun criticized the Foreign Office, calling for "men of iron" to surround the Iron Lady in the nation’s hour of need. As the initial rage militaire faded, most of the British media, press and broadcast, concentrated on diplomatic activity that attempted to end the crisis without conflict. The Sun, however, maintained its jingoistic fervor throughout the conflict, perhaps hoping to capitalize on the public’s desire to see Britain win a military victory in the South Atlantic.\textsuperscript{45}

Even before they had left the English coast for the far off South Atlantic, the correspondents who had been lucky enough to gain permission to travel with the task force learned that the military planned to impose certain limits on the flow of information.\textsuperscript{46} The reasons for censorship were supposed to be strictly military ones and would not involve the vetting of copy for style or tone. According to one correspondent sailing aboard the requisitioned civilian liner Canberra, Captain Tony Collins told journalists that "there would be no way [their] material would be censored for things like style or taste."\textsuperscript{47} In a meeting attended by the editors of the national media held on 7 April, just two days after the Task Force with the first group of reporters set sail from Portsmouth, Sir Frank Cooper, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, laid down strict

\textsuperscript{45}The Sun remained the most belligerent and jingoistic of the news organizations during the crisis. As will be seen, the Sun’s stance would lead to problems during the war, both between the military and the media and within the ranks of the press.

\textsuperscript{46}The correspondents could readily tell that the accreditation forms provided by the military were not up to date since they contained passages in Arabic that identified them as being relics of the Suez Crisis twenty-six years earlier. See HCDC Report, vol. 2, Q. 2 et seq., Q. 67-8, pp. 109, 119; Harris, GOTCHA!, 26.

\textsuperscript{47}Recollection of Kim Sabido. Quoted in Harris, GOTCHA!, 26.
guidelines governing what the press could and could not report. The rules were intended to protect military operations by maintaining “strict security.” Task force commanders received a copy of the guidelines and were instructed that they and their crews should observe them faithfully. “Officers and crews of ships with embarked correspondents,” the rules read,

should be reminded of the standard rules for dealing with the press and are to be specifically briefed to avoid discussing with them or in their hearing the following:
   a. Speculation about possible future action.
   b. Plans for operations.
   c. Readiness state and details about individual units’ operational capability, movements, and deployment.
   d. Details about military techniques and tactics.
   e. Logistic details.
   f. Intelligence about Argentine forces.
   g. Equipment capabilities and defects.
   h. Communications.48

If any of the specified details found their way into journalists’ reports, they would be subject to official military censorship. While news representatives have been at times unwilling to submit to censorship, the British media editors did not object to the guidelines issued on 7 April. This moment of solidarity between the media executives and the military regarding the handling of information was especially exceptional because it contrasted so sharply with the past experience of reporters in the field and the military and

48While the military and the government provided clear guidelines on what correspondents accompanying the Task Force could report, there were no explicit rules governing the coverage of the war by journalists in England. The lack of foresight would lead to many problems, especially once Argentina and Britain become engaged in a shooting war. HCDC Report, vol. pp. 2, 14, 467-9; Harris, GOTCHA!, 26-7.
naval commanders of the task force.\textsuperscript{49}

Civilian members of the Ministry of Defense accompanied the press representatives on the journey to the Falklands. These ministry officials acted both as liaisons between the military and the journalists and as official censors responsible for the vetting\textsuperscript{50} of journalistic copy dispatched from the task force. Six Ministry of Defense Public Relations Officers (PROs), referred to derisively as "minders" or "babysitters,"\textsuperscript{51} accompanied the members of the media.\textsuperscript{52} These civilian officials were just as unprepared to face the trials of war as were the journalists they were supposed to watch over. Because of their undefined position within the military/government hierarchy, PROs were often not able to


\textsuperscript{50}\textit{The Oxford English Dictionary} defines vetting as a careful and critical examination for deficiencies or errors; spec. to investigate the suitability of (a person) for a post that requires loyalty and trustworthiness. During the Falklands War, the term vetting was used to mean the review of journalistic material by military and government censors before it was released to the public.

\textsuperscript{51}Contemporaries, both within the press and the military, used the terms "minders" and "babysitters" to describe Public Relations Officers during the Falklands War. Both correspondents and military personnel used the words with a derisive meaning, viewing PROs as little more than unwanted watchers imposed on unruly "children" without their consent or input by distrustful "parents" in White Hall and 10 Downing Street. David E. Morrison and Howard Tumber, \textit{Journalists at War: The Dynamics of News Reporting during the Falkland Islands War} (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1988), 131-162; The HCDC \textit{Report}, vol. 1, xxxix-xli, vol. 2, Q, 93, p. 412; Harris, \textit{GOTCHA!}, 27-8.

\textsuperscript{52}In total there were seven MoD Public Relation Officers, all very junior civil servants, who accompanied the fleet. Although the number with the task force remained constant at six, one of the original six left the task force and was replaced. For a complete list of PRO's and the ships they were assigned, see Harris, \textit{GOTCHA!}. 
approach high-ranking military officers and assist them in dealing with the press. In the end, the minders found themselves isolated from nearly everyone involved in the Falklands campaign.⁵³

On the trip from Portsmouth to the Falkland Islands, the media and the Royal Navy interacted more than they had at any time since the Second World War. This interaction was not always friendly or even civil. Although the British Army and Marines had operated under the media’s eye in Northern Ireland, the Navy had not taken part in a major combat operation since the Suez Crisis and, therefore, had not dealt with the modern media.⁵⁴ The mutual wariness between the media and the Navy made the long trip from England to the South Atlantic uncomfortable for both sides. The media’s need for news did not help the situation. In order to justify their presence with the task force and to find some news amid normal naval activity, journalists sent “local color” pieces back to England. The volume of these soft news stories clogged the lines of communication.

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⁵⁴Many commentators on the Falklands War have noted the different experiences of the British Navy and the British land forces in dealing with the media. The Army and Marines had been operating in Northern Ireland for over a decade before the Falklands War and had been forced to learn how to deal with the media during difficult times. The Navy had no comparable recent experience. However, too much can be made of the British experience in Northern Ireland. While it is true that the Army and Marines had to interact with journalists in Northern Ireland, the two groups rarely had to spend extended periods of time together in close working conditions. Usually, military forces and correspondents covering their actions in Ireland would return to their respective bases after a day or a few days of action. The lengthy cohabitation of the journalists with military forces that became the norm in the Falklands had not been experienced by any member of the British military since 1956 (the Suez Crisis), and has its most direct parallel in the Second World War. Morrison and Tumber, Journalists at War, 145-51.
between the task force and England. After the war, Captain Jeremy Black of the Invincible complained bitterly about the amount of what he considered unimportant traffic that journalists generated. As an example, Black quoted from a story that reporter Tony Snow of the Sun filed.

The Page Three Girls are going to war. Fifty outsize pin-up pictures, each one foot by six inches, were airlifted to the task force and are now on their way to the Falkland Islands. They were flown into Ascension Island, 4,000 miles from Britain, and then dropped by helicopter onto the Invincible. They were featured on a television show on the ship’s closed-circuit television and then distributed so that there is at least one in every mess in the ship. . . .

Black also criticized the description of his men as portrayed by the press. Citing from the same article, Black took exception to the Sun’s vivid language.

. . . Skinhead Ian ‘Walter’ Mitty would put the frighteners on anyone. With his close-shaved head, tattoo-covered body and heavy bobby boots, he looks every inch what he is — a hard man. But Walter, 20, from Richmond, Yorkshire, was near to tears yesterday when he learnt that his dearest wish — to get at the Argies with his bare hands — had been denied.  

As the world hoped for a diplomatic settlement, the journalists with the task force

55 Throughout the Falklands Campaign, the only method for journalists to send their stories back to England was through naval communications networks. Given the large volume of transmissions between a major military formation and a nation’s political leaders, the volume of copy that journalists wished to send back to their editors bewildered and infuriated naval commanders. See Harris, GOTCHA!, 36-7.

56 According to the account of one PRO with the task force, “The youngest guys in the signals center -- I’m talking about the kids of 19 or so -- used to come and ask me why I kept giving them all this ‘dross’ and ‘tripe’ to transmit.” Eventually, Black and other captains insisted that press copy would be filed during the night when the regular signals traffic was the least. The PRO on-board Invincible, on his own initiative, placed a 700 word per day limit on correspondents to help alleviate the overloading of communications systems on the ship. HCDC Report, vol. 1, xxv, vol. 2, Q. 1179-81, p. 7.
reported whatever news they could dig up. However, during the journey from England to the Falklands, tension between the Navy and the press developed. These tensions would never disappear and, in time, they would only increase.

By the time the naval contingent reached the American base at Ascension Island, approximately half-way between the Falklands and England, the media and the Navy needed a break from one another. Unfortunately, because of the need to maintain the appearance of American neutrality, the Navy did not allow reporters off the ships and onto the island. The journalists bristled at this restriction on their movements especially when military commentators in London were openly noting the presence of the task force at Ascension and the possibility of more direct American military aid.57 While they were at Ascension, the journalists discovered that they would not be able to transmit television footage or still photographs from the task force as the Royal Navy moved closer to the Falklands. No satellites were available to pick up television or photographic signals in the area of the Falkland Islands and bounce them back to either Ascension or London. All visual footage would have to be flown from the task force back to England via Ascension Island.58

57 The United States did eventually provide more assistance to the British during the Falklands war. American-made Sidewinder missiles provided an edge for British Harriers against Argentinean air attacks. The U.S. also allowed the British to see information gathered from American satellites orbiting the Falklands region. For a discussion of the assistance offered and given to Britain during the Falklands campaign by the United States, see Hastings and Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands, 142; The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons, 24-25.

Although junior members of the Ministry of Defense did conduct low-level talks with their counterparts in the United States to see if American satellites might be made available for the transmission of pictures out of the South Atlantic, technical difficulties and previous assignments limited the aid that U.S. representatives could provide to the British. The long and tedious route that television footage had to take produced delays that the media always found too long and caused some reporters to accuse the Ministry of Defense of manufacturing transmission difficulties in an attempt to limit the impact of independent news coverage. In an investigation of the handling of the press conducted after the end of the war, the House of Commons Defense Committee found that the difficulties in transmitting television pictures were real but stressed the need for better military planning to allow for the timely broadcast of television footage in the event of future conflicts. Difficulties in providing television coverage of the war showed the technical problems that existed between the military and the media with the task force -- especially broadcast journalists. Since the end of the Vietnam War, television journalists had become accustomed to having satellite coverage of most major events. During the Israeli-Arab War in 1972, television networks showed live and recorded footage of the fighting. In the ten years that separated the Falklands War from that earlier conflict, broadcast journalists came to expect government cooperation in covering major international crises. When the British government and military informed journalists that such coverage would not be possible in the South Atlantic, journalists reacted angrily,
souring relationships between the military and the media.\textsuperscript{59} 

Difficulties in communicating with London angered the press and inconvenienced the military. Because it was not possible to send televised reports from the task force back to London, broadcast journalists were able to provide only voice-over reports. In a voice-over, television correspondents would speak to their respective news organizations over commercial communications systems aboard British navy ships while the news organization showed a picture of the correspondent and/or file footage to the viewers. To provide any reports, television journalists first had to find an available communications system to send their reports back to London, a tedious process that angered many correspondents. For example, when Robert Hanrahan of BBC TV News and Michael Nicholson of ITN wanted to send dispatches back to their editors they had to transfer from HMS Hermes to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Olmeda, which was equipped with the commercial communication system known commonly as INMARSAT.\textsuperscript{60} 

This process sometimes took hours as the reporters waited on the deck of Hermes for a helicopter to ferry them to the INMARSAT ship. As weather conditions worsened in the South Atlantic, transfers became more difficult. Even after making it to Olmeda the journalists often had to wait for the proper alignment of satellites before relaying their


\textsuperscript{60}INMARSAT was the acronym for the International Maritime Satellite system that commercial and military ships used to transmit information to land based organizations. The system was not a secure communications network and was vulnerable to tracing. For a discussion of the capabilities and limitations of the INMARSAT system see \textit{The Beach Report}, 22-30.
information to London. Hanrahan and Nicholson both believed that simpler methods could have been used to spare the wear and tear on men and machines that these cross docking operations entailed. Secure communications were possible between ships and Hanrahan believed that journalists could have used them instead of flying over to a INMARSAT ship. Nicholson asked the captain of Hermes, Lew Middleton, for permission to use ship-to-ship radio to speak from the carrier, through the INMARSAT ship, and directly to London. Middleton refused this request on grounds that use of that type of communications could give away the position of the task force to the Argentineans. Nicholson, however, noted that Captain Middleton occasionally used ship-to-ship communications to relay news quickly to journalists when it seemed to suit navy interests. According to Nicholson, Middleton used the method to tell reporters of the sinking of the Argentinean cruiser Generalissimo Belgrano, assisting in the rapid reporting of the Royal Navy's first victory against Argentina during the war.\(^{61}\)

The British submarine HMS Conqueror sank the Belgrano on 2 May with the loss of 301 Argentinean sailors. While military analysts in Britain had speculated that British submarines were operating in the South Atlantic since the beginning of the conflict, no official confirmation had come from British authorities.\(^{62}\) In fact, the Royal Navy had a

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\(^{61}\) Harris, *GOTCHA!*, 32-3; The HCDC Report, vol. 1, xlvii-xlviii.

\(^{62}\) While the Ministry of Defense and Royal Navy would not confirm the reports of a British submarine operating in the waters near the Falklands, they would not deny it either. In fact, many news organizations had identified the suspected submarine as the HMS Superb, which had been observed steaming away from port in the Mediterranean. Only later, when the Superb was again sighted in its home port in Scotland, did the media realize that they had misidentified the submarine in the South Atlantic. After the war, Ian MacDonald said that he had let the inaccurate accounts of Superb's whereabouts continue
long-standing policy that the whereabouts of individual British submarines were regarded as top secret and not available to the media for broadcast. As it happened, at the time the captain announced the sinking on the ship-to-ship communications system, Michael Nicholson was on board the INMARSAT ship *Olmeda* and overheard the name of the submarine responsible for the attack on the *Belgrano*. Nicholson sought and received confirmation of his information from what he called "a senior naval source." Nicholson promptly sent a story over the INMARSAT system to ITN’s *News at One*. Presumably, Ministry of Defence PRO’s had vetted the copy of Nicholson’s story and approved it for transmission. When ITN broadcast its report in London, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet who was in charge of Combined Operations Headquarters in England, became enraged. Not only had the report revealed the whereabouts of a submarine, but the death toll inflicted by *Conqueror* was so great that

because a submarine’s presence in the South Atlantic was thought to bring pressure on the Argentine government. MacDonald also felt that it was not his place to correct media errors that did not harm the MoD or the British military. *HCDC Report*, vol. 2, Q. 780, 786-9, p. 417.

53Captain Hew Middleton of HMS *Hermes* gave the House of Commons Defense Committee investigating the handling of the press during the Falklands War an account that differs from Nicholson’s. According to Middleton, "Michael Nicholson was not in the ship at the time because on 1st May he went across to RFA *Olmeda* to use the INMARSAT satellite and he was in *Olmeda* when the *Belgrano* incident happened. He got the name *Conqueror* from his editor in London." *HCDC Report*, vol. II, Q. 1120. While this casts some doubt on how Nicholson found out the name of the submarine responsible for the sinking of the *Belgrano*, it does not diminish the fact that the press had broken a cardinal rule of the Royal Navy - namely revealing the whereabouts of one of its nuclear submarines. What is certain is that this incident reinforced the feelings of distrust that the military felt toward journalists. In his own words, Nicholson stated, "The press will always do the dirty work because it is their own instinct to do so . . ." *HCDC Report*, vol. II, Q. 471. The incident clearly illustrates the conflicting views of the military and the media regarding certain types of information.
British leaders feared a public outcry against the sinking. Fieldhouse sent off a strong rebuke to Captain Middleton on board Hermes. In response to Nicholson’s actions and Fieldhouse’s message, Middleton never spoke to the reporter again. Any trust that had developed between the Navy and the media evaporated.

As a result of Nicholson’s identification of the Conqueror, a second screen of censorship was set up in London to vet all copy coming from the South Atlantic, under the control of the Ministry of Defense and the Navy. At Admiral Fieldhouse’s insistence, all

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64 When a poll was conducted asking about the sinking of the Belgrano, over forty percent of the respondents opposed the attack. It is interesting to compare the results of that poll with the results from a similar one regarding the British bombing attack against the airfield at Port Stanley. In the second poll, 81 percent responded favorably to the military action. One reason for the different responses could be the wording of the question. In the poll conducted about the Belgrano the question included a reference to the 1000 on board the ship, while the poll on the bombing gave no reference to casualties (real or potential). The differences in the results of these two polls give some credence to the fears of the British admiralty. When the British public was asked about a specific military action, the mention of casualties lowered the favorable responses. IIPO 1981-82, 320.

65 Harris, GOTCHA!, 108; Sandy Woodward, One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander, (London: HarperCollins, 1992): 149-62. The circumstance behind the releasing of the Conqueror’s name led to the only legal actions taken as a result of the media coverage of the war. Clive Ponting, a senior official in the Ministry of Defence, admitted to passing a sensitive document concerning the sinking of the Belgrano to Labour Member of Parliament Tom Dalyell. The document contained information regarding the course of the cruiser when it was sunk (the government claimed that the Belgrano was headed for the task force, while other reports indicated that it was steaming for its home port). Ponting was charged under Britain’s stringent yet ill-defined Official Secrets Act. While the case against Ponting is interesting, it is most remarkable because it was the only such case connected with the Falklands War. Despite the problems that the government and the military had with the flow of information during the conflict, no journalist was brought up on charges. As a measure of the controls placed on the flow of information during the war, the lack of Official Secrets Act violations points to some level of cooperation between the media and the government. New York Times, 18 February 1985, 19 February 1985.
news reports from the task force underwent PRO censorship in the South Atlantic as well as review in Britain. Fieldhouse had first become upset with the way that the news was coming from the task force when on 1 May, the day before the sinking of *General Belgrano*, he had learned on the news that two Argentine Mirage aircraft had been shot down. He promptly fired off an angry message to the task force demanding to know why he had not been informed first. After the identification of the *Conqueror*'s location following the sinking of the *Belgrano*, Fieldhouse made sure that the Ministry of Defense would have the final say on what the media published. The result of the dual censorship was an increased delay in the release of information from the task force.\(^{66}\)

As the task force took up positions off the Falklands on 29 April, the media in London reacted joyously to the news of Britain's first success against the Argentineans. "GOTCHA!" ran the infamous early edition headline of the *Sun* on the morning of 3 May. Earlier that week, the *Sun* had run an article reporting it had sponsored a Sidewinder missile and written "Up Yours, Galtieri" on it. Three days later, the *Sun*'s correspondent with the task force reported that the sponsored missile had been responsible for the destruction of an Argentine bomber. The rest of the British media were never as crass as the *Sun*. The high casualties that resulted from the sinking of the *Belgrano* caused some in Britain to question whether the recapture of the islands was worth the price. The first Argentinean air attacks on 4 May, came two days after the British sank the *Belgrano*, gave the British people more reason to question their commitment to the Falklands. When news reached London that the British frigate, HMS *Sheffield*, had sunk after being hit

\(^{66}\)Harris, *GOTCHA!*, 107-8.
during an Argentinean air attack, the media and the nation were shocked. The Sun
remained ever jubilant, reporting that the loss of Sheffield was "a grievous blow. . . . YET
THIS TRAGEDY, SHOCKING AS IT IS, CAN IN NO WAY AFFECT BRITAIN'S
RESOLVE."67 A different note was struck by other papers. The Daily Mail called the
sinking "Too High a Price."68 The Mirror on 6 May stated that "The Killing has got to
stop."69 The loss of Sheffield made the crisis all too real and marked a turning point for
much of the commentary on the Falklands. Coming so soon after the sinking of the
Belgrano, the media saw that "bloodless brutality" was no longer practical.

Ever since the Vietnam War, politicians and military leaders had become
increasingly concerned about the public's tolerance of casualties. The sinking of the
Belgrano fired the debate over the lethality of the conflict. Although the British public did
not seem to react strongly to the deaths of the Argentine sailors, the loss of Sheffield
stunned the country. Just days before the first maritime casualties, Prime Minister
Thatcher said, Britain was "not prepared to compromise the democracy and liberty which
the Falklanders claim as their birthright."70 She also said, "We shall then take the
necessary action -- let no one doubt that. . . .The cost now, however high, must be set

67Sun 4 May 1982.
68Daily Mail 4 May 1982.
69Daily Mirror 6 May 1982.
70Barry James, "Mrs. Thatcher Unyielding on Falklands Crisis," UPI, 15 April 1982.
against the cost we would one day have to pay if this principle went by default.”

However, reporters continued to speculate that a protracted campaign for the islands, particularly if there was heavy loss of life, would not be popular. On 29 April Admiral Sandy Woodward had told reporters that he foresaw a “long, bloody campaign” in the South Atlantic. Woodward’s statement worried his superiors who immediately rebuked the task force commander, urging him to be more sensitive to the impact that his comments might have on public opinion.

On the day that the British ship sank, the Prime Minister listened “ashen-faced” as Minister of Defense Nott announced the growing British death toll. Combined with the previous day’s news of the sinking of the Argentine cruiser, the announcement of British losses on the floor of the House of Commons added to a growing sense of unease among politicians in London and in other European nations that the conflict in the South Atlantic was escalating out of control. Members of Parliament became even more divided, with hawks calling for a full-scale invasion of the Falklands while doves urged the government not to abandon diplomacy. A growing number of Labour Party Members of Parliament called for an immediate cease-fire and the submission of the dispute to the United Nations for arbitration. British losses appeared to have stunned even the most bellicose Conservative supporters of the Thatcher government. Before the loss of Sheffield, news

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from the South Atlantic had been highly favorable for the British: the nearly bloodless recapture of South Georgia, the sinking of two Argentine ships, the crippling of an enemy submarine, the shooting down of at least three Argentine planes, and the successful bombing of airstrips on the Falklands. Yet, with the first battle casualties, British politicians debated the impact of significant casualties on both sides. A recent poll had shown that the British public, by a margin of nearly three to five, would not accept the loss of a single British life. Less than three hours before she learned of the Argentine attack on Sheffield, Thatcher had said, “The worry I live with hourly is that Argentine forces in attacks both naval and air will get through to our forces.” That fear came true with the terrible loss of life on 4 May.73

The press began to debate whether or not Britain should continue to fight for the Falklands, causing a minor war to break out on the home front. Most newspapers reported that the loss of British lives saddened the public, but they remained determined to continue the campaign. New York Times reporter Drew Middleton, a veteran war correspondent who had first covered events in Britain during the Second World War, assessed public opinion while he visited with common Britons in the days after the first losses of the war. He noted that the clashes between Argentine and British forces in the South Atlantic had awakened among many Britons a deep strain of unthinking combativeness that he found an odd element of the British national character that was normally “placid, polite, and increasingly parochial.” In the clubs, pubs, and streets of

London, he found most people agreeing that "we'll have to bomb their air bases on the mainland now." Londoners believed that as distasteful as the operation was, the job had to be done. The dominant sentiment of those who supported the action, according to Middleton, was: "They took 'em. We've a right to take them back."

Importantly, the New York Times' reporter noted that the forces involved in the South Atlantic were professionals and volunteers, making them markedly different from the military and naval personnel of the Second World War who included large numbers of reservists and conscripts drawn from every class. The national representation found in the military meant that ordinary folk during World War II were much more personally involved in the war than they were during the Falklands conflict. Since the end of the last world war, the British military had undergone changes typical of Western powers, transitioning from a conscripted force into an all-volunteer armed force. Professional soldiers and sailors wholly comprised the forces that sailed toward the Falklands in April 1982. The British military gradually phased out National Service, as the British called conscription, between 1957 and 1962, making their army, navy, marine corps, and air force into small, but highly professional services. The change from a conscripted force to a volunteer military had several possible repercussions for interactions between the military and the public and the press. Unlike the "people's armies" of the world wars, the British forces that served in the Task Force had voluntarily chosen to join the Royal Army, Navy, and Air Force, and felt strong ties to their fellow service men and were less

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connected with civilians — especially reporters. Unlike World War Two, where the threat to national survival inspired individuals from all aspects of life to pull together, the crisis in the Falklands was not all-encompassing enough to serve as a definitive link between the professional military and other segments of society.\textsuperscript{75} Middleton also noted that the loss of a warship, and especially an important vessel like the destroyer Sheffield, was a great blow to Britain. Militarily, the British Navy was stretched exceedingly thin due to the deployment of nearly two-thirds of the country's fleet to the South Atlantic. Perhaps more important, naval losses were psychologically traumatic for the island nation. Since the country's earliest days, ships and sailors held a special place in the hearts and minds of the British people. Although the Royal Navy, like the British Empire, had shrunk by early 1982, the average person continued to associate the service with national heritage and the loss of a single ship and a single sailor "hurts."\textsuperscript{76}

Following the first naval battles of the war, the press became more divided over the Falklands issue. The loss of British lives caused news organizations and politicians to attack press outlets that failed to "support the war satisfactorily." The first casualty on the news front was the BBC. Long viewed as a stalwart supporter of conservativism, the BBC during the Falklands War upset other media organizations as well as the Thatcher government. In an attempt to cover the crisis thoroughly in an information-poor

\textsuperscript{75}For a discussion of the change from conscript to all-volunteer force in Briton see Colin McInnes, \textit{Hot War, Cold War: The British Army's Way in Warfare, 1945-1995} (London: Brassey's, 1996), 5-14; Michael Dockrill, \textit{British Defence since 1945} (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 41-64.

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.
environment, the BBC at times relied on reports from Argentina to supplement briefings provided by the British Ministry of Defence. The BBC program *Panorama*, broadcast on 6 May 1982, caused an intense reaction from the Prime Minister when it aired a dissident opinion from within the Tory party. Margaret Thatcher responded to the BBC coverage with a denunciation of the news organization in the House of Commons.\textsuperscript{77}

Thatcher's stringent response to the mildly critical reporting of the BBC surprised some observers. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was somewhat mystified at Thatcher's actions. Impressed by the mostly positive media portrayal of the government, he said, "If [America] could have got the support for [its] Vietnam policy that the prime minister has for her Falklands policy, I would have been the happiest man in the world."\textsuperscript{78} Other media organizations quickly took sides. The tabloid *Sun* defended Thatcher's actions and went one step farther by announcing in an editorial that condemned the BBC and the *Daily Mirror*, "There are traitors in our midst." According to the *Sun*, both the BBC and the *Mirror* called for "appeasing the Argentine dictators because they [did] not believe the British people have the stomach for a fight, and are instead prepared to trade peace for honour [sic] . . . ."\textsuperscript{79} The *Mirror* responded by labeling the *Sun* "THE HARLOT OF FLEET STREET" and went on to characterize its competitor as a "coarse


\textsuperscript{78}Kissinger quoted in *Sunday Times* Insight Team, 229.

\textsuperscript{79}*Sun*, 7 May 1982.
and demented newspaper." For many within Britain and among the press, the
government attacks on the BBC and other media outlets reminded them of the troubles
that Presidents Johnson and Nixon endured during the Vietnam War. Although the
similarities between the Falklands conflict and the Vietnam War were limited, reporters
and commentators continued to speculate that public support for the Thatcher government
would decrease as casualties rose the same way that Americans' support for their
government's policies in Vietnam decreased during the terms of Johnson and Nixon.81

The war of words between the government, with support from certain media
outlets, and non-hawkish news organizations added some drama to the weeks of waiting
for a diplomatic solution and continued escalation of military action. While it is clear that
the Falklands crisis raised the passions of the government and the media, what is not so
clear is what effect the heated attacks between the government and the press had on the
public. Commentators on the war have pointed out that the attacks on the BBC and on
the Mirror may not have represented the mood of the nation.82 Limited public polling was
conducted on the question of the how the media should report the war, but two polls offer
some suggestions as to how the war of words impacted the people. In a BBC
commissioned, independent survey on 13 May, 81 percent of the sample thought that the
BBC had behaved "in a responsible manner in its coverage of the Falklands crisis." Only

80 Daily Mirror, 8 May 1982.

81 William Borders, "Impartial Coverage of Crisis Infuriating Some in Britain," New

82 Harris, GOTCHA!, 88.
14 percent thought that the BBC had acted irresponsibly. The same proportion, 81 percent, thought that the network should “pursue its traditional policy of reflecting the full range of opinions” (10 percent thought it should not). The following week, a Gallup poll showed slightly less favorable responses but still supported the earlier findings. More than 60 percent of the respondents thought that the BBC was reporting the crisis fairly, while 22 percent thought it had not. The polling data suggests that the people were not as sensitive to the type of coverage that media organizations gave to the war as the government and the media were.\(^3\)

Just as public support for the BBC remained high during the press crisis, public opinion continued to favor military action to reclaim the Falklands. When asked whether they approved or disapproved of the government’s actions over the Falkland Islands, the majority of respondents stated that they supported the actions taken to date. On 3 May, just before the first British casualties, 76 percent of respondents approved of government actions. The following week that number dropped to 71 percent.\(^4\) When asked if the military should invade the islands to regain control of the Falklands, over three quarters of the sample believed that landings would be necessary and justified.\(^5\) The impact of the

\(^3\)Polling data taken from Harris, *GOTCHA!*, 88-89.

\(^4\)IPO 1982-1983, SSLT, 321. General approval for the government rose dramatically during the crisis. In March 1982, only 29 percent of respondents stated that they approved of the government. In April, the month the crisis began, government approval rose to 34 percent. The next month, with the battle joined between Argentine and British naval forces, public approval of the government reached 49 percent -- fully twenty percentage points higher than the ratings of March 1982. See IPO 1981-1982, MORI, 159.

Falklands crisis went beyond public opinion polls. The increased public support for the government and the Prime Minister caused some observers to wonder publicly if the Conservative Party would call early elections to take advantage of the upswell of support. Despite assurances from Conservative leaders that no such action was being considered, the ruling party reaped political rewards from Thatcher's handling of the crisis. In the midterm elections, the Conservative Party picked up seats in Parliament and the recently formed alliance between the Social Democrats and the Liberal Parties all but dissolved. Public support for the war transferred to support for the war leaders and their party.\(^{86}\)

In the South Atlantic, the situation had gotten to a point where no one had time to question each other's loyalty. Argentinean air attacks continued against the task force. On 12 May, Argentinean aircraft dropped an "iron bomb" on the HMS Glasgow. The bomb failed to explode. During the next month, seven more ships suffered hits by this type of bomb, but only one ship, HMS Antelope, was lost.\(^{87}\) Because of the British defenses, Argentine attacks came in at an extremely low altitude, allowing insufficient time for the bombs to fuse. The Ministry of Defence failed to appreciate the importance of information regarding the failure of the Argentine tactics and allowed the media to report the problem with the Argentine tactics after the first attack. Reports of later attacks and further failures of the bombs to explode -- during attacks on 21 May against the HMS

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\(^{87}\)The Antelope was not initially sunk from the bomb strike. Only after an unsuccessful attempt by a bomb disposal crew did the UXB explode and sink the ship. See Adams, *The Media and the Falklands Campaign*, 101; Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, 214-6; HCDC *Report*, vol. 2, p. 496.
Argonaut and the HMS Antrim -- came from the correspondents with the task force. American and Argentinean newspapers also picked up on the story. The Ministry of Defence's own press release included references to the successful defusion of bombs that had struck British ships but failed to explode. Yet, on the afternoon of 23 May the Chiefs of Staff determined that there should be no further official statements regarding the unexploded bombs (UXBs) and the Ministry asked correspondents to discontinue referring to UXBs. When an iron bomb failed to explode after striking the HMS Broadsword, the government did not release the information. Journalists practiced self-censorship at the request of the Ministry of Defence, but many felt that the matter of the unexploded bombs was an instance of "too little, too late." The story was already out and the journalists thought the time for limiting information about UXBs long past. The incident became one more example of the military's poor coordination and planning of its information policy.

As soon as the task force had arrived off the Falklands, preparations began for landing operations to retake the islands. On 1 May, British special forces reconnoitered on the shores of West Falklands. For the next two weeks, British naval forces endured air attacks from the Argentine Air Force while waiting for the ships transporting the ground units to arrive in the area. By the middle of May, the landing forces rendezvoused with the naval Task Force and the British Army and Navy finalized their plans for the ground assault. Just as journalists had covered the naval operations, they wanted to accompany

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the Royal Marines and British Army ashore. When Captain Jeremy Black, of HMS Invincible, announced on 19 May that the landings would begin the following morning, journalists quickly scrambled to get word of the imminent operation back to London. PROs stationed aboard Invincible refused to authorize any transmissions that might jeopardize the upcoming landing. One journalist, Alfred McIlroy of the Daily Telegraph, attempted to send a message that the MoD minders and Captain Black suspected was a coded signal that told when the landing was to begin.  

Black had had enough of the journalists and made arrangements to have the five correspondents stationed on his ship removed from Invincible as quickly as possible and placed ashore. The journalists were just as anxious to leave the confines of the ship and cover the ground operations. Transferring from Invincible to Royal Fleet Auxiliary Resource without adequate clothing, rations, training, or assignment to any land unit, the five reporters believed that they would soon be covering the retaking of the Falklands. Unfortunately for the “Invincible Five,” as they were known, Resource was not part of the initial landings. While the ship came within a few hundred yards of shore on 24 May, air attacks that afternoon forced it farther out to sea. In the middle of an Argentinean attack, one correspondent asked a crew member why no one was wearing life jackets. The sailor informed the inquisitive journalist that none would be needed if the Argentines hit Resource because she was carrying explosives and ammunition equivalent to half the force of the Hiroshima atomic bomb. The crew member, perhaps attempting to put the

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McIlroy’s message stated, “Please close my New York bank account as there is only one dollar left.” Harris, GOTCHA!, 124.
journalist at ease, did suggest that in the event of a bomb hit, parachutes, and not life
vests, might be appropriate. The Invincible Five remained aboard Resource for four days
through several air attacks. Although they made it ashore aboard a navy helicopter, the
land forces they met up with promptly sent them back to sea since they were not officially
attached to any unit.  

On 21 May, British forces landed near San Carlos on West Falklands Island.
Despite strong Argentinean air attacks, the British succeeded in securing a strong
beachhead and began slowly to expand their area of control. However, the Argentine Air
Force dealt the British a tremendous blow on 25 May when they sank the transport ship
Atlantic Conveyor, destroying all of the British transport helicopters. Because of the
aircrafts’ loss, the British land forces had to travel from the San Carlos area on foot to the
main Argentine concentration of forces at Port Stanley, nearly 70 miles away. After the
landings had begun, journalists and military analysts in England speculated on what the
military would do next. Most recognized that because of the loss of the Atlantic
Conveyor and the deployment of Argentine forces the British forces had few choices,
concluding during the last week of May that the ground forces were about to move south
from their bridgehead and attack Darwin and Goose Green.  Speculation gained

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90 Harris, GOTCHA!, 124-9.
91 Time (24 May 1982), 44-46. Time magazine speculated on the course of the
British invasion. In the article published before any movement by the British to take
Darwin or Goose Green, Time noted that “The British would establish a number of
bridgeheads on West Falklands before attacking the eastern island. The final aim is to
limit casualties while creating an air, sea, and land encirclement of the territory’s capital of
Port Stanley and the lesser port of Darwin (44).” On the following page, a map depicting
the islands identified only four specific points: Port San Carlos, Port Stanley, Darwin, and
credibility when the military issued a forty-eight-hour news blackout for all reports coming from the Falklands beginning on 26 May. On the day before the attack, 27 May, speculation was confirmed when a source in the Ministry of Defence informed the BBC that the 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment was moving toward Darwin and Goose Green.\textsuperscript{92} The BBC World Service picked up the story and broadcast it on the 1:00 p.m. (GMT) news. Soon, the story was broadcast around the world. Speaking before the House of Commons, Thatcher said: "The house would not expect me to go into details about the operations in progress." Harking back to a World War II slogan, she added, "Careless talk costs lives. Too much discussion about timing and tactics could only help the enemy." Thatcher’s remarks in the House of Commons provided the first official news that the 5,000 men on the British beachhead now were taking the offensive a week after they landed at San Carlos Bay.\textsuperscript{93} However, at the same time that the Prime Minister was speaking before the Members of Parliament, 2nd Parachute Brigade was still trekking toward their nighttime encampment on their way to Goose Green. Many of the paratroopers heard her announcement and one asked a journalist, "How many enemies are we supposed to be fighting?" Max Hastings, a journalist accompanying 2 Para, reported, "The colonel commanding [the British marines] told me furiously that if a BBC correspondent arrived in his area, he would be sent immediately to the prisoner-of-war

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Goose Green. Clearly, military analysts at Time understood the importance of Darwin/Goose Green and saw the area as a logical step for the invading British.

\textsuperscript{92}HCDC Report, vol. 1, xxxiii; vol. 2, Q. 1802-3, 1184, p. 424.

cage.” The commanding officer, Colonel Hew “H” Jones, muttered blatant threats of suing “John Nott, the Ministry, the Prime Minister, if anyone’s killed.” The Ministry of Defence further botched the situation when it prematurely announced on the evening of 28 May that the Paras had captured Goose Green. Some time during the night of 28 May, the Argentines flew reinforcements into their forces deployed around Goose Green and Darwin. In the end, the Argentines put up a strong defense and eighteen British soldiers died in the attack on Goose Green, including Colonel Jones. While not directly responsible, journalists with the British ground forces felt the anger and distrust of the military after the government’s botched handling of information in London. Goose Green made it much more difficult for reporters to gain the trust of the ground troops they were dependent on for their stories, as well as their safety, during the last phase of the Falklands War.

As the campaign for control of the islands continued, support for the Prime Minister and the Government continued to rise. During the week of 23 May, events kept the British public in emotional turmoil. On Monday came the news that seven Argentine planes had been shot down in a savage battle over the Falklands. On Tuesday a horrific photograph of the frigate Antelope exploding after an Argentinean bomb struck the ship

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94 Colony Jones quoted in, Hastings and Jenkins, *War in the Falklands*, 233-56; Harris, *GOTCHA!*, 117-8. Jones was awarded the Victorian Cross, Britain’s highest award for military gallantry, posthumously for his leadership and bravery at Goose Green. HCDC *Report*, vol. 1, xxxiv.

95 HCDC *Report*, vol. 1, xxxiii.

stunned the country. On Wednesday, Britain lost two more ships. On Thursday, British troops broke out of their beachhead. Then on Friday, Pope John Paul II became the first of the 263 Bishops of Rome to set foot in England, a thrill just possibly topped when the Defense Ministry announced the capture of Darwin and Goose Green. Through it all, public support for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher not only held fast but grew. Since Argentina seized the Falklands, Market and Opinion Research International polled a panel of voters for the Economist magazine and during the week of ups and downs, an astonishing 84 percent said they approved of her Government’s handling of the crisis. In the same sample, 51 percent said they would vote Conservative if a general election were held tomorrow — up from only 33 percent in April. On Thursday, 24 May, Timothy Smith, a Conservative who had called Mrs. Thatcher’s Falklands stand “courageous” was elected to a vacant seat in Parliament from the London suburb of Beaconsfield with 62 percent of the vote. Yet, despite the public opinion polls and the Conservative victories, some commentators warned that the final push toward victory could be politically dangerous for the Thatcher government and the country. The more British soldiers, sailors and airmen killed, they believed, the more the British public and Prime Minister would demand that the country have something to show for its sacrifice. Especially if the ground battle to recapture Stanley were to cost many British lives, it could be politically impossible for Mrs. Thatcher to settle for anything less than British control of the islands for several years.97 When an Argentine air attack against British landing ships on 8 June inflicted the

largest number of British casualties suffered in a single day, calls for a negotiated
settlement all but disappeared. The only possible end acceptable to the British people
would be the recapture of the Falklands.⁹⁸

The fighting between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands ended by midday 14
June. Nevertheless, the last scrimmage between the media and the military was yet to be
fought. Max Hastings of the London Standard, with the units closest to Port Stanley,
heard reports that white flags were flying over the capital. He quickly rushed ahead and
gained the first interview with the defeated Argentine troops. Forty minutes after walking
into town, Hastings rushed back to the British lines and boarded a helicopter to take him
back to a ship to get his story out. Other reporters gave Hastings copies of their stories so
that he could file them when he made contact with London. Once aboard the
INMARSAT-equipped Fearless, a Ministry of Defense news blackout stopped Hastings
short. While Hastings argued with the PRO officers on Fearless, Margaret Thatcher was
announcing to the House of Commons that the Argentineans had surrendered. The BBC
World Service carried her comments live and Hastings heard his Prime Minister scoop him
from 8,000 mile away.⁹⁹

Back on shore, the formal surrender ceremony was carried out at 8:30 p.m. local
time. The British Land forces commander, Brigadier General Jerenry Moore, refused to
allow any reporters or cameramen inside to observe the proceedings. As a result, no


⁹⁹Harris, GOTCHA!, 139-141.
pictures exist of the surrender. When the news blackout was finally lifted, two and a half hours after the surrender, Hastings quickly sent out his story. Somehow, the other accounts of the end of the war that his fellow journalists had given to him earlier in the day never made it back. Hastings report was the only account of the end of hostilities filed on 14 June.\(^{100}\)

In London, the news of the war's end was greeted with excitement. The British military had succeeded and the Falklands had been returned to British rule. Margaret Thatcher emerged as the tough leader who had stood up to Argentina's aggression. The war had been a galvanizing moment for Britain. Coming at a time when British influence was waning, the skill of the military and the strength of the government reasserted British national pride and prowess. Prime Minister Thatcher's handling of the war had transformed her from one of the least popular British leaders of the twentieth century, to one of the most popular.\(^{101}\) Her grasp on power, both within her own party and throughout the nation, had solidified and strengthened. In Argentina, the military

\(^{100}\) Harris, *GOTCHA!*, 142-143. When the other journalists learned that their stories had not been sent and that no copy of them could be found they were understandably upset. According to one account, Ian Bruce, a reporter for the Glasgow Herald, accosted Hastings when they next met at the Upland Goose, Port Stanley's hotel. "Max was sitting by the piano, when Bruce started yelling at him in a loud Glaswegian accent, which translated into something like, 'Hastings, you have lost my story and now I am going to kill you,' and then he pulled out an Argentinean bayonet. Patrick Bishop's face was one of studied amusement as to where Bruce would plunge the dagger. Then Derek Hudson piped up and said, 'This is neither the time nor the place to murder Max Hastings,' and Bruce was dragged from him. Poor Max went very white." Perhaps not surprising, journalists were not long welcome at the Upland Goose.

\(^{101}\) Between May and September 1982, Thatcher's approval ratings increased from 29 percent to 46 percent. The Prime Minister was able to maintain a rating of over 40 percent through April 1983. *IPO* 1981-1982, 360.
government greatly assisted Prime Minister Thatcher. By refusing to negotiate with Britain, Argentina allowed the British only one option -- to fight for a portion of its sovereign territory. The junta’s failure to maintain possession of the Falklands led to the toppling of the military junta. When Pope John Paul II visited Argentina, less that two weeks before the end of the war, the Argentine people already expressed a desire that the war end. The military junta that ruled Argentina helped to cause its own fall by continuing to make wide claims of success even as the British military advanced across the Falklands. When the truth was finally announced in Argentina, the people abandoned the ruling party that had so badly deceived them.102

While the Falklands campaign offers only one example of the relationship between the military, the media, the government and the people, some tentative conclusions can be drawn from the British experience. First, the British media were able, for the most part, to report the news of the war from one of the most remote sections of the world. Information continued to flow from the South Atlantic to England throughout the war. The problems that did exist developed because of the lack of planning on all sides. The media did not know what to expect when they boarded naval vessels in Portsmouth and embarked for the distant South Atlantic. Often leaving without appropriate gear, training, instructions, and familiarity with military life and operations, journalists found themselves in an alien and hostile world for two and one half months. Some reporters managed to draw on their previous war reporting experience to become somewhat acclimated to military life while with the task force, but others were not able to adapt. In part, this was

102 *Time* (7 June 1983), 42-43.
the media's own fault. At the beginning of the crisis, Fleet Street was not sure how big a story the Argentinean invasion was. Usually the reporters that accompanied the task force were not senior journalists or even defense correspondents. They were the most expendable and least experienced.\textsuperscript{103}

The British government also contributed to the problems that developed. The Ministry of Defence had no known plan for dealing with the press during extended military operations. The fact that a study did exist, but that MoD officials did not know of its existence, only highlights the military's poor preparation. The system that developed left much to be desired. Like the media, the Ministry of Defense choose to send inexperienced and expendable Public Relations Officers to act as censors, liaisons, and babysitters. These men did their jobs well, but they were at a severe disadvantage throughout the campaign.

\textsuperscript{103}An exception to this characterization of the task force journalists as being unprepared and inexperienced was Max Hastings. Hastings had established good relationships with many officers in both the land and naval forces before the war. His father had been a correspondent during World War II and the younger Hastings felt that during the Falklands War journalists should do their best to portray the military in such a way as to bolster public support for the nation's forces. His coverage of the war, while not unthinkingly pro-military, tended to be very supportive of the British fighting man. This favorable coverage, along with his previous experience with the military and his considerable knowledge of military matters, helped Hastings gain access where other journalists were not welcome. Often, the military provided more help to Hastings than other journalists seemed to receive. Because of his privileged position, Hastings was able to report more than most of his fellow journalists. This in turn meant that his stories were often picked up by news organizations other than that of his sponsor, the London Standard. By the end of the war, many in the military were eager to give assistance to Hastings because they knew that if he wrote a piece about them it would probably be picked up and used in England. Given the highly competitive nature of the press, Hastings good fortune and diligence did not win him many fans among his fellow journalists dispatched with the task force. For more on Hastings unique position and the feelings of other journalist toward him see Philip Knightley, "Britannia Rules the Waves," Columbia Journalism Review, (Sept./Oct. 1982), 51-3; Turner and Morris, Journalists at War, 163-188.
Lacking a clear position with either the military or the press, the PROs must have been some of the loneliest members of the task force.

The military also failed to set up a clear system of censorship or vetting. The dual system that was put into place after the sinking of the *Belgrano* succeeded in further delaying reports from the task force but failed to regulate the potentially harmful speculation of analysts in Britain and the at times damaging remarks of officials. The government also seriously weakened its position vis-a-vis the press through its highly vocal and publicized attacks against what it saw as critics of its actions. While the government did take steps to make sure that reporters accompanied the task force, it failed in dealing effectively with the press. Traditionally the most reserved of the services, the Navy refused to make reasonable accommodations for the press. The Royal Army and Marines, although more experienced in handling the media than the Royal Navy, also had problems. While British ground forces had worked closely with journalists during operations in Europe and in Northern Ireland, the Army and the Marines found that relations with the press were much more difficult when engaged in a war halfway around the world. Because of the lack of planning, correspondents and the military did not have a clear set of guidelines governing their relationship when the task force sailed. Rules were developed as they were needed, often without the planning and review necessary to make them effective and satisfactory. The military's lack of uniformity in dealings with the press added to tensions that already existed between the two institutions. Without a clear set of regulations governing their relationship with the press, the military was forced to deal with issues that distracted them from their primary responsibility, the winning of the war.
When the stress of conflict rose, so too did the tensions between the military and the media.

Despite all of the failings of the government, the press, and the military to prepare for the war, the inadequate planning never endangered the British war effort. The trouble between the government and military and the press was a side-line issue during the war. Unlike the American experience in Vietnam, distrust between the government, the military, and the press during the Falklands War never led to the vocal opposition to the conflict. Even during the most contentious period of government/military and press disagreement -- the attacks on the BBC and other news outlets -- the British nation remained almost wholly united behind the Prime Minister's decision to send the Task Force to reclaim the Falklands. When their government called upon them to support a war, they did. Margaret Thatcher provided strong leadership and clear war aims that allowed the people to understand and back the war in the South Atlantic. But their support was conditional. As polling data suggests, the public in Britain placed limits on what the government was allowed to do -- limit the war to the Falklands region, regain and maintain British sovereignty over the islands, but keep casualties low -- and how the policy could be carried out. The public also monitored the press. While most of the media supported the war, those news organizations that dared to ask why the country was fighting the war were consistently attacked by other news institutions and by the government. Despite the jingoism, the people maintained its composure. Not taken in by the sensationalism of either the media or the government, the people lent their support in a steady, rational manner. While willing to back the government's policies and endure the
loss of its military men, the people did not seem be willing to accept unthinkingly the press’ views.

The Falkland Islands War demonstrated the complex nature of the relationships among the military, the media, the government, and the people. No one group completely dominated the other. They interacted, each exerting influence on the others. Unlike the country’s experience in the Suez Crisis, the British government had succeeded in winning international support for its actions during the Falklands War. The clear articulation of war aims and the strong leadership of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher allowed the British government to avoid many of the pitfalls that had caused the American efforts in Vietnam to fail. Poor planning and lack of foresight created the tensions between the government, the military, and the press. However, those difficulties did not manage the threaten the public’s support of the war or the country’s leadership. And despite times of conflict between the military and the press in the South Atlantic, the press largely accepted the government and military’s policies — even working within a system of censorship. The successful British experience in the Falklands provided a possible template for democracies to emulate in future conflicts in the post-Vietnam world — providing a system that had allowed the government to win and maintain public support, the military to control the means of communication from a battlefield, and the press’ to play a role in the release of information from the front. Other countries attentively observed the war in the South Atlantic and took note of the British approach to war.
Chapter 6
Testing the Waters of the Pool:
The United States in Grenada and Panama

During the early hours of 25 October 1983, forces from the United States invaded the tiny island nation of Grenada. The American press and public had first learned of the military action at 9:00 a.m. on the day of the invasion, four hours after the first U.S. Rangers and Marines had landed on Grenada. President Ronald Reagan held a press conference announcing "forces from six Caribbean democracies and the United States [had begun] a landing or landings on the island of Grenada in the eastern Caribbean" earlier that day.¹ He explained that U.S. and Caribbean forces were attempting to protect innocent lives, to forestall further chaos, to help in the restoration of law and order, and to restore the legitimate governmental institutions on the island. The president emphasized the first aim over the others. "When I received reports that a large number of our citizens were seeking to escape the island thereby exposing themselves to great danger," the president stated, "... I concluded the United States had no choice but to act strongly and decisively."² Although U.S. forces had previously intervened in the internal affairs of Caribbean nations, the operation on Grenada in 1983 was unique because for the first time since before World War II the U.S. government and military deliberately excluded the press from covering a major use of U.S. forces overseas.


Several key events led to the United States' decision to land troops in Grenada and exclude reporters from the operation. Since 1979 Grenada had slowly drifted toward a Marxist society and had aligned itself with Cuba and the Soviet Union. Earlier in 1983 Cuban construction workers began work on a 9,000 foot runway at Point Salines on Grenada. The runway, if completed, could have accommodated military aircraft like Soviet-designed MIG-23s and served as a point of entry for Soviet-Cuban supplies bound for Latin-America. During the two weeks before the U.S. invasion, events on Grenada had caused the leadership in Washington to worry about the future stability of the island. On 12 October a left wing faction of the ruling New JEWEL party had removed the Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. The coup, led by the commander in chief of Grenadian forces General Hudson Austin and Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, succeeded. Within a week, Bishop was dead and General Austin imposed martial law. The newly formed Revolutionary Military Council, with Austin acting as spokesman, imposed a twenty-four hour curfew, warning that violators would be shot on sight. Beyond concern that Grenada could become another Communist island bastion in the Caribbean, the United States government was worried about the safety of approximately six hundred American students at the St. George's Medical School. The medical students violated the curfew to obtain food and water, risking arrest and death. Officials at the U.S. State Department and within the U.S. military were concerned that the new regime threatened the students' and other Americans' lives.3

3Cole, Urgent Fury, 11. Despite the president's public emphasis on his concern for the medical students, his main strategic concern was the construction of the military-capable airfield at Port Salines. U.S. military and security officials worried that Grenada
Beginning on the evening of 12 October, military and diplomatic officers met to discuss the situation on Grenada. From 14 October through 17 October, the United States Ambassador to Barbados, who also had responsibility for Grenada, learned from informants of the growing danger to the U.S. medical students. By the night of 20 October, the United States Atlantic Command, responsible for operations in the Caribbean, had come up with a contingency plan for the evacuation of civilians from the island and for a demonstration of force to influence the actions of the new Grenadian leadership. On 21 October, the Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) as well as the Governor-General of Grenada had sent appeals to the United States, asking for assistance in removing the military junta that now ruled Grenada.\(^4\) On that same day, CBS News had reported the diversion of the Independence aircraft carrier, with its supporting vessels and Marine Amphibious Ready Group (MARG 1-84), to the Caribbean. After learning that the Grenadians were preparing to mobilize several thousand reservists to augment an estimated force of fifteen hundred Grenadian regular forces and six hundred armed Cubans, the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 22 October refined plans for operations that would rescue the medical students and disarm hostile forces on Grenada. By the afternoon of 23 October, the JCS knew that the Grenadian junta was making additional preparations to resist foreign intervention. In the predawn darkness of 25 October, ships

of the USS Guam amphibious ready group and C-130 aircraft from Hunter Airfield, Georgia, approached Grenada with forces from the United States Marine Corps and Rangers from the U.S. Army’s XVIII Airborne Corps.⁵

Within thirty hours of the first U.S. landings, U.S. television networks broadcast scenes of rescued American medical students kissing the ground upon their return to Charleston, South Carolina. The operation, while not without its military setbacks, had been a success. The United States forces defeated the Cuban and Grenadian resistance and safeguarded American civilians. However, one of the most intense battles of Operation URGENT FURY continued long after U.S. troops fired their final shots on Grenada. Tensions that had been building between the military and the media since Vietnam reached a head during the short military action. When President Reagan announced the beginning of the operation on the morning of 25 October, reporters immediately demanded access to Grenada to cover the invasion. Despite CBS reports that some sort of operation was about to take place in the Caribbean, neither the White House nor the Pentagon had invited the media to join military forces involved in URGENT FURY. On the day before the invasion, reporters at the White House had asked Reagan’s press secretary, Larry Speakes, about rumors of an impending invasion. Speakes had responded that to his knowledge such rumors were “preposterous.”⁶ No one had informed Speakes of the imminent invasion.⁷ In fact, the speed with which the military

⁵Cole, Urgent Fury, 41.


⁷Baker, interview.
planned the operation and the military’s desire to preserve the element of surprise meant
that few outside the immediate decision makers in the White House and Pentagon knew of
the planned operation in the Caribbean. White House Chief of Staff James A. Baker III
recalled that the decision to keep Speakes uniformed of the upcoming operation stemmed
from fears that the leaked information could “pre-notify” the press and possibly lead to the
loss “of [even] one American life.” Baker also claimed that because there was no
procedure in place to inform reporters of upcoming operations and then guarantee
operational security the administration and military had no choice but to keep all news of
the operation from the press until the military situation became secure.8

Within hours of Reagan’s announcement, hundreds of reporters scrambled to get
to Grenada. During his initial statement on the invasion, reporters had asked for details
about the military situation. The president deferred to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
Staff, saying “… we are yielding to the influence of General Vessey in that we don’t think
in these early hours of that landing that we should be on the horn asking the commanders

8Baker, interview. The decision to keep information about the invasion so secret
led to problems within the press office of the White House. Speakes was so angered by
his exclusion that he threatened to resign but decided to remain in place. Assistant Press
Secretary for Foreign Affairs Les Janka did resign over the incident citing the deliberate
twin decisions to exclude press officers from the pre-invasion planning and the
denying/delaying media access to the island. Janka told Speakes and others that he was
“distressed” that he had unwittingly misled reporters about the upcoming Grenada
invasion. He complained forcefully that the credibility of the White House press office had
been compromised because senior officials were refusing to tell him and his peers what
was going on in Grenada. See also Lou Cannon and David Hoffman, “Speakes
Complained in Memo; Invasion Secrecy Creating a Furor,” The Washington Post, 27
October 1983; Lou Cannon, “White House Press Aide Resigns in Row Over Grenada
Policy,” The Washington Post, 1 November 1983; Mary McGrory, “Remaining Doves are
Reduced to Cheering Margaret Thatcher,” The Washington Post, 3 November 1983.
to stop and give us detailed reports.” The military officers in charge of the operation had originally included a press blackout in their plan that would last until the rescue of the medical students. By noon on 25 October, United States troops had secured the True Blue campus of the medical school but had yet to reach a concentration of students at a second campus near Grand Anse. Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf, commander of the operation, extended the ban on reporters. Metcalf knew that for the remainder of the 25th and following day, Special Forces personnel would employ techniques and systems that the military wished to keep from public disclosure. The unexpected resistance from Cuban forces and the fear of guerilla activities also influenced his decision. Neither VADM Metcalf nor his subordinates wanted to delay their operations to provide escorts, transport, shelter, or food for reporters. Finally, difficulties in clearing landing areas for military transports delayed many supplies for the operation and limited the transportation resources available for the movement of civilian reporters onto the island.¹⁰

Throughout the first two days of Operation URGENT FURY, reporters continued to raise their voices and demand access to the battlefield. In press stories, journalists denounced the Reagan administration for instituting “an unparalleled act of censorship.”¹¹ In a meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 27 October, Senator Paul Sarbanes (D, MD) stated that the Administration’s treatment of the press raised serious

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¹¹Cole, Urgent Fury, 46.

questions about the president's and the military's commitment to a free society.

Dismissing the Defense Department's early statements that the military had barred reporters from Grenada because of the dangers of the battlefield, Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R, KS) noted that "reporters had faced far worse conditions in Lebanon." Only after Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger ordered the military to open the island to reporters on 27 October did Admiral Wesley McDonald, Commander-in-Chief United States Atlantic Command, submit a public affairs plan. Still hoping to prevent the interference of reporters in combat operations, McDonald proposed establishing a Joint Information Bureau (JIB) on the nearby island of Barbados, with branches on Grenada and on the USS Guam. During the day, either branch would transport a pool of no more than twenty journalists to the sites of previous engagements and other comparatively safe areas. When the media pool members returned from Grenada, the JIB would review their stories and photographs and then transmit the news reports for immediate release. Late in the afternoon of 27 October, a pool of twelve reporters flew from Barbados to Grenada. Military officers had told the reporters that the military would fly them back to Barbados by 5:00 p.m. to file stories for broadcast on the evening news programs. However, the plane was not in the air by 8:00 p.m. and military officers told the journalists that they could not take off from Grenada because of excessive air traffic.

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12 Quoted in Cole, Urgent Fury, 54.

13 Cole, Urgent Fury, 55.

In the United States, the media complained that the military was unfairly denying them access to Grenada. When President Reagan went on television for his second address to the nation regarding the situation in Grenada, the Pentagon supplied the only still pictures and television footage of the operation available to the press. Many within the media speculated that the military was denying access to the battlefield to cover-up mistakes it had made during the operation and that the president’s administration was attempting to control the news coming from Grenada. NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw called the handling of the press “outrageous.” ABC World News Tonight producer Robert E. Frye stated that the media had been “totally blacked out” from covering the invasion. However, reporters in the Caribbean did not always sit by and wait for the military to allow them in to cover the action on Grenada. Steve Shepard, an ABC News television correspondent, and his producer Tim Ross, hired a fishing boat in Barbados and attempted to reach Grenada without the assistance, or permission, of the military. They encountered fifteen-foot waves and the U.S. Navy in their attempt to sail to Grenada. During the difficult crossing a Navy jet intercepted the fishing boat. According to Ross, the jet first “waggled its wings.” When the boat continued toward Grenada, the jet’s pilot buzzed the boat. When that failed to deter the newsmen, the pilot opened the airplanes bomb bay and dropped a buoy just ahead of them, forcing Shepard and Ross to turn around and return to Barbados.  

Josh Makiewicz, another ABC correspondent, rented a different boat but stopped when a U.S. destroyer blocked its path. “I got a good look at the gun on the foredeck,” Makiewicz told a fellow journalist, “and decided that we were simply

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15Friedrich, “Anybody Want to go to Grenada?” Time (14 November 1983), 70.
outclassed.” When questioned about the military’s actions in stopping reporters from getting to Grenada, VADM Metcalf responded, “I’m down here to take an island. I don’t need [reporters] running around getting in the way.” To any journalist who would attempt to enter Grenada without military consent, Metcalf issued a warning. “We’ll stop you. We’ve got the means to do that.”

In Washington, reporters attempted to find out why the Navy had gone to such extremes to keep journalists from reaching Grenada. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John W. Vessey, Jr. and Secretary Weinberger explained that the need for secrecy and the concern for reporters safety demanded such actions. As the operation was ending, the battle between the military and the press was heating up. Editorials in many influential newspapers across the country attacked the Pentagon’s policy toward the press. Citing the historical precedent of newsmen covering nearly every previous major military action in the twentieth century, journalists blasted the government and the military for violating their First Amendment rights. In the Washington Post, an editorial stated, “If the American media can be excluded by their own government from direct coverage of events of great importance to the American people, the whole character of the relationship between the governors and the governed is affected.”

Jerry Friedheim, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and president of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, called the restrictions on the press “unprecedented and

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16 Ibid.


intolerable.” Friedheim called for a Congressional investigation into what he called a “policy of secret wars hidden from the American people.” Walter Cronkite, former CBS anchorman and one of the most respected journalists of his time, criticized the government’s decision to bar reporters from Grenada. “These are our Marines, our Rangers down there,” Cronkite stated. “This is our foreign policy and we have a right to know precisely what is happening, and there can be no excuse in denying the people that right.”

In an attempt to clarify the situation in Grenada, the current Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Michael I. Burch, asked the rhetorical question, “Do firemen have a right to set up fire lines to keep reporters from rushing into burning buildings?” Burch implied that the military had practiced the same sort of restraint in Grenada.

While the press and the military engaged in a heated debate over access to Grenada, the public voiced its view on the Grenada operation. By the end of October, the majority of Americans approved of the presence of American forces on Grenada. The percentage of the respondents who approved of Reagan’s overall performance rose slightly, to 49 percent from 46 percent the month before. When questioned immediately after Reagan’s second address to the nation on 25 October, many of the respondents felt that U.S. action in Grenada had been justified. In the same poll, half the public, or 51 percent, said they believed that other Caribbean nations wanted the new government in Grenada overthrown because it was threatening their security, and 58 percent said they

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20 *Ibid*.

believed that Americans in Grenada were in danger before Reagan sent American troops there. Over two thirds said that they thought that Reagan had deployed the troops to stop the spread of Communism in the Caribbean and that they believed Cuba planned to take over the island of Grenada and turn it into a military base.22

Surprisingly, the public also supported the decision to bar reporters from the scenes of combat on Grenada. A Gallup Poll published in December 1983 revealed that when asked about the press ban in November, fully 59 percent of the respondents "approved of the way President Reagan was handling the problem in Grenada."23 NBC commentator John Chancellor, despite believing that the government had imposed restrictions on the press for political reasons, noted that letters sent to NBC had run ten to one in favor of the ban.24 Although support for the president and his policies during the Grenada situation was high, it was not surprising. Coming closely on the heels of the tragic bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon, the executive and the military trumpeted the invasion of Grenada as a quick, successful, and relatively bloodless victory. Because the operation had been so short and successful and because there were no outside voices or eyes to show the military difficulties during the operation, it was reasonable that the public would support the president and his actions.

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Journalists attempted to understand what had caused the military to deny the press access to the operation. Many pointed to the experience of Vietnam. Drew Middleton, an experienced war correspondent for the *New York Times*, wrote an extensive article pointing to the legacy of Vietnam as influential in the decision to keep the media out of the early stages of the operation on Grenada. "The majors and commanders of the Vietnam war who believed the media had worked against the American command there," Middleton wrote, "had become influential generals and admirals determined not to expose the Grenada operation to what they continue to view as a hostile adversary." Middleton, however, believed that the military was not solely to blame for the exclusion of reporters. "It was James A. Baker then White House Chief of Staff," he accused, "who accepted on behalf of the President restrictions imposed by the military on the media."  

Efforts to ensure that in future operations the media would be included were begun almost as soon as news of the invasion of Grenada and the ban on reporters was released. Larry Flynt, publisher of *Hustler* magazine, brought a case against the government over the press ban during the Grenada invasion. Flynt's case was the first to challenge the military and government's right to regulate press access to the battlefront. In *Flynt v. Weinberger*, the publisher asked the Washington, D.C. District Court for declaratory and injunctive relief against the press coverage prohibitions imposed by the government during Operation URGENT FURY. However, by the time the case came before the court, the

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operation had ended and the court declared the case moot.\textsuperscript{26}

The \textit{Flynt} case was the first attempt by a media organization to use the courts to force the military and government to open the battlefield to reporters. However, earlier judicial rulings had touched upon the subject of press freedom and access during times of war. Added as part of the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment stated that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or the press; . . .” Since its adoption in 1787, the Court had developed extensive case law defining both the positive and negative aspects of freedom of speech and press. The public and the press, according to the Supreme Court’s interpretation, had the positive right of free expression and the negative right to express themselves without prior restraint.\textsuperscript{27} Prior to the 1970s, the Supreme Court dealt with cases dealing mostly with negative freedom -- freedom from prior restraint. In \textit{Near v. Minnesota} (1931), the Supreme Court examined a state government’s right to stop publication of material it found undesirable.\textsuperscript{28} The Minnesota legislature had passed a law authorizing prior restraint of publication of material that the state courts ruled undesirable. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the law, citing that the chief purpose of constitutional protection for the press was to prevent previous restraints upon publication. Chief Justice Charles Evans, in delivering the Court’s opinion,

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\item \textsuperscript{26}10 Med. L. Rept. 1978 (1984).
\item \textsuperscript{27}The Court, however, limited the freedom of speech in cases of libel. Individuals and members of the press could express themselves as long as they were basing their public opinions on facts. For a discussion of the positive and negative aspects of the First Amendment see Foster, 71.
\item \textsuperscript{28}283 U.S. 697 (1931).
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argued that the increasing complexities of modern government made it even more vital that the press be free of prior restraint so that "official malfeasance" might be exposed.  

However, the Court did not grant absolute protection from prior restraint. Specifically, during times of war, the Court explained, the government could keep the press from publishing certain types of information. "No one would question," Evans wrote in the Court's opinion, "but that a government might prevent actual obstruction of its recruiting service or the publication of sailing dates of transports or the number and location of troops."  

Near was important because it provided the legal justification for the government to place limits on the First Amendment's protections during times of war and conflict.

For the next forty years -- during one world war and two Cold War conflicts -- the Court did not rule on any cases dealing specifically with prior restraint during war time. However, during that same time the Court continued to support the press in cases dealing with government attempts to impose prior restraint. At the same time, the Supreme Court justices, through their opinions, urged the press to act as both observer of government acts and as watchdog for the public's interests.  

Perhaps the most famous and often cited case concerning the government's

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29 Ibid., 713, 720-22.

30 Ibid., 716.

attempt to restrain the press’s right to publish was the 1971 case New York Times v. United States, known as the Pentagon Papers. The case centered around the New York Times and Washington Post’s decision to publish stories based on information garnered from documents detailing the decision making process of the United States government in the prosecution of the war in Vietnam. The documents, which traced the government’s policy in Vietnam through 1968, consisted of nearly 7,000 pages of documents that the Department of Defense had compiled under the title “History of U.S. Decision-making Process on Vietnam Policy.” The Department of Defense had classified the study “Top Secret -- Sensitive,” the highest authorized classification for material the disclosure of “which could result in exceptionally grave damage to the Nation.”

The case’s history began when Daniel Ellsberg, who had copied the study while working for RAND Corporation, attempted to publicize the DOD study’s contents. He had first approached several leading political figures (Senators William Fulbright and Edward Kennedy) but had found no one willing to publicize the work’s content. Failing to find support there, Ellsberg sent the papers to the New York Times. The newspaper reviewed the mountain of paper for several months and debated the merits of publishing portions of the study. However, on 13 June 1971, the New York Times began a series of articles reproducing selected portions of the reports. After only three installments of the series, the Justice Department sought an injunction against further publication and on 15

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32 403 U.S. 713 (1971).

33 Executive Order 10501, Code of Federal Regulations (1949-1953 Compilation) at 979, quoted in O’Brien, Right to Know, 156.
June received a temporary restraining order prohibiting further disclosures in the *New York Times* until 19 June. On 18 June, the *Washington Post* also printed two articles based on the study and by 5 o’clock that evening the government had filed a similar suit against the *Post*. The next morning, a district court denied the government’s request for a preliminary injunction. Later that same day, a circuit court judge extended the temporary restraining order until noon, 21 June, to give a panel of the circuit court the opportunity to consider the government’s application. Following a hearing on 22 June, the circuit court remanded the case to the district court to determine whether any of the other material yet unpublished posed “such grave and immediate danger” to the security of the country as to warrant prior restraint and continued the stay on publication until 25 June. On 24 June the *New York Times* appealed to the Supreme Court to vacate the stay on publication and to expedite consideration of the case. On 25 June the Court granted *certiorari* and heard oral arguments the following day.34

Four days later the Court issued no less than ten opinions on the case. In a brief per curiam opinion, the Court stated that the government had not met the “heavy burden of showing justification for the imposition of such a restraint” on the press. Six justices issued separate concurring opinions, while three justices wrote individual dissents. The three justices who dissented based their objections primarily on the speed at which the case was decided. In the dissenting opinions, they stated that the case deserved more time because of its importance. Justice Hugo L. Black admonished the Executive for seemingly

\[34\text{O’Brien, Right to Know, 156-7.}\]
forgetting the essential purpose of the First Amendment in a democracy.\textsuperscript{35} He wrote that the press must be free to publish news no matter what its source, without the imposition of censorship, injunction, or prior restraint. According to Black, a free and unfettered press was essential to expose deception by the government. The press must be free, he continued, to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and "sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell."\textsuperscript{36} Black dismissed the government's contention that the information should be withheld because of national security interests and stated that guarding military and foreign policy secrets at the expense of informed representative government "provides no real security for the Republic."\textsuperscript{37}

Justice Potter Stewart, also dissenting, said that because of the vast powers endowed in the executive branch by the Constitution in areas of national defense and international relations, the press served as a check on unrestrained presidential powers by informing the citizenry. Stewart did not rule out the possibility of the need for secrecy in some cases, but urged the government to use "wisdom of a high order" in determining what is to be kept secret and to recognize that secrecy could best be preserved only when credibility was maintained.\textsuperscript{38} Justice William O. Douglas went the farthest in his

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{New York Times v. United States}, 403 U.S., 753. The justices who concurred in the Court's \textit{per curium} opinion believed that the magnitude of the issues required quick resolution.

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}, 717.

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, 719.

\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}, 724, 727-9.
interpretation of the First Amendment. In his opinion, Douglas stated that the wording of the press clause left no room for government restrain on the press. "Secrecy in government is fundamentally undemocratic," Douglas wrote, "perpetuating bureaucratic errors. Open debate and discussion of public issues are vital to our national health."39

The Court's ruling in the Pentagon Papers case reflected two changes that had taken place since its decision forty years earlier in Near v. Minnesota. Between 1931 and 1972, the press had gained institutional independence and had adopted the political role of guardian of the public's right to know about the government's decisions and actions. During that time, the Supreme Court had not had to rule on cases putting the government and the press at odds over national security matters chiefly because the press had accepted a subordinate role during times of crisis. In World War II, journalists and editors generally complied with the executive branch's requests for compliance with the Office of Censorship's voluntary "Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press." After the war, members of the media continued to exercise a good measure of self-imposed restraint when dealing with matters of national security and defense. The New York Times had know of the government's decision to have military pilots fly high-altitude spy missions over the Soviet Union in U-2 reconnaissance planes long before Gary Powers was shot down in 1954. Only afterwards, did the paper reveal that the U.S. government had been staging its spy missions out of Pakistan to photograph military and missile installations within the Soviet Union. Similarly, the newspaper considerably downplayed its information about the Central Intelligence Agency's preparations for the Bay of Pigs

39Ibid., 724.
invasion of Cuba and military and government findings during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1963.40

The Pentagon Papers controversy illustrated the press’ new position in the country that emerged during the later 1960s and early 1970s. Coinciding with the great upheavals that the Civil Rights Movement and the war in Vietnam caused, the birth of an independent and hostile media altered the relationship between the press and the government. Journalists and editors were no longer as ready to trust the government as they had been during World War II. The credibility gap that developed during the Vietnam War (and later during the Watergate scandal) caused many newsmen to question everything the government did and said. This adversarial relationship came to define the interactions between the press and the government and military in the years after the Pentagon Papers case.

While the Pentagon Papers case was a victory for the press and a defeat for the government, it did not clarify many of the underlying questions raised by the dispute. Despite the Court’s decision to deny the government’s request for an injunction, the per curiam decision did not discuss the merits of the case, nor did it illuminate what rights the press had to information during times of war. Despite its growing body of rulings dealing with prior restraint of publication, the Court never interpreted the First Amendment as giving the press an absolute right to acquire information. In the more than ten years between the Pentagon Papers and the Grenada operation, the Court heard numerous cases concerning the issue of access to information. However, the Supreme Court had never

40O’Brien, Right to Know, 157.
heard a case dealing with press access to military operations. Nevertheless, it did make several rulings on the press’ access to other government controlled areas. In 1964, Zemel v. Rusk\textsuperscript{41} set a precedent that the U.S. Supreme Court has cited in many of its later decisions concerning U.S. citizens’ ability to travel to areas restricted for national security reasons. Zemel, a private citizen, challenged the United States government’s ban on travel to Cuba after it severed diplomatic relations with the Caribbean nation. The plaintiff wished to travel to Cuba to acquaint himself with the effects of the United States government’s foreign policy. The Court ruled against Zemel and upheld the ban. In its decision, the Court stated that the inhibition was a restriction on action and not an infringement on the First Amendment freedoms to speak and publish. Significantly, the Court’s decision argued, “The right to speak and publish does not carry with it the unrestrained right to gather information.”\textsuperscript{42} Members of the press viewed the Court’s ruling as a setback but still believed that they were legally different from other citizens. Because the First Amendment specifically mentioned the press, the media had often claimed that it should have special protection in order to acquire information from various sources including scenes of military operations. According to this view, without special protection the press cannot fulfill its role of informing the people.\textsuperscript{43}

A case dealing with the special protection for the press came before the Supreme Court in 1972 when a newsman argued that reporters were not obligated to reveal their

\textsuperscript{41} 381 U.S. 1 (1964).

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 16-17.

\textsuperscript{43} Foster, “The Press at the Battle,” 78.
sources even in the face of court orders to do so. In its decision on *Branzburg v. Hayes*, the Court said that news people had no exemption from testifying before a grand jury because "valid laws severing substantial public interests may be enforced against the press as against others." The Court also noted that there were certain instances where the press was regularly barred access despite the potential for news gathering. Addressing the supposed special protections that the press enjoyed, the Court stated that reporters had no constitutional right of access to the scenes of crimes or disaster "when the general public is excluded." The First Amendment, the Court decided, does not guarantee the press a constitutional right of "special access to information not available to the general public."  

\[44]\text{403 U.S. 665 (1972).}

\[45]\text{Ibid., 682.}

\[46]\text{Ibid., 681-5. Although the Court ruled against a special protection of access for the press, it did note areas in which the First Amendment protected news gathering. The case, according to the majority ruling of the Court, did not restrict the use of confidential sources, nor did it involve intrusions upon speech or assembly, nor did it express or imply that the government could command the press to publish what it preferred to withhold. Reporters remained free to seek news by means within the law, but the Court had determined that journalists had an obligation to respond to grand jury subpoenas the same as other citizens. In his dissent to the *Branzburg* ruling, Justice William O. Douglas rejected the notion that the press should be treated no differently from the general public. Douglas wrote in his opinion that the press has always enjoyed a "preferred position in our constitutional scheme . . . to bring fulfillment to the public's right to know." Stating his belief that if the press is hampered in its ability to gain access to sources of information, the people are the ultimate victims. *Ibid., 724-5.* Another dissenting opinion, written by Justice Potter Stewart and joined by Justices William J. Brennan and Thurgood Marshall, cited the unique role of the press in the nation's democratic tradition. "The Court's crabbed view of the First Amendment," Stewart wrote, "reflects a disturbing insensitivity to the critical role of an independent press in our society." According to Stewart, the corollary to the right to publish must be the right to gather news, and the flow of information would be curtailed without the protection whatever else was afforded to the process by which news was assembled and disseminated. "News must not be unnecessarily cut off at its source, for without freedom to acquire information, the right to}
During the next ten years, the Court continued to refine its view of the press’ right of access. In several cases, the Supreme Court ruled that the press had only those rights of access that the general public enjoyed or that had historically been open to observation. However, in other areas where there was not a parallel historical tradition of access the Court denied the press a Constitutional right to access. Between 1974 and 1977, the Court heard arguments in four separate cases dealing with the right of the press’ access to prisons and prisoners. While it granted the press some special access to publish would be impermissibly compromised,” the justice wrote. Ibid., 727-8.

See for example First National Bank v. Bellotti, 435 U.S. 765 (1978). In 1978 the First National Bank of Boston sued the attorney general of Massachusetts for the right to advertise the business community’s view opposing an amendment to the state constitution which would authorize the Legislature to enact a graduated personal income tax. The Court ruled a Massachusetts law unconstitutional because it impeded the discussion of public affairs. In its opinion, the Court stated that the press’ freedom to advertise opinions was important because of the “special and constitutionally recognized role of [the press] in informing and educating the public, offering criticism, and providing a forum for discussion and debate.” Ibid., 781. In Richmond Newspapers v. Virginia (448 U.S. 555 (1980)), the press attempted to gain access to closed portions of court proceedings. In finding in favor of the press, the Court noted that its decision “validate[d] the media claim of functioning as surrogates for the public.” Ibid., 573. Justice John Paul Steven noted in his concurring opinion that Richmond Newspapers marked the first time in the Court’s history that it had given constitutional protection to the acquisition of newsworthy matter. Ibid., 582. However, the Court did not grant validity to the idea of an absolute right of access. It said only that trial could not be arbitrarily closed, and recognized exception that would preclude openness. Ibid., 576-7. In a footnote to his concurring opinion, Justice Brennan wrote that national security concerns about confidentiality could warrant closures during sensitive periods in a trial, such as testimony about state secrets. Ibid., 598. See also Globe Newspapers v. Superior Court, 457 U.S. 596 (1982); Press-Enterprise Co. v. Superior Court, 104 S. Ct. 819 (1984).

In the first case, Pell v. Procunier (417 U.S. 817 (1974)), the Supreme Court upheld a California Department of Corrections policy denying newsmen interviews with specific prisoners. Noting that the First and Fourteenth Amendments barred the government from interfering with a free press, the Court decided that the Constitution did not require the government to accord the press any type of special access to information
proceedings normally closed to the public — namely to witness executions — the Court stopped short of granting a wide ranging right of access to areas that were not traditionally open to the public.\textsuperscript{49}

that was not shared by the members of the general public. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Douglas, joined by Justices Marshall and Brennan, repeated his belief first stated in \textit{Branzburg} that the public was the loser if the government denies access to the press. In a similar case involving a federal prison (\textit{Saxbe v. Washington Post}, 417 U.S. 843 (1974)), the Court ruled that the press could tour the facility and interview prisoners according to the policy of the prison. However, citing its \textit{Pell} decision, the Court ruled, “Newsmen have no constitutional right of access to prisons or their inmates beyond that afforded the general public.” As in \textit{Pell}, three justices dissented from the majority opinion. Writing for Justices Marshall and Brennan, Justice Lewis F. Powell challenged the Court’s contention that the government could interfere with the press’ information gathering process as long as members of the media were treated the same as members of the public. While agreeing with the majority opinion that the press was not a privileged class, Powell disagreed with the position that any governmental restriction on press access to information, so long as it was not discriminatory, was outside the scope of First Amendment concerns.

\textsuperscript{49}In \textit{Houchins v. KQED} (438 U.S. 1 (1978)), the question of equal access for the press and the public was at issue once again. In its decision, the Court noted the importance of the press as serving as the public’s “eyes and ears,” but denied an unlimited right of access. “This Court has never intimated a First Amendment guarantee of a right of access to all sources of information within government control.” Again in the dissent, this time written by Justice John Paul Stevens and joined by Justices Brennan and Powell, the equal status of the press and the public with regard to access to information was disputed. Justice Stevens seemed to have supported the same sort of additional rights of the press. “It is not sufficient,” Stevens wrote, “that the channels of communication be free of governmental restraints. Without some protection for the acquisition of information about the operation of public institutions such as prisons by the public at large, the process of self-governance contemplated by the Framers would be stripped of its substance.” The fifth case dealing with press access to prisons, \textit{Garrett v. Estelle}, involved the State of Texas’ denial of a television station’s request to film the first execution to take place in the state in twelve years. Citing its decisions in \textit{Branzburg}, \textit{Zemel}, \textit{Pell}, and \textit{Saxbe}, the Supreme Court decided that the press did not have a right of access greater than that of the general public. “The First Amendment does not accompany the press where the public may not go.” Ibid., 2267-9. Noting that the press was allowed to attend the execution, although not permitted to film it, the Court argued that in fact the State of Texas had given the press greater access than that of other public citizens. The Supreme Court once again denied the assertion that the press enjoyed a special right of access to information under the First Amendment.
Since its *Near* decision in 1931, the Supreme Court had recognized that in certain instances "compelling governmental interests" could limit access to information and its publication. The most often cited example of such interests fall under the category of national security concerns. Building upon the legal precedent first established in its *Near* decision and on the Constitutional grant of broad powers to the executive in matters dealing with foreign policy and military affairs, the Courts have been reluctant to grant broad rights to the press. In *Zemel*, the Court held that "the weightiest considerations of national security" allowed the Secretary of State to restrict travel to Cuba at the time of the Cuban missile crisis.\(^{50}\) In a more recent opinion, *Haig v. Agee*,\(^{51}\) the Court upheld the government's revocation of a former Central Intelligence Agency employee's passport when he threatened to travel abroad and reveal covert operations and operatives working for the United States. Citing *Zemel* as precedent, the Court ruled that the government was justified in its action because it did not impede Agee's right to voice his criticisms of the government, but only restricted his actions. The Court did add a caveat, noting that the decision rendered in the *Near* case did provide for Agee's future punishment if anything that he said or wrote harmed national security.\(^{52}\) By implication, the Court's actions in *Near, Zemel,* and *Haig* point toward a view that the government may restrict the gathering of information in the interest of national security and not violate the First Amendment.

\(^{50}\) *Zemel*, 381 U.S. at 16-7.

\(^{51}\) 453 U.S. 280 (1980).

Two cases argued before the Supreme Court have dealt directly with issues of civilian access to military controlled areas by non-military personnel. In *Cafeteria & Restaurant Workers Union v McElroy*\(^5\) a civilian cook who worked on the premises of the Naval Gun Factory in Washington, D.C., was denied further employment because she failed to meet security requirements necessary for access to the base. The Court ruled that the control of military bases was within the powers of Congress and the president. As outlined in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress had the power to provide and maintain a Navy. Congress had delegated responsibility for the administration of the Navy to the Secretary of the Navy who is appointed by the president and approved by the Senate. Since naval regulations clearly stated that civilians could not “be admitted within a command, except as authorized by the commanding officer,” the Court said there was no doubt that the base commander was justified in excluding the cafeteria worker from the premises. The regulation, according to the ruling, was “a verbalization of the unquestioned authority which commanding officers of military installations have exercised throughout history.”\(^4\)

In a similar case, the Court built upon the precedent of *Cafeteria Workers*. In 1976, several candidates for national political office attempted to gain access to Fort Dix, New Jersey, in order to make political speeches and distribute campaign literature. The commanding officer of the post denied the candidates access on the grounds that he wanted to keep the installation free from the partisan political politics. The candidates, in

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\(^4\)Ibid., 892.
*Greer v. Spock*,\(^5^5\) claimed that this was a violation of their First Amendment rights. The Court, citing its decision in *Cafeteria Workers*, found in favor of the military. Even though portions of Fort Dix were regularly open to the public, the Court ruled that a post is not a public place. Since the business of a military installation like Fort Dix was to train soldiers, and not provide a public forum for the free expression of ideas, the Court did not feel that the respondents' claims of abridged freedoms of speech were merited. From the Court's rulings in *Cafeteria Workers* and *Greer* it appeared clear that if the press bought a case before the United States Supreme Court regarding their supposed right of access to the battlefield, legal precedent would weigh heavily on the side of the government and the military in restricting unlimited access. Despite the First Amendment's guarantees that the press had a right to debate government policy, the Court was reluctant to grant the press an absolute right of access to most areas not normally open to the general public and particularly against forcing military commanders to make special accommodations for the media.

Following their exclusion from the first two days of the military operations in Grenada, news organizations complained loudly about the military's restrictions on access to the battlefield. Although only Larry Flynt, editor of the pornographic magazine *Hustler*, legally challenged the decision to exclude the press from the battlefield, nearly all major media organizations felt that the military and government needed to make some sort of concessions to ensure that American reporters would never again find themselves barred from covering U.S. military operations. As a result of the media's complaints,

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John W. Vessey, Jr. (Army), ordered the formation of a special commission to investigate "How do we [the military] conduct military operations in a manner that safeguards the lives of our military and protects the security of the operation while keeping the American public informed through the media?" Retired Major General Winant "Si" Sidle, former chief of public affairs in Vietnam, headed the commission, officially known as "The CJCS/Media-Military Relations Panel," that came be known as the Sidle Panel. In his memorandum establishing the panel, Gen. Vessey noted that in the past, the military had used a wide variety of methods to deal with the press and keep the American public informed during times of conflict. Vessey's memo stated that he "hoped that the results" of the study would be "at least the first step in establishing some general guidelines on which both the media and the Defense Department can agree for the future."

The Sidle Panel began its meetings on 6 February 1984 at the National Defense University located at Fort Leslie J. McNair in Washington, D.C. Chairman Sidle initially hoped to invite major media organizations and the Department of Defense to provide members who would sit on the panel and help draft its final recommendations. The major media organizations -- such as the American Newspaper Publishers Association, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and the Radio Television News Directors

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57 General John W. Vessey, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Memorandum for Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Administration), OASD (C), Subject: Establishment of CJCS/Media-Military Relations Committee Study (1 February 1984), 1.
Association -- and individual member organizations, however, declined the invitation. Although agreeing to cooperate fully with the eventual members of the panel, the news organizations felt that it was inappropriate for media members to serve on a government panel that might cause them to lose their objectivity to the matters under discussion.\footnote{58} A new format was necessary. The unanimous decision of the major news organizations resulted in a revised plan for the inclusion of non-military participants in the panel. The civilian members were "experienced retired media personnel and representatives of the schools of journalism who were experts in military-media relations."\footnote{59} Even before the

\footnote{58}{Sidle Panel, I.}

\footnote{59}{Ibid. The members of the panel were as follows:}

\textbf{Military Members}

- Colonel George Kirschchenbauer, U.S. Army, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Captain James Major, U.S. Navy, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Captain Brent Baker, U.S. Navy, Office of the Chief of Information, Department of the Navy
- Mr. Billy Hunt, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, U.S. Army

\textbf{Civilian Members}

- Keyes Beech, retired war correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner
- Scott M. Cutlip, former Dean, Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia
- A.J. (Jack) Langguth, Chairman of Print Classes, University of Southern California School of Journalism
- Wendel S. (Bud) Merick, retired war correspondent
- Richard S. Salant, President and Chief Executive Officer, National News Council
- Barry Zorthian, Senior Vice President, Gray & Co., and former public
panel's membership was final, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (OASD(PA)) and the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OCJCS) distributed a questionnaire that provided initial input to the panel to facilitate opening panel discussions. During the panel's meetings, from 6 February through 10 February, media representatives and military officials also provided oral testimony. Following three days of open presentation and two days of closed deliberation, it made eight recommendations. Agreed to in principle by all members, the recommendations addressed ways to improve the military-media relationship and to inform the public in future operations. The final report was delivered to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff on 11

affairs officer during the Vietnam War

60The OCJCS and the OASD(PA) sent the questionnaire to all panel members and to other individuals and organizations who had expressed interest in the panel's topic. As a result of this mailing, the panel received 24 written inputs to study prior to the first meeting of the commission. Of the 24 responses, 16 originated from major news organizations or umbrella groups such as the American Newspaper Editors and the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Ibid.

Unfortunately, despite repeated inquiries to various government agencies and repositories, the official working papers of the Sidel Panel were not found. Therefore, it was impossible to examine these responses. As a result, the most complete record of the Panel's actions are found in its official report to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is upon that document that the majority of this section is based.

61Presentations before the panel came from 25 senior media representatives speaking for 19 news organizations, including major umbrella organizations. The chiefs/directors of Public Affairs for the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force also made major presentations during the open sessions. During the closed panel sessions, the Marine Corps, the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) also made informal presentations. The open sessions attracted much interest from the media at large, who covered its proceedings with more than 70 reporters from nearly 30 news organizations. Sidel Panel, 2.
February 1984.⁶²

The basic recommendation of the panel, agreed to unanimously by committee members, was that "the American people must be informed about U.S. military operations and that this information can best be provided through both the news media and the government. Therefore, the panel believes that the U.S. media should cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and the safety of U.S. forces."⁶³ Specifically the eight recommendations of the Sidle Panel called for (1) the inclusion of public affairs planning to be conducted concurrently with operational planning; (2) the deployment of a national media pool to cover the initial phases of a military operation; (3) the accreditation of journalists slotted as members of the media pool; (4) the voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines established and issued by the military; (5) the dedication by the military of such equipment and personnel necessary to assist correspondents in covering the operation adequately; (6) the availability of adequate communications facilities necessary for the media's coverage of an operation, provided that use of such facilities would not interfere with combat and combat support operations; (7) the provision of intra- and inter-theater transportation support for the

⁶²MJG Sidle noted in his cover letter to Gen. Vessey, which accompanied the panel's report, that the panel had not directly addressed the problems experienced in Grenada. Stating that the panel understood "that Grenada had shown the need to review media-military relations in connection with military operations," Sidle noted that Vessey had not asked for a specific review of the situation in Grenada. "However," Sidle did note, "we do feel that had our recommendations been 'in place' and fully considered at the time of Grenada, there might have been no need to create our panel." Letter, Sidle to Vessey, 11 Feb. 1984, 2.

media; and (8) the improvement of the understanding and cooperation between the media
and the military.\textsuperscript{64} The Department of Defense released the complete findings of the Panel
on 23 August 1984. Even before the DOD made the Sidle Panel findings public, Secretary
of Defense Weinberger directed senior Pentagon officials and high military officers to
make non-classified information regarding military operations “fully and readily available”
to the press, public, and Congress. “Information may only be withheld,” Weinberger’s
directive stated, when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the
safety or privacy of the men and women of the armed forces.”\textsuperscript{65} In a press statement
following the release of the Sidle Panel findings, the Secretary of Defense further
reiterated his earlier commitment. He ordered the military to implement those portions of
the final report that met with the panel’s criterion of providing maximum coverage of U.S.
military operations “consistent with military security and the safety of U.S. forces.”\textsuperscript{66} Two
major news organizations, the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the American
Newspaper Publishers Association, issued a joint statement praising the panel’s work as
exhaustive and productive and offered their continued cooperation in improving media
relations with the military.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{64}Sidle Panel, 4-7.

\textsuperscript{65}Facts on File, World News Digest, 10 February 1984, “Press Combat Access
Hearings Held,” 93A2.

\textsuperscript{66}New Release, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), 23
August 1984. See also Janice Castro, “Peace Pact on War Coverage,” \textit{Time}, 73, Jonathon
L33.

\textsuperscript{67}Facts on File, “Press Combat Access Hearings Held,” 93A2.
The major impact of the Sidle Panel's findings was the creation of the Department of Defense National Media Pool. The DOD created the Media Pool to prevent many of the problems with access that surfaced during the invasion of Grenada and to insure that the public was informed about military operations. On 10 October 1984, the DOD outlined its plan for the formation of the first national pool. Officials in the Pentagon did not choose the journalists to be included in the pool. Instead, they designated the media outlets that the journalists would represent and let the outlets themselves choose their representatives. The proposed pool consisted of eleven journalists: one correspondent from each of four television networks (CBS, NBC, ABC, and CNN), a two-member sound and film crew to service the TV networks, one radio correspondent from an undesignated network, one photographer, one reporter each from the Associated Press and United Press International, and one correspondent who served the three major weekly news magazines (*Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*). The DOD did not originally include a representative from the daily newspapers. Following the announcement of the initial plan for the make up of the pool, newspapers and print journalism organizations protested their exclusion. On 11 October, the Defense Department announced that one reporter from a daily newspaper would be added to the

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68 The Pentagon rationale for the make up of the pool was simple. It had to remain small so that transportation, supply, and communication would be possible. It also selected pool members so that they could reach the largest possible audience. The inclusion of two major wire services made up for the exclusion of newspaper representatives. Since the pool was only intended to be used for a short period before the operation was opened to the press at large, the DOD reasoned that the wire services could provide stories to the print media. *Facts on File, World News Digest, “War Zone Media Pool Designated,”* 19 October 1984, 773G3.
pool. The revised plan called for the American Newspaper Publishers Association to choose eight newspapers for inclusion. One reporter from among the eight newspapers would join the pool on a rotational basis. In addition to the formation of the National Media Pool, the Department of Defense also released a provisional draft of ground rules governing the way reporters released information.\(^6^9\)

The newly created Department of Defense National Media Pool shared some characteristics with the accreditation arrangements in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Both systems allowed the military to limit the number of reporters covering an operation. In Vietnam, for example, the U.S. military, at one time under the direction of General Sidle, never had space for more than about forty-five accredited reporters on any particular combat operation. Numbers higher than that would have been too difficult for the military to deal with in the field. The limitation never caused problems with the news media because the U.S. military never told the press of it and news agencies never attempted to commit that many reporters to cover an operation. In the same way, there was limited space for reporters when the U.S. and its allies struck the beachheads of Normandy on 6 June 1944. In that case, only fifty-eight journalists accompanied the troops, with less than thirty going ashore with U.S. forces. Important, under the military’s accreditation system in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and even the Falklands, the

\(^6^9\)Ibid. The ground rules -- which barred journalists from reporting military operations in progress, prohibited the reporting of any weaknesses in U.S. fighting units, banned the reporting of enemy body counts, and gave senior U.S. field commanders authority over the release of news from the scene of battle -- drew sharp criticism from the media. When questioned about the ground rules, Secretary Weinberger stressed that there had not been a final decision on what form the rules would take.
reporter who covered a battle represented his employer. What the journalist wrote was
the exclusive property of that agency, which held the right to print or broadcast it in whole
or part or to disseminate it to subscribers (as in the case of the wire services — AP, UPI,
Reuters)."0

Despite some commonalities, the pool system that the Sidle Panel recommended
and the military adopted in 1984 and the older accreditation system handled news
differently. Because the military imposed limitations on the number of reporters who
accompanied military forces during an operation, a small group of reporters represented
the entire body of correspondents responsible for collecting the news. The stories that the
group’s members wrote belonged to everyone. Press representatives — usually editors or
a committee of bureau chiefs — selected the members of the pool. Military and
government officials avoided becoming involved in the process, allowing the press to
determine for themselves who would accompany U.S. forces in the field. The military and
government’s decision to leave the selection of pool members to the press was an attempt
to avoid charges of managing the news through their selection of reporters who might
have given favorable coverage to the military. Officials, however, placed limits on what
type of journalist could qualify for inclusion in the pool. For example, the military could
specify that the pool had to include a television camera team, the representative of a daily
newspaper, a magazine journal, etc. Usually, however, the news agencies determined

70 William M. Hammond, Historian, U.S. Army Center for Military History, letter
to author, Washington, D.C., 2 August 1999. Dr. Hammond is the Center for Military
History’s expert on the media and has written extensively on military/media relations
during the Vietnam War.
those requirements themselves in their attempt to provide balanced, effective coverage.\textsuperscript{71}

The use of pools to cover events was not new in 1984. Previously, news organizations used pools only to cover events that they could not report on in any other way. For example, newspapers and networks often agreed to combine their coverage and share the costs of accompanying the president on his travels. The presidential pools allowed news organizations to send a few reporters on an assignment that usually had very little news value but possessed the potential for something bad or unexpected to happen. In one instance, a small pool accompanied then Vice-President Richard Nixon when he traveled to Latin America in the 1950s on a good will tour. While there, angry crowds threw stones at the vice-presidential entourage, providing the reporters who had traveled with Nixon an expected news story. Pools also proved practical in covering events where access was very limited for one reason or another. During the Second World War, a pool of journalists accompanied President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the secret Casablanca conference in 1942. Security arrangements required the military and the presidential staff to limit press access and knowledge of the conference. The pool system allowed them to maintain operational security while also providing newsmen the chance to cover the historic event.\textsuperscript{72}

Despite the previous use and success of pools, most journalists and their superiors disliked their use. Pool members often produced products that were poorly suited for the needs of particular media. Because pools allowed a small number of reporters to

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid.
represent all news organizations, a news organization like the *Washington Post* might have to settle for a report that lacked the slant that its own reporters normally produced. At other times, pool members pursued stories that appealed to their particular magazine but were of little value to media outlets at large. Many journalists, editors, and producers also worried that pool members withheld information and sent it to their own employers later, effectively using their privileged position to steal scoops rightfully belonging to everyone under the pool arrangements. Despite these reservations, news organizations accepted pools when they had no other option for coverage.73

The Pentagon tested the newly formed press pool twice in 1985. The first test, on 21 April, had many problems. The Defense Department activated the pool on 20 April by notifying designated media outlets that would supply pool members. Warned to keep the deployment secret, the Department of Defense instructed the news outlets to have their representatives at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland at 4 a.m., 21 April. The Pentagon informed the pool members’ employers that the journalists and technicians would be spending up to a week in a warm climate. When the pool members arrived at Andrews AFB, they boarded a plane and learned that the operation was only an exercise to take place in Honduras. News of the operation quickly leaked out. Bart Tessler, the news director of Mutual Radio Network, who had a reporter in the pool, alerted eight other radio networks to be prepared to receive telephone reports from Mutual’s reporter with the DOD pool. Quickly, the other media outlets flooded the Pentagon with requests for information regarding the pool’s deployment. A Defense Department spokesman

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reluctantly admitted on 21 April that a test of the pool arrangements was underway. Some within the military cited the leak as proof that the media could not be trusted to maintain secrecy during military operations, even when the operation was only an exercise.\textsuperscript{74}

In the field, the communications systems for journalists' use were not adequate for the timely release of information from the pool. Apparently reports to Washington from the pool were delayed because Navy technicians were unable to make the telephones work aboard the helicopter carrier \textit{Nassau} and because a teletype machine was busy with routine military traffic.\textsuperscript{75} Broadcast journalists were able to transmit their stories, but only through the assistance of locally based journalists in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.\textsuperscript{76} Even when journalists were successful in transmitting their stories from Honduras, there were still delays in relaying them from the military to the media in the United States.\textsuperscript{77}

In comparison to the first test, the second deployment of the national pool was a success. No leaks occurred during the test and communication of pool reports went smoothly. However, the second test was conducted within the United States. This meant


\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid}.

that the operation did not have to coordinate with a foreign host nation for media access and that technological facilities were of a high standard. The second test was also only one day in duration, as opposed to five days for the first test. The After Action Report dealing with the second test noted the improvements, but cautioned against over optimism because of the "limited duration and scope of the exercise." When the Department of Defense National Media Pool deployed as part of Operation EARNEST WILL (the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers during the Iran-Iraq War), some pool members continued to complain about delays in the transmission of stories.79

Despite its tests of the National Media Pool during the second half of the 1980s, the United States military did not have occasion fully to test its capabilities until nearly the end of the decade. In the largest deployment of troops since the Vietnam War, President George Bush dispatched American troops in the early morning of 20 December 1989 to overthrow Panamanian military strongman General Manuel Noriega. A total of nearly 12,000 Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine forces from the United States and an additional 12,000 military personnel already stationed in Panama took part in the invasion, dubbed Operation JUST CAUSE by Pentagon planners. For the six days preceding the attack, tensions between Noriega and the Bush administration had escalated. On 15 December, Panama's National Assembly of Representatives, a legislative body Noriega appointed in October, had unanimously voted to name the general head of the


79 Facts on File, World News Digest, 5 August 1987, "U.S. Sends Minesweeping Helicopters to Persian Gulf," 546A2. The inclusion of the DOD Media Pool in Operation EARNEST WILL was the first deployment of the pool in a non-training operation.
government — nullifying free elections held earlier in the year that had ousted Noriega from power — and designating him as “maximum leader of the struggle for national liberation.” The assembly also approved a resolution stating that “the Republic of Panama is declared to be in a state of war” with the United States as long as U.S. “aggression,” in the form of economic sanctions imposed in 1988, continued. On the following day, 16 December, Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) troops stopped and harassed four unarmed, off-duty U.S. servicemen at a roadblock outside the Panamanian military headquarters in Panama City. The Americans attempted to escape the roadblock by driving off. While the U.S. servicemen were driving away, the Panamians opened fire on their vehicle, killing one U.S. officer, Marine Lieutenant Robert Paz. In a related incident, the PDF abducted a Navy lieutenant and his wife (later identified as the Lt. and Mrs. Curtis), who had witnessed the shooting, and interrogated them for about four hours. The PDF men beat the Navy officer and sexually threatened and assaulted his wife before releasing them. Following the two incidents, U.S. forces in Panama were placed on “delta” alert, the second-highest status of readiness for forces in Panama. In a later confrontation on 18 December, a U.S. officer shot and wounded a PDF corporal near a U.S. installation. The U.S. officer acted after he was “threatened” because the PDF soldier appeared to be reaching for a gun. On 18 December President Bush called the shooting of Lieutenant Paz “an enormous outrage” and prompted speculation about possible military intervention by refusing to answer questions about his planned response. “All presidents have options,”

Bush told reporters. "But they don’t discuss what they might be."\footnote{Ibid.}

Shortly before 1 a.m. EST, 19 December, after an alternative Panamanian government headed by Guillermo Endara was sworn into office at an American military base, U.S. forces began attacking key PDF command centers. Lieutenant General Thomas W. Kelly (U.S. Army), director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared on the evening of 20 December that the U.S. forces had achieved their initial goals of removing the PDF as an organized military threat in Panama and reestablishing the legitimately elected government of Panama to power. However, Kelly noted that scattered pockets of resistance still remained and that members of the violent "Dignity Battalions (also know as DingBats)" continued to roam the streets of Panama City. Despite the best efforts of the U.S. military, General Noriega had eluded capture and on the night of 20 December, his whereabouts were still unknown.\footnote{Ron Cole, Operation JUST CAUSE, Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC (1995), 42-4.} Combat operations continued in Panama until 22 December, with irregular forces sniping at U.S. troops through 24 December. Following the end of combat operations, the U.S. military began to help the newly installed Endara government restore order and peace to the country. The U.S. also continued to search for the deposed leader, Noriega. On 24 December, the U.S. learned that Noriega had sought refuge at the Nuciatura, the Vatican’s diplomatic residence, in Panama City. From Christmas Eve through 3 January 1990, U.S. military and diplomatic officials negotiated with Noriega and Vatican representatives. General Noriega surrendered himself to U.S.
Marshals on 3 January, after which he was returned to the United States and placed in prison awaiting trial on drug trafficking charges.  

Despite the operational success of Operation JUST CAUSE, the military’s dealings with the media were once again problematic. While the military did not actively prevent the press from gaining access to the battlefield, as they had during the invasion of Grenada, there were so many problems and setbacks during the operation that press access was unintentionally restricted. In many regards, the military’s handling of the press was the least successful aspect of the U.S. operation in Panama. Several factors, all logical but preventable, led to the difficulties experienced during JUST CAUSE.

Many of the obstacles that journalists faced in Panama stemmed from inadequate planning on the part of the military. As early as 13 November, the Joint Staff had asked the Southern Command (the military command based in Panama and in control of the operation) for a Public Affairs Plan. The Public Affairs Plan, known as Annex “F” (Foxtrot), was needed to facilitate the organization of necessary logistical and personnel support required to assist a media pool in the complete coverage of the operation. Nine days later, on 22 November, the Southern Command (SOCOM) Public Affairs Office (PAO) sent a Top Secret fax to the Pentagon Public Affairs Plans unit. The plan that SOCOM submitted was only a bare bones assessment of press’ needs and requirements in covering the proposed operation. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Richard C.

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83Cole, JUST CAUSE, 51, 57-64.

Brown, directed his staff to “close-hold” the fax until closer to the start of the operation — to “stick it in the safe and forget about it.” Brown’s actions, based on concerns about maintaining operational security, prevented necessary planning for the coverage of the impending operation. In a later interview, Brown explained his actions. “[The fax] really told about the mission,” Brown said. “Given that it could be leaked, there was concern about possible compromise.”

Throughout December, members of the Bush Administration were meeting to decide whether or not the United States would take military action against Manuel Noriega. In a meeting on 17 December, following the death of Lieutenant Paz and the interrogation of the Curtises, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Richard “Dick” Cheney, Secretary of Defense, consulted several civilian and military advisors about the contingency plans for removing Noriega from Panama and installing a new government. Included in this meeting was Mr. Louis “Pete” Williams, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). Much of the discussion revolved around whether or not the killing of Lt. Paz and the abduction and assault on the Curtises provided the justification for military action. At the end of the meeting, Williams approached Cheney and told his boss that he had spoken with the public affairs officer for the SOCOM, who had informed Williams that Lieutenant Curtis was coherent and could appear on television. Williams told Cheney that Curtis could explain what had happened to him and his wife and

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85 Fred Hoffman, “Review of Panama Pool Deployment,” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), March 1990), 5. This document, known as the Hoffman Report, was an internally commissioned review of the military’s handling of the press during the U.S. invasion of Panama.
might provide a clear rationale for any future action. Cheney declined to pass on
Williams' suggestion, telling the Pentagon spokesman, "Let it pass. We don't want to
whip things up."\textsuperscript{86}

Later on the same day, Powell and Cheney, along with General Thomas W. Kelly,
chief of Operations (J-3) for the Joint Chiefs, briefed President Bush and portions of the
administration and national security team. The meeting climaxed with the president giving
a verbal "O.K." to the proposed seizure of Panama with the intent to remove Noriega
from power and install the democratically elected Endara government. When the meeting
turned to matters dealing with the press and the public's reaction to military intervention
in Panama, White House Press Secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, stated that although there was
bound to be negative reaction from some members of the press, they would not be a major
problem. During the meeting, Secretary Cheney informed the participants that the
Department of Defense pool would go in with the first wave of troops. President Bush
asked Cheney who would comprise the pool, journalists based in Washington or those
already present in Panama.\textsuperscript{87} The pool would come from Washington, Cheney informed
the President. Bush expressed concern over the maintenance of security if members of the
pool were notified of an upcoming operation. No final decision was reached on where the
pool would originate. However, the question of who could know about the decision to


\textsuperscript{87}Typically, DOD National Media Pool representatives were drawn from reporters
stationed in Washington, D.C. However, many news organizations had either dispatched
reporters to Panama following the escalation in tensions between Panama and the United
States or relied on journalists based out of the country, giving them reporters on the scene
who could cover events without having to travel to Panama.
proceed with the operation without compromising security remained a matter of concern. President Bush instructed all involved to limit the number of people who actually knew about the decision to an absolute minimum.\textsuperscript{88}

The following day, Monday 18 December, Cheney called Pete Williams into his office and informed the Pentagon spokesman that President Bush had authorized JUST CAUSE. He also informed Williams that a pool would cover the operation. Cheney, concerned about security, warned Williams, “You can’t tell this to anybody.” The issue of where the pool would originate, in Washington or from within Panama, had not yet been decided. Throughout Monday and Tuesday, Williams and Cheney met several times to discuss how the military would handle the media coverage of the operation. “There was never any doubt in anyone’s mind that there was going to be a pool,” Williams told a reviewer of the press situation in Panama after the operation had concluded.\textsuperscript{89} On Tuesday afternoon, 19 December, at a White House meeting the origin of the pool was again discussed. Only ten hours before the start of the operation, Vice President Dan Quayle asked Cheney why the pool couldn’t be organized in Panama rather than in Washington. According to Fitzwater, who was again present, “No one had a good answer as to why it had to come from Washington.”\textsuperscript{90} In the end, the President left the final determination up to his Secretary of Defense. Following further discussions with Williams, Cheney decided to use the National Media Pool. “We decided to use the


\textsuperscript{89}“Hoffman Report,” 6.

\textsuperscript{90}Ibid.
national pool because we were confident OPSEC [operational security] could be
preserved," Williams later explained, "[and] we were accustomed to it and we had used a
[national] pool" earlier during an operation in Panama. Williams also noted that he
believed that the Washington-based pool members would be the better choice since they
"knew the ground rules."91 In his description of why the national pool was selected over
the local pool, Secretary Cheney stated that the DOD National Media Pool had been
"created for this kind of situation," and that he felt a certain sense of loyalty to those
reporters who regularly covered military affairs.92

Meanwhile, in Panama, Southern Command Public Affairs Officer Colonel Ron
Scoyners had received notification that a military operation might occur and that he was to
plan for media coverage. Scoyners began to devise a plan which utilized the local
reporters to provide coverage of any military action in Panama. Scoyners' plan did not
require extensive transportation support since he intended to preposition reporters at key
strategic sites near Quarry Heights and possibly Fort Amador where they could observe
U.S. troops in action. Not until 5 p.m. on 19 December, did Williams inform Scoyners
that a national, and not local, pool would be used.93 When Scoyners learned of the
planned deployment of the national pool, he immediately asked SOCOM planners for

91 "Hoffman Report," 7. Both Williams and Cheney corroborated the events
leading up to the decision to use the National Defense Media Pool. See Richard Cheney,
interview by author, tape recording, Dallas, TX., 1 February 1999; Pete Williams,

92 Ibid.

transportation support. Because of the lateness of the request, SOCOM had already tasked all air and ground transport to support military operations and none was available to transport pool members around the battlefield.\textsuperscript{94}

In Washington, Pete Williams notified members of the Department of Defense National Media Pool that there was an impending operation at 7:30 p.m., EST.\textsuperscript{95} Members of the pool were to report to Andrews Air Force Base by 9:30 p.m. for an estimated time of departure at 11 p.m. The timing of the call-out proved controversial. Concerned with a possible breach of operational security, Secretary Cheney told Williams to delay the notification of pool members until after the evening news and, therefore, reduce the risk of a leak. The 11 p.m. departure time meant that reporters would not arrive in Panama until hours after the first U.S. troops began operations at 1 a.m. The arrival of the pool was further delayed because the DOD could not locate many of the reporters who were members of the pool at their offices or homes. Most were either attending Christmas parties or had left town for the holidays.\textsuperscript{96} During the call-out, one known breach of security occurred when staff members of \textit{Time} magazine discussed who

\textsuperscript{94}\textit{Ibid.} In Washington, some mid-level officers from the Joint Staff discussed possible airlift arrangements for the pool with Pete Williams’ staff. These discussions ended when it was realized that the options offered by the Joint Staff would have landed the pool in Panama long after the first attacks by U.S. troops. “Hoffman Report,” 8

\textsuperscript{95}All times are Eastern Standard Time unless otherwise noted. Panama, like Washington, D.C., lies in the Eastern Standard Time Zone.

\textsuperscript{96}One reporter, Dick Thompson of \textit{Time} magazine, was attending his company’s Christmas party when he received notification of the pool’s call-up. He rushed to Andrews AFB without a change of clothes or even his writing materials. Thompson was forced to borrow the writing materials and ended up traveling to tropical Panama in a winter suit. “Hoffman Report,” 11.
would go to Panama during a holiday party. Williams also weakened the control of information about the operation when he allowed NBC to bring along a satellite dish with two technicians who were not part of the designated pool. The technicians' inclusion in the pool widened the radius of knowledge about the operation and created a potential for a violation of operational security. Because they had never been involved in pool activities they were not accustomed to the discipline of working under security ground rules.

Because of the delay, the pool did not leave Andrews AFB until 11:26 p.m. Pool members learned in flight that they were bound for Panama.97

The pool landed in Panama at Howard AFB around 5:00 a.m. Wednesday morning. Problems developed from the moment the reporters arrived. The helicopter that had been designated to meet the reporters at the air base arrived about one-half hour after the plane with the pool on board had landed. Another half hour was consumed loading the reporters' equipment. The last-minute inclusion of the satellite up-link dish greatly slowed down the preparations for departure from Howard. Although Col. Scoyners had planned to move the pool by road from Howard AFB to Quarry Heights, that route was no longer an option since the Bridge of the Americas, which provided the only way across the canal, was closed and there was sporadic fire-fights between Howard and Quarry Heights. By 7:00 a.m. the reporters had not moved from the air base. Operation JUST CAUSE had been under way for several hours and members of the media had not yet covered any of the action. Despite urging from Pete Williams in Washington, Scoyners

97There is no indication that either of the technicians in any way violated operational security. "Hoffman Report," 10.
was unable to transport the journalists to the scene of action or anywhere else.⁹⁸

Scoyners had received additional help from other public affairs officers attached to the forces deployed during the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Ned Longsworth, Chief of Public Affairs for the XVIII Airborne Corps, acted as Chief of Public Affairs for Joint Task Force South PAO and spokesman for the operation.⁹⁹ Longsworth had arrived in Panama on 18 December and immediately began coordinating with Scoyners.¹⁰⁰ Like Scoyners, Longsworth did not believe that the DOD media pool would be deployed to cover operations in Panama.¹⁰¹ In an interview following the operation, Longsworth described the plan for handling public affairs as getting "worked out on the run." Because of the unexpected activation of the DOD media pool, the initial plans of SOCOM and XVIII Corps public affairs personnel had to be scrapped and redone.¹⁰² At Howard, Longsworth linked up with the pool. He had arranged for the press to conduct an interview with the new president of the country, Mr. Endara. The interview never took place. According to Longsworth, Endara chose at the last moment to back out of the arrangement.¹⁰³ Instead, reporters listened to a briefing by John Bushnell, Chargé

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⁹⁹ LTC Ned V. Longsworth, JR. and MAJ Lloyd D. Foster, interview by Dr. Robert Wright, United States Army Center of Military History, vol. 1 of 2 (15 March 1990), 5. Hereafter cites as Longsworth, CMH Interview.

¹⁰⁰ Longsworth, CMH interview, 7.

¹⁰¹ Longsworth, CMH interview, 3.

¹⁰² Longsworth, CMH interview, 10.

¹⁰³ Longsworth, CMH interview, 11.
d'Affaires from the U.S. Embassy in Panama, that outlined the history and culture of Panama. Reporters later described the briefing as boring as a history lecture.¹⁰⁴

The pool was finally on the move later on the morning of 20 December, traveling as a complete unit. Around 10:00 a.m. Scoyners and Longsworth managed to find a helicopter that was free and flew the journalists to Fort Amador, across the bay from Quarry Heights and the main part of Panama City. This took considerable effort from the two public affairs officers who had to compete with combat operations for transportation and security assets. At Ft. Amador, a facility normally shared by both U.S. and Panamanian forces and the scene of earlier fighting, the action was largely over. In the early morning hours, U.S. forces had shelled PDF barracks on the post, but when the reporters arrived not much remained to be seen. Ken Merida, reporter for the Dallas Morning News and member of the pool, described the scene when the pool arrived. "All that was left to do was smoke out a few remaining Noriega loyalists," he noted, "none of whom surrendered in our presence."¹⁰⁵ Longsworth remembered the pool excursion to Amador differently, recalling that the reporters did get to see some action and were able to take pictures of artillery in action and witness the surrender of PDF members. Although he admitted that the events at Amador were not as ideal as the original plan to have journalists watch the attack on the Commandancia from Quarry Heights, Longsworth still viewed the trip to Amador as a success.¹⁰⁶


¹⁰⁶Longsworth, CMH interview, 15.
From Amador, the pool members could see rising smoke coming from the battered Commandancia in Panama City. The Commandancia was the military headquarters of the Noriega forces and had been a prime target of U.S. forces. The journalists asked their escorts if they could travel across the city to witness the end of the action around the Commandancia. “We were told that because of continued sniper fire on the first day it was too dangerous for us to visit the neighborhood of Chorillo which housed another of Noriega’s headquarters and was still burning from heavy shelling by U.S. troops,” Merida remembered. “It was also too dangerous, we were told, to take a helicopter tour of Panama City.” The helicopter that had originally transported the pool to Ft. Amador had been called away and did not return for an hour and a half. When it returned, the pool asked Longworth for an aerial view of Panama City. The PAO consulted with the helicopter pilots who stated that they believed that it was still too dangerous “to fly a helicopter directly over the city because of the sniper fire that was still occurring.”\textsuperscript{107} Longworth and the pilots decided to fly as close as possible without incurring undue risks. Longworth remembered making his decision primarily because he did not wish to risk the lives of his men unnecessarily.\textsuperscript{108}

For the two days that the pool operated in Panama, 20-21 December, the reporters encountered numerous difficulties. On several occasions the military informed journalists that they could not take pictures of certain things. Pete Williams, in Washington, had ordered that the journalists were not allowed to photograph or interview wounded U.S.

\textsuperscript{107}Longworth, CMH interview, 16.

\textsuperscript{108}“Hoffman Report,” 12.
servicemen. Williams had issued the order so as to spare the wounded's next-of-kin finding out the injury of their loved one on the television or in print before official notification by the Department of Defense. Scoyners also denied pool photographers' request to photograph caskets bearing men killed in action. The question of notification did not appear to be applicable for this request since the caskets were closed and they bore no identification of the bodies inside. Longsworth also dealt with requests from reporters for access to certain areas and sources of information. In one incident, reporters asked Longsworth for permission to interview Panamanian detainees. A U.S. Army Lieutenant had earlier barred reporters from talking with detainees under his charge. Longsworth intervened on behalf of the journalists and facilitated their interviews of the detainees. On 21 December, Longsworth denied a request from journalists to photograph several damaged U.S. helicopters at Howard AFB. Longsworth based his decision on an order from Air Force Brigadier General Robin Tarnow, commander of the 830th Air Division. Tarnow was concerned that photographers might inadvertently take pictures of classified equipment on the field at the time.

Members of the pool grew increasingly restless during 20 and 21 December. On the night of 20 December, they attended another briefing by a member of the U.S. Embassy. One reporter deemed the event as "worthless." A SOCOM PAO stated that the

109 "Hoffman Report," 13. When asked about the incident involving the caskets, Scoyners stated that he could not remember that incident, but noted that things were pretty hectic at the time and that he may have indeed denied the photographers' request.


briefing was done because it was “either doing that or hanging around the press center.”

There were also communications difficulties. “It was a nightmare,” said Army Captain Barbara Summers. “The faxing and refaxing operation,” said Houston Post reporter Kathy Lewis, “was a nightmare.” Both women were describing, from a difference in location of over a thousand miles, the problems with trying to get written pool reports from Panama to the Pentagon for distribution. CPT Summers was a member of the staff at the Pentagon, while Lewis was a member of the pool in Panama. On Wednesday morning, the pool filed its initial reports via fax machine to the Pentagon. Unknown to anyone, the fax machine was not working properly. No one in Panama knew of the problem until late in the day. By that point reporters had already sent “something like 33 stories.” Although the stories were later resent, a whole day’s worth of news had been delayed. LTC Longsworth remembered that “somewhere around about 100 stories or something like that were ultimately filed during the period” of communications problems. Pool photographers also had difficulty sending their products back to the United States. One member of the pool estimated that it took about ten hours to send six to eight photos. The procedure should have taken only ten minutes per picture.

A contributing factor to the communications problems was the growing number of reporters in Panama. Additional news personnel, traveling from the United States but not

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112 Watson, 151.


114 The fax machine was cutting faxes off at the margins, eliminating large sections of the text. “Hoffman Report,” 14.
members of the pool, arrived as early as Thursday, 22 December. In one of the most publicized events involving the press during JUST CAUSE, ABC anchorman Sam Donaldson traveled to Panama to file a special report for ABC News magazine “Prime Time Live.” Many other journalists expressed the opinion that Donaldson had received special treatment from the military. “When Sam Donaldson arrived,” one unidentified military escort remarked, “it was like the President had walked into the media center.” This escort stated that Scoyners was “given over basically to supporting Sam Donaldson.” Both Scoyners and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Donnelly, stated that they had received pressure from Washington to give Donaldson favorable treatment.115

The DOD National Media Pool disbanded on Christmas Eve. Although coverage of the operation continued through the first weeks of the new year, the pool ceased to function as a body on the same day that Manuel Noriega entered the Papal Nunciatura. Operation JUST CAUSE was the first real test for the DOD media pool. In many ways it was a failure. However, the experience gained in Panama proved useful in planning for the coverage of the much larger operation that was to begin in less than eighteen months. The public response to the successful operation in Panama was very similar to the reaction after Grenada six years earlier. President George Bush’s approval rating jumped by nearly

115.“Hoffman Report,” 14. Williams offered a different explanation of the Donaldson trip. He recalled that Donaldson was only one of several journalists that the DOD flew to Panama after the National Media Pool had begun work. Williams denied that he or anyone in his office had provided ABC News or Donaldson any special treatment. Williams, interview. Sam Donaldson’s recollection was very similar to Williams’s. See Sam Donaldson, interview by author, tape recording, Washington, D.C., 10 January 1999. However, the resent of pool members at having to compete with non-pool journalists led to many complaints and hurt feelings.
ten points, rising from 71 percent in early December 1989 to 80 percent in January 1990.  

Following the completion of operations in Panama, the Department of Defense once again organized a review of its handling of the media. Like the report of the Sible Panel that predated it, the “Review of the Panama Pool Deployment” cited several failings of the military and the Defense Department. In particular, the report’s author, Fred Hoffman, criticized Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney for being overly concerned with operational security. Cheney’s concern for security, according to Hoffman, was responsible for the delayed military planning of how to deal with the media and the late activation of the DOD National Media Pool. In response to the report, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, issued a communication that was distributed to every major joint command and each of the military services’ public affairs divisions. Entitled “DOD National Media Pool Planning Requirements,” the memo outlined the history of pool coverage of the battlefield and what needed to be done in the future to improve relations between the military and members of the media. Specifically citing the experiences in Panama and the critical report from Hoffman, the memo also explained the problems during Operation URGENT FURY that led to the formation of the

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117 Subj: DOD National Media Pool Planning Requirements, from CJCS to Command Group, 18 May 1990, Media Briefing File, Public Affairs Guidance, Box 2, Records of the U.S. Central Command, Record Group 518, National Archives, College Park, MD.
DOD Pool. In its assessment of the two operations, the memorandum concluded that the military would have to deal with the media in future operations by utilizing the DOD National Media Pool more effectively. The large number of reporters that attempted to cover both URGENT FURY and JUST CAUSE made it imperative that the military work better with the pool if the military had any hopes of influencing future coverage of military operations.

The Grenada and Panama operations clearly revealed the media’s need for and access to information, [the memo stated]. During the first 24 hours of the Grenada action, more than 600 reporters attempted to gain access to the operation. In Panama, more than 800 reporters eventually arrived on-scene. In both cases, the large number of journalists overwhelmed the assets available to support them. Alternatively, the National Media Pool, consisting of up to 16 media and 3 escort officers, is structured to provide media coverage of military activities until the command has had time to stabilize the situation and establish open media coverage. Once open coverage is achieved, the pool is to be disbanded.

... Commanders are reminded 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. ... Commanders are reminded that the media aspects of military operations are important, will get national and international attention, and warrant your personal attention.118

The military’s assessment of its own performance in handling the media in both Grenada and Panama was correct. Two operations, both hastily planned and successfully executed, were tarnished by inadequate planning for the press. Both presidents Reagan and Bush crafted simple, clear aims that the military achieved quickly and relatively cheaply allowing the public easily to support and approve of the operations. The use of the DOD National Media Pool offered one solution to the problems that plagued the

118 Ibid.
military and the media. Growing out of the acrimonious times following the U.S.
operation in Grenada, the National Media Pool offered pluses for both the military and the
media. When used correctly, the DOD Pool would give press representatives access to
the initial stages of military operations while allowing the military the opportunity to
preserve operational security and control access to the battlefield. In its first test in
combat during Operation JUST CAUSE, the pool did not work well for either side. The
way in which the Defense Department activated and planned for the pool showed
problems in the military handling of the press. And the large influx of reporters working
outside of the pool quickly overwhelmed the resources of the military in Panama. The
memo from the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff clearly outlined the past
problems. It also talked of an ongoing study to eliminate some of the problems
experienced in Panama. The solutions of that study would be tested sooner than anyone
expected.
Chapter 7
Burnishing the Shield:
Building National Support during the
Crisis in the Persian Gulf

During the early hours of 2 August 1990, Iraqi military forces crossed the border between their country and the small nation of Kuwait. Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, had been threatening to take some sort of military action against Kuwait for nearly a month. On 17 July 1990, Saddam Hussein had accused Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates of over producing oil and driving prices down. Iraq needed more money to rebuild its military and economy ravaged by eight years of war with Iran. The Iraqi president further accused Kuwait and other Arab states of conspiring with the United States and Israel to weaken his nation's economy and undermine its military buildup. Although Kuwait had been a major financial contributor to Iraq during its long war with Iran, the government of Iraq grew increasingly hostile toward its neighbor in the closing weeks of July 1990.

During talks on 25 July with the U.S. ambassador to Baghdad, April Glaspie, Saddam delivered a message to President George Bush that stated that Iraq would not take military action against Kuwait. In return, Glaspie assured Iraq's leader that the United States had no interest in Iraq's long-standing border dispute with Kuwait. However, spokespersons for President Bush restated the United States continuing commitment to peace and stability in the region.¹ President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt announced on 26 July that Iraq

¹Statement on the situation in the Persian Gulf, 26 July 1990, Daily Guidance Files, Box 119, Bush Press Records, Press Office, George H. W. Bush Library, College Station, TX. Records from the Bush library will be hereafter cited as BPR, GBL.
and Kuwait would hold talks in Saudi Arabia in the hope of finding a peaceful solution to the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait. The talks, scheduled for the first week of August, never took place. Saddam Hussein withdrew from the negotiations on 1 August. With Iraqi troops already massed on the common border between Iraq and Kuwait, Saddam ordered his forces to advance in the early hours of following day. By the end of 2 August, the Iraqi military had successfully occupied Kuwait's largest cities and its major oil producing regions. The first battle of what became known as the "Gulf War" had ended in a total victory for Iraq.

Although Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was not a complete surprise to the leadership of the United States, Saddam Hussein's audacity in moving so decisively to occupy his neighbor was unexpected. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft notified President George Bush of the invasion at 8:30 p.m. (EST) on the evening of 1 August. Bush quickly convened a meeting of his national security team. This team, known as the Group of Eight, served as the principle advisors to the president in times of international crisis.

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4 Eight hours separate Kuwait City and the East Coast of the United States. News of the invasion reached the White House at 8:30 p.m. EST on 1 August, 4:30 a.m. local time in the Middle East.

5 Members of the Group of Eight included President George Bush, Vice-President Dan Quayle, Secretary of State James A. Baker III, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, National Security Advisors Brent Scowcroft, Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates, and Chief of Staff John Sununu. See U.S. News, Triumph without Victory, 32.
By eleven o'clock p.m. the leader of Kuwait, Emir Sheik Jaber al-Sabah, requested American assistance. By then, however, the Kuwaitis had made the request much too late. The administration team quickly got in touch with the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, and Secretary of State James Baker who was concluding a trip to the Soviet Union. Baker was insistent that the administration quickly approach the UN and gain official condemnation of the Iraqi invasion. Pickering began immediately to organize an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council. He also contacted the Kuwaiti ambassador to the UN, Saud Nasir al-Sabah, and notified him of the invasion. The Kuwaiti ambassador had heard nothing of the invasion until Pickering told him of the bad news. Pickering quickly drafted the text of a resolution condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, demanding that Iraq "immediately and unconditionally" withdraw its forces from Kuwait, calling for negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait to settle their disputes, and authorizing the UN Security Council to meet again when and if future events in the Persian Gulf warranted such action.

Through late in the night, U.S. officials in Washington and New York worked diligently to gather as much information about the situation in Kuwait as possible and to devise a proper response. In the early hours of 2 August (EST), George Bush went to bed, and National Security Advisor (NSA) Scowcroft dozed on a couch in his office. In the Pentagon, the U.S. military leaders continued to work. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

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of Staff, General Colin Powell, notified the Joint Staffs’ Chief of Operations, Lieutenant General Thomas Kelly, that he wanted General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command, to be in Washington by 7:00 a.m. the next day, to brief the National Security Council during its eight o’clock meeting. Kelly made the call and continued to monitor the situation in the Middle East.9

At 5:00 a.m. on the morning of 2 August, Scowcroft delivered an executive order to President Bush who signed it, freezing the assets of both Iraq and Kuwait held in the United States.10 Later that morning, Bush spoke with reporters about the invasion and his response. In his statement to the press, the president outlined the country’s aims that would guide future U.S. action during the crisis. Matching almost exactly with the wording of United Nations Security Council Resolution 660, which the Council had approved just that morning by a vote of 14-0, the president articulated a clear policy.

9Bob Woodward, The Commanders (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 220-225. The U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM or CENTCOM) was established by President Jimmy Carter in November 1979 following the fall of the Shah of Iran. Originally designated as the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, the military command was based in the United States. RDJTF was originally intended to respond quickly to unexpected international crisis. By 1982, the Reagan administration had converted the RDJTF to the U.S. Central Command with responsibility for the Arabian Peninsula and the adjacent Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, as well as the area from Egypt to the Sudan to the Horn of Africa and all the way northeast to Afghanistan and Pakistan. In all, the geographic area covered by CENTCOM was more than four thousand miles. Because few nations in the region wanted U.S. forces stationed on their soil, the headquarters for CENTCOM remain in the United States at McDill AFB in Tampa, FL. No combat forces were permanently staffed to the command. Instead, CENTCOM could call on U.S. units from all over the world when it needed to deploy forces overseas. See H. Norman Schwarzkopf, It Doesn’t Take a Hero (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 254, 266; Colin Powell My American Journey (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 369.

10Remarks by the President Regarding Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, 2 August 1990, Box 119, Daily Guidance File, Press Office, BPR, GBL.
First, he condemned the Iraqi military invasion of Kuwait. "There is no place for this sort of naked aggression in today's world," he stated. Next, Bush called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces in Kuwait. To show Saddam of his seriousness, the president announced that he had instituted the first level of economic sanctions, freezing Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets held in the United States. On the international front, Bush told reporters that Secretary of State Baker had already begun to build an international coalition against the actions of Iraq. In the closing of his statement, the president reaffirmed the importance of the Middle East to the United States. "We remain committed," he assured the reporters, "to take whatever steps are necessary to defend our long-standing vital interests in the Gulf." However, his conviction seemed to falter just moments later when he took his first question from the White House Press Corps. Helen Thomas, the veteran UPI White House correspondent, asked the president if he contemplated direct U.S. intervention or the sending of U.S. troops to the region. "I'm not contemplating such action and I . . . would not discuss it if I were," he responded.

The president then left to meet with his National Security Council. During the meeting, the members discussed the implications of the Iraqi invasion and what options the United States had. The Bush team reached no firm conclusions before the president departed for a longstanding speaking engagement at the Aspen Institute in Colorado. There he would have the opportunity to speak with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher about the recent events in the Middle East.11

In Aspen, Thatcher and Bush discussed the crisis and in a meeting with the press on 2 August, Bush told reporters that he and his British counterpart were "looking at [the situation in the Persian Gulf] on exactly the same wavelength -- concerned about this naked aggression, condemning it, and hoping that a peaceful solution will be found that will result in the restoration of the Kuwaiti leaders to their rightful place, and prior to that, a withdrawal of Iraqi forces" from Kuwait. When pressed about a military option, he stated that the administration was "not ruling any options in, but we're not ruling any out." Following his trip to Aspen, the President returned to Washington for only a day before retreating with his National Security Council to the presidential rural residence at Camp David, where the Group of Eight held intense policy discussions concerning the future U.S. response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. During the NSC meeting at Camp David on 4 August, Bush and his advisors concentrated on military options. General Powell stressed that any military response had two distinct dimensions -- the deterrence of further Iraqi aggression and an offensive capability to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait. USCENTCOM commander, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was also present at Camp David. Schwarzkopf described the capabilities of the Iraqi forces and the logistical difficulties that would arise in trying to support U.S. forces in the Middle East. During the discussions at Camp David, the Bush team further defined its policy and options. Bush also contacted King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and asked for the king's permission to send a

\[12\] Remarks by the President and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Press Availability, 2 August 1990, The Catto Residence, Aspen, Colorado, Daily Guidance File, Box 119, BPR, GBL.

\[13\] Ibid.
delegation to brief the Saudis on what the United States was prepared to do. Fahd did not respond immediately, and Bush and his advisors returned to Washington on 5 August.14 Public reaction to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the president's handling of the crisis was cautiously favorable during the first weekend of August. In a Gallup poll asked between 3 and 4 August, 52 percent of respondents said they approved of the way Bush was handling the "situation in the Middle East involving Iraq and Kuwait." In a similar poll asked between 7 and 8 August, CBS/New York Times pollsters found that 64 percent of respondents approved of Bush's "handling of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait," while only 18 percent disapproved.15

When Bush landed on the White House lawn and disembarked from Marine One, he did not initially intend to signal a dramatic shift in U.S. policy. In his memoirs, he wrote, "Although over the weekend I had been thinking about the need to voice my determination to the American people, I had not decided when I should do it." As he walked from the helicopter to the Executive Mansion, he stopped to speak with the press. Just intending to "fill everybody in on the diplomatic steps" the administration had taken and the international reaction, Bush gave a brief statement and then took a few questions.

14Bush and Scowcroft, World Transformed, 327-332.

15John Mueller, Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994), Table 8, 193; Table 9, 194. Mueller offers the most complete listing of public opinion data from the Gulf War period. His book consists of two parts. The first is comprised of his analysis of the polls and comparisons between the Gulf War and earlier conflicts. In the second portion, Mueller has compiled a complete listing of poll questions and their results relating to the Gulf crisis and conflict. Unless otherwise noted, references to Mueller's work are taken from the second section. Analysis offered in the text is that of the author.
In the answer to the final question about what the U.S. government was going to do to protect U.S. citizens in Kuwait, the president said:

I am not going to discuss what we’re doing in terms of moving forces, anything of that nature. But I view it very seriously, not just that but any threat to any other countries, as well as I view very seriously our determination to reverse this awful aggression. And please believe me, there are an awful lot of countries that are in total accord with what I’ve just said, and I salute them. They are staunch friends and allies, and we will be working with them all for collective action. This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait.\(^\text{16}\)

The sudden shift in policy, from “We’re not discussing intervention” to “This will not stand” shocked many. General Powell was watching the president on CNN and sat upright when he heard Bush utter his last sentence. Powell turned off the television and went to the map on his desk. He knew from what the president had said that he had a new mission.\(^\text{17}\)

Although General Powell intensified planning for the deployment of U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf region following the president’s meeting with reporters on 5 August, the U.S. still did not have permission to send its forces to Saudi Arabia. Secretary of Defense

\(^\text{16}\)Remarks by the President Upon Arrival From Camp David, 5 August 1990, The South Lawn, Daily Press File, BPR, GBL.

\(^\text{17}\)Powell, American Journey, 453. Dick Cheney, interview by author, tape recording, 1 February 1999. Cheney recalled a similar reaction to Bush’s impromptu press conference on 5 February 1990. However, Cheney offered reasons for the apparent shift in policy. First, Bush had not ruled out military intervention when he first spoke with reporters on 2 August. He had refused to discuss options and then went to consult with his advisors. After that meeting with the NSC, and following his talks with Margaret Thatcher and the weekend meetings at Camp David, Bush had a better understanding of his options. The lines tracing the movement from one view to the other exist, if below the surface. However, the dramatic way that Bush delivered his view that the Iraqi aggression would not stand sent a stronger message than his previous statements had.
Dick Cheney had left Washington the previous day to deliver a briefing to the Saudi government. While Cheney was traveling to Saudi Arabia, the United Nations Security Council passed the second of twelve resolutions aimed at forcing Iraq from Kuwait. UN Security Council Resolution 661 imposed economic and military sanctions on Iraq, embargoing nearly all goods into and out of the country. The international community was slowly isolating Saddam Hussein and his country from the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{18} The continued U.S. reliance on the United Nations marked a definite policy by the Bush government. Led by Secretary of State Baker, the U.S. government attempted to build a strong international coalition opposed to the Iraqi aggression before it directly appealed to the United States Congress or people. Unilateral U.S. action, like that taken during the invasion of Panama less than eighteen months earlier, would not work in the present situation. International support also made it easier for the Arab countries of the Middle East to seek U.S. assistance.\textsuperscript{19} Secretary Cheney’s mission to Saudi Arabia was to learn if King Fahd would accept U.S. help.

Cheney and the rest of the U.S. delegation met with Fahd and his advisors on the evening of 6 August, just four days after Iraq had seized control of Kuwait. Cheney made it clear to the King that if he waited too long to ask for assistance, as the Kuwaiti government had done, the U.S. could do nothing to stop Iraqi forces from seizing portions of Saudi Arabia. General Schwarzkopf, who had accompanied the Defense Secretary, outlined the military plan for moving U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia to protect it from attack.


\textsuperscript{19}Baker, interview, 21 January 1999.
The U.S. could dispatch the first troops immediately. They could arrive in a very short time. Schwarzkopf told the king. Within four months the deployment would be complete and Fahd’s country would be safe from Saddam Hussein. Cheney ended the presentation by saying, “If this invasion of Kuwait is not countered, the consequences for the kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be grave.” The combination of U.S. forces and the Saudi military could defend Saudi Arabia from Saddam. If the demonstration of international solidarity and the economic sanctions were not enough to force Iraq to relinquish its control of Kuwait, Saudi and American forces could force Saddam to comply. After a lengthy discussion with his royal advisors, King Fahd welcomed the presence of U.S. forces to help defend his country. Cheney responded to the king’s invitation by saying, “This has been a historic meeting.”

King Fahd’s agreement to accept the aid of U.S. troops in defending his country from Iraqi attack marked an important step in building an international Coalition opposed to Saddam Hussein and his aggressive tactics. When the Saudi king granted U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney permission to deploy American forces within Saudi Arabia, he signaled a new alliance between Western nations and the moderate governments of the Middle East. While American military forces had staged joint training exercises with Egypt since the early 1980s and had assisted in the protection of oil tankers during the Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. military had not conducted major operations within Saudi Arabia, the home of Islam’s two holiest places — Mecca and Medina. King Fahd’s willingness to

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accept U.S. forces demonstrated the split between Arab nations that Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait had caused. Coupled with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and U.S. Secretary of State Baker's joint condemnation of the Iraq invasion on 3 August, the Saudi decision to allow U.S. forces into the region paved the way for a broad international alliance opposed to the continued expansion of Iraqi power and the reversal of Saddam's unprovoked seizure of Kuwait. Almost immediately after the Saudi government granted the United States permission to base forces in their country, American diplomats and military leaders began to encourage other nations to join the multinational coalition opposed to Iraqi aggression. In particular, U.S. leaders appealed to Muslim nations -- like Egypt, Syria, and Morocco -- to assist in the defense of Saudi Arabia and to isolate Iraq economically and politically from the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{21}

Immediately upon gaining permission from the Saudi Arabian government, the U.S. military began to dispatch military forces to the region. The Division Ready Brigade of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division left for the Gulf region on 6 August. The 1st Tactical Fighter Wing from Langley AFB also rushed to bases in Saudi Arabia and surrounding nations. Other U.S. forces scrambled to deploy halfway around the world. On 8 August, President Bush went on television to address the people of the United States. He explained that he had ordered U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia to help defend that nation against Iraqi aggression. Appealing to the people of the U.S., he called on them "to stand up for what's right and condemn what's wrong -- all in the cause of peace." The

\footnote{For a discussion of the joint U.S.-Soviet statement condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait see, **Add full citation - Baker, Politics of Diplomacy, 2-7. See also U.S. News, Triumph without Victory, 76-89.}
president then stressed four principles guiding American policy in the region. First, President Bush said that he had taken action to “compel the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait.” The president also hoped to restore Kuwait’s legitimate government and remove the puppet regime installed by Saddam Hussein. Third, the United States was working to preserve security and stability in a region of the world that was vital to the nation’s strategic interests. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait had threatened the free flow of oil that most of the world, including the U.S., depended on for economic health. Finally, Bush had sent U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia to protect the lives of American citizens abroad. Harkening back to his own past, Bush reminded the U.S. people that failure to stand up to aggression nearly forty years before led to a vast world war. “Appeasement does not work. As was the case in the 1930s, we see Saddam Hussein as an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbors.” Bush closed his statement to the people by asking them once again to stand up for their principles and “to pray for those who are committed to protect and defend America’s interests.”

Public reaction to the president’s actions was favorable. Immediately after Bush addressed the country Gallup again asked a sample if they approved of the president’s handling of the crisis in the Gulf. Between 9 and 12 August, Bush’s approval ratings increased first to 77 percent and then to 80 percent. CBS and The New York Times also readdressed their question of support for the president’s actions in the Middle East, finding a similar upward trend in responses. On 10 August, 84 percent of respondents

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22 Address by the President to the Nation, 8 August 1990, The Oval Office, Daily Guidance File, Box 120, BPR, GBL.
said they either strongly approved or approved somewhat of Bush handling of the invasion.\textsuperscript{23} The president's own approval ratings also increased as a result of the crisis. In late July 1990, the last time the Gallup organization polled Americans on their approval of the president before the Gulf crisis, 60 percent of respondents said they approved of Bush. By 12 August, that number had increased to 74 percent — the highest ratings since the U.S. intervention in Panama over eighteen months earlier.\textsuperscript{24}

On the same day that Bush spoke to the country about his response to the crisis in the Gulf, Secretary Cheney, back from his trip to Saudi Arabia, and General Powell met with the press at the Pentagon. During his remarks, General Powell asked the press to help maintain operational security while U.S. forces continued to deploy to the Middle East.\textsuperscript{25} Immediately after Powell appealed to reporters for help, a journalist asked Cheney why no correspondents were deploying with U.S. troops. According to the revised public affairs guidance issued following the conclusion of U.S. operations in Panama, the Department of Defense National Media Pool was supposed to deploy with U.S. forces during the initial stages of any operation. Cheney explained that the decision not to include reporters with the first deployment of forces was not his. "Obviously," he

\textsuperscript{23}Mueller, Public Opinion and Policy, Table 8, 193; Table 9, 194.

\textsuperscript{24}Mueller, Public Opinion and Policy, Table 1, 180.

\textsuperscript{25}Powell had already experienced an earlier violation of operation security. On the evening that he relayed the order to begin sending troops to Saudi Arabia, Powell learned that a mistake within the military had allowed the activation orders to go out at lower levels uncoded. A sharp Pentagon reporter, CBS' David Martin picked up the story and broke the news that U.S. forces were deploying to the Middle East. The first order to Military Airlift Command went out at 8:45 p.m. EST. By the next morning reporters began speculating on their destinations. See Powell, American Journey, 454-5.
responded, "we think it's important that [the press has] the opportunity to cover the actions of U.S. forces in the area, and Pete [Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)] will be working on finding ways to make that possible." Cheney continued by reminding journalists that attitudes toward the press in Saudi Arabia were not the same as those in the United States. "You have to keep in mind, though, that inside Saudi Arabia itself, Saudi Arabia is a sovereign nation, they have their own rules and regulations and requirements, and they establish the ground rules under which people have access to cover activities inside the kingdom." Cheney promised to do what he could to help journalists. However, the Saudi Arabian government did not normally permit foreign journalists entrance into their nation and only occasionally granted reporters temporary visas to travel through their country for a few days to cover a specific story. In August 1990, no foreign news organizations had an office within the country and no U.S. journalist was present in the country at the time of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.26

The media continued to pressure the military and civilian leadership in the Pentagon to influence the Saudis to allow U.S. reporters to cover what was obviously becoming the largest story of the time. On 9 August, reporters again had questions about access to the deployment during the Department of Defense Daily News Briefing. When asked if the Saudi Arabian government had restricted the activities of female personnel with U.S. military units, Pentagon spokesperson Pete Williams replied that the Saudi Arabian government had allowed women to deploy as normal. A journalist in the crowd

26Cheney Interview, 1 February 1999; Sam Donaldson, interview by Author, tape recording, 10 January 1999.
commented sarcastically that the implication was that "the Saudis dislike reporters more than they dislike women."\textsuperscript{27} For the first time, the Pentagon assured journalists that the military would facilitate coverage of the operation as much as possible. Some sort of pool would deploy to the Middle East to cover the U.S. operations there. Williams informed journalists that for access on a longer term, they would have to appeal to the Saudi government for permission to enter their country.\textsuperscript{28}

That same day, the public affairs officer of Central Command notified units involved in the deployment to the Middle East that either the DOD National Media Pool or a pool comprised of reporters already in the region would soon be visiting U.S. forces in or near Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{29} During the second weekend of August, U.S. reporters already stationed in the Middle East had the opportunity to visit several Navy ships involved in what had become known as Operation Desert Shield.\textsuperscript{30} On 12 August, the Department of Defense activated the National Media Pool. Made up of representatives from nine news organizations, the pool departed the from Langley AFB at 8:00 a.m. It first traveled to Tampa, FL, for a briefing by members of the Central Command staff. By 12:15 p.m. the

\textsuperscript{27}Department of Defense Daily News Briefing, 9 August 1990, Pete Williams ASD(PA), Daily Guidance File, Box 120, BPR, GBL. The reporter who made the sarcastic comment was Bob Zelnick of ABC News.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{29}Public Affairs Guidance, 09 Aug. 1990, USCINCCENT, McDill AFB, Media Briefing File, Public Affairs Guidance, Box 2, Records of the U.S. Central Command, Record Group 518, National Archives Building II, College Park, MD. Hereafter cited as MBF, PAG, Box #, RG 518, NAB II.

\textsuperscript{30}Memorandum for Correspondents, Desert Shield #2, 10 August 1990, Daily Guidance File, Box 120, BPR, GBL.
members of the pool were again airborne and on their way to Saudi Arabia. The pool — consisting of representatives from national newspapers, broadcast news organizations (television and radio), and the wire services — arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 13 August. During their trip from the United States to Riyadh, public affairs escorts advised the reporters of the ground rules that they would be operating under during their stay in Saudi Arabia. Journalists were not to reveal the locations or designations of units in Saudi Arabia, details of operational units, or any other significant military information.\(^{31}\)

Central Command had outlined the military plan for dealing with the press in Annex F (Foxtrot) of the operational order for Operation Desert Shield. On 11 August, the Secretary of Defense and his Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs had approved the public affairs plan for Desert Shield. The inclusion of a specific annex devoted to public affairs guidance in the operational plan was an outgrowth of the lessons learned from the military intervention in Panama. Recognizing that insufficient planning had contributed to the development of problems during Operation JUST CAUSE, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs had succeeded in modifying the Defense Department's planning policy. All future operations had to include some sort of rough public affairs plan from the beginning.\(^{32}\) The Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) for Desert Shield called for the earliest possible deployment of some sort of media pool consistent with the sensitivities of the Saudi government. The military established a Joint  

\(^{31}\)Proposed Public Affairs Plan for Deployment of USCINCENT AOR National Media Pool, 11 Aug. 1990, MBF, PAG, Box 2, RG 518, NAB II.  

\(^{32}\)See Chapter 6 above.
Information Bureau (JIB) in Riyadh and subordinate JIBs in other areas in the region.\footnote{33} The OASD(PA) directed the military to "execute an active [public affairs] program that conveys to external and internal audiences the resolve of the [U.S. government] to protect its regional interests and affords the NMRs (national media representatives) appropriate access to unclassified, timely, and accurate accounts of U.S. operations. Additionally, the program seeks to illustrate U.S. forces’ abilities to deter and defend and if necessary fight and defeat enemy forces." The public affairs officers assigned to CENTCOM were to stress that the U.S. forces in the region were there to set up defensive positions with other members of a multinational coalition, and to train with the Saudi and other military units. The U.S. military did not seek conflict. Its mission was wholly defensive, and it did not seek to drive Iraq from Kuwait by force.\footnote{34}

According to the operational order governing media relations, the military in Saudi Arabia was to allow reporters access to unclassified information and area commanders. The operational order, however, did not include any measure for field censorship but stressed the need to maintain operation security and instructed public affairs officers to conduct "security at the source." Military personnel trained in public affairs would also serve as escorts for reporters. Escorts would act as liaisons between the media representatives and members of the military. They would assist reporters in gaining access

\footnote{33}{In addition to the Joint Information Bureaus the U.S. Central Command established in Riyadh, CENTCOM created a JIB in Dhahran and another in the United Arab Emirates city of Dubay.}

\footnote{34}{Annex F to OPORD DESERT SHIELD Public Affairs, 12 Aug. 1990, MBF, PAG, Box 2, RG 518, NAB II.}
to information, acquiring transportation, and filing news stories. Escorts would also inform journalists if portions of their stories posed potential or real security violations. Annex F included a listing of the ground rules under which journalists would operate while pool members. The rules, based upon those used in Vietnam, prohibited the publication of certain types of information, including future plans or the weaknesses of U.S. equipment or tactics. The military also barred journalists from identifying soldiers other than task force commanders or commanding officers of units.\textsuperscript{35}

The members of the DOD Pool that deployed to Saudi Arabia on 12 August accepted the military-imposed restrictions. Most were happy just to have the opportunity to cover the U.S. forces in the Gulf.\textsuperscript{36} During their stay, the journalists visited Air Force, Army, and Navy units.\textsuperscript{37} Even while the DOD Pool was active in Saudi Arabia, other journalists were attempting to gain permission from the Saudi government to cover the U.S. forces in that country. One of the first journalists to receive permission to visit Saudi Arabia outside of the official pool was Sam Donaldson of ABC News. Donaldson had used contacts within the Saudi embassy in Washington, D.C., to obtain visas permitting him and his crew from “ABC Prime Time Live” to travel to Saudi Arabia and report on

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36}Colonel William Mulvey (USA), interview by William Hammond and Jack Pulwars, Center of Military History, 21 May 1991. COL Mulvey was the Director of the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran from 1 December 1990 until March 1991.

\textsuperscript{37}Proposed PAG, 11 Aug. 1990.
the continuing U.S. deployment. Soon other journalists also gained entrance to the country and began to send back stories of U.S. soldiers, sailors, marines, and air force personnel from the desert. *Washington Post* defense reporter Molly Moore accompanied the DOD National Media Pool when it went to Saudi Arabia during the middle of August. Moore, who had been away from Washington when other pool members received their visas from the Saudi embassy, had learned that the visa she received was good for thirty days while the pool would stay in the region for only an extended weekend. She approached Pete Williams and informed him that she intended to remain in Saudi Arabia after the National Media Pool left. Williams told Moore that he would not stop her. When the pool’s airplane departed for the United States, Moore simply stayed in her hotel room, becoming one of only a handful of Western reporters in Saudi Arabia during the initial stages of the military buildup. Journalists like Donaldson and Moore demonstrated that it was possible to gain access to Saudi Arabia during the initial phases of the deployment, but the U.S. military and government could not do much to help reporters in early August.

By 24 August media relations had become an important issue and CENTCOM sent out a message to all commanders in the field explaining why they should cooperate with the media. “For most Americans,” the message began, “the media will provide the window through which Operation Desert Shield will be evaluated and supported.

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[38]Donaldson, interview, 10 January 1999; Sam Donaldson, interview with author, phone conversation, 4 February 1999.

Consequently, it is imperative that we support this link back to the American people, but at the same time protect our operational security.” CENTCOM directed commanders to support the efforts of the press to tell the “positive story of our well trained, motivated and dedicated soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.” Schwarzkopf’s headquarters also instructed commanders to facilitate the press’ efforts as long as such action did not interfere with their mission. The message concluded by urging commanders to release bad information as quickly as possible. If the military addressed bad news first they could “pre-empt any false claims of coverup and keep credibility by telling the press both the good and bad news.”

Despite the gradual increase in the number of journalists in Saudi Arabia, many within the media continued to express concerns over their limited access to cover the deployment of U.S. forces. On 22 August, journalists again questioned Secretary of Defense Cheney on access issues. When asked if the American people would be able to rely on “free, open and complete press coverage of the American men and women deployed overseas,” the Secretary replied that much depended on the Saudi Arabian government. According to Cheney, the Saudis were the main obstacle to granting greater press access to the operation. Because Saudi Arabia was a “closed” society, the government of King Fahd was slow to appreciate the demands of the American press. Cheney reaffirmed his commitment to provide “an adequate flow of information to the American people about what our young men and women are doing in Saudi Arabia,” but

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40 Field Support for Public Affairs in Operation Desert Shield, 24 August 1990, MBF, PAG, Box 2, RG 518, NAB II.
cautioned that he did not “have the final authority over what kind of access the
government of Saudi Arabia grants to our press.” Cheney went on to note that the United
States and Saudi Arabia were coming to grips with cultural differences regarding not only
the press but also other areas like the role of women. The Secretary remained convinced
that the U.S. and the Saudis would soon work out an arrangement for press coverage.\footnote{Press Briefing by Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, 22 August 1990, Walker’s Point, Kennebunkport,
ME, Daily Guidance File, Box 120, BPR, GBL.}

The massive U.S. deployment to the Gulf region proved to be such a compelling
story that editors and publishers were not satisfied with assurances from the U.S. and
Saudi governments that access would increase. More and more journalists used
connections in the Saudi government to gain visas to visit the country. Gradually the
Saudis relaxed their position on the press, and by September the number of journalists
covering the operation had grown to over 400.\footnote{James Fetig, “Inside Fort Apache: The United States Army and the News Media in the Persian Gulf War,” (Unpublished paper, 1991), 17.} In addition to the original JIB at
CENTCOM Forward Headquarters in Riyadh, the military formed JIBs in Dhahran and
Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The two principle JIBs in Riyadh and Dhahran were
responsible for two very different tasks. In Riyadh, public affairs officers conducted daily
briefings for the press and acted as the directors of public affairs for the U.S. Central
Command and its commanders. The JIB in Dhahran served as a central clearing house for
journalists who wanted to cover forces in the field. As had happened in Grenada and
Panama, the large number of journalists attempting to cover the military operation taxed
the resources of the military. In order to deal with the many reporters in Saudi Arabia, the military began to use pools to cover activities in the field. At first pools mainly covered specific events. In Dhahran, the journalists had named representatives to act as liaisons between a certain type of journalist and the military. For example, the television journalists and their crews selected a pool coordinator which broadcast crews would go out to cover pool events. Each of the news mediums (print, radio, and photography) had a similar arrangement. Pool coordinators also suggested stories to the public affairs officers at the JIB and worked with those officers to facilitate news coverage. Journalists might request a trip to observe an Apache helicopter training exercise. The public affairs officers would then contact the appropriate commander and ask for permission to bring a pool of reporters to cover the exercise. Once the military had granted permission for the pool to cover an exercise, the pool coordinators would designate who would cover the event. After the pool members had traveled out into the field and gotten their stories, they would return to the JIB in Dhahran and share their product with the other journalists who had not been part of the pool. According to the former director of the Dhahran JIB the system worked well through the first months of Desert Shield.  

The stories that the journalists in Saudi Arabia produced were, for the most part, complimentary to the military and supportive of the their mission during the initial phases of the deployment. Many focused on how the soldiers were dealing with the harsh environment of the Arabian desert. Reporters described the intense heat, unfamiliar animals, and the need to drink 7 or 8 gallons of water a day. In a cover story for USA

\[43\]Mulvey, CMH interview, 21 May 1991; Williams, interview, 8 January 1999.
Today Laurence Jolidon wrote how members of the 82nd Airborne Division tried to sleep on top of their HUMMV (the replacement of the venerable Jeep) in the desert heat and how U.S. Marines ordered extra lip balm to combat the effects of the blistering sun.44 Reporters also described new weapons systems to the uninformed U.S. public.

Descriptions of equipment like the Maverick and Hellfire missiles, the Bradley fighting vehicle, and the Apache attack helicopter made for exciting reading and stunning visuals as U.S. forces trained in the desert.45 The social structure of Saudi Arabia highlighted the new role that women played in the U.S. military. Most news organizations did some sort of feature on how women in the military were coping with the social constraints placed on them. Women played a much more visible role in Operation Desert Shield than in any previous deployment of U.S. forces. Barred only from being members of combat units, women served in support roles. Some were members of military police detachments while others acted as drivers, worked in supply units, or served as members of headquarters staffs.46 Journalists seized upon such human interest pieces to fill space while they waited for more substantial events to occur.

While troops from the United States were deploying to the Gulf region, leaders in Baghdad, Washington, and New York continued to maneuver. Between 18 and 20


46Laurence Jolidon, “Female troops blending in -- walk fine line in military Saudi Arabian culture,” USA Today, 3 October 1990. Include section from Molly Moore on her having to write a women’s interest piece.
August, Saddam Hussein placed Western citizens living in Kuwait under Iraqi
"protection." The Iraqi leader also ordered all embassies in Kuwait closed. Saddam may
have hoped that such actions would intimidate the leaders of the West, especially
President Bush and Prime Minister Thatcher, his two most vocal critics. However, in
reaction to the Iraqi detention of foreign nationals, the United Nations once again took
action through the passage of Security Council Resolution 664 which demanded the
immediate release of all foreign nationals in Iraq and Kuwait. Resolution 664 also directed
Iraq to rescind their order to close embassies in Kuwait by 24 August.47 The same day,
the U.S. Navy vigorously began to enforce the UN-imposed sanction against Iraq. On 18
August, a U.S. naval vessel fired the first shots of the crisis when it sent warning shots
across the bows of several Iraqi vessels as they attempted to bring supplies into Iraq. The
crisis in the Gulf region and its escalation into an armed confrontation between members
of the Coalition and Iraq sent shock waves through the world. The price of oil rose to
$28 per barrel. For several days in August, Saddam Hussein attempted to find a
negotiated settlement to the crisis. On 19 August, he offered to free Western hostages if
the United States would withdraw its forces from the region. Bush quickly said no. In
response to Bush's dismissal, Saddam carried through on an earlier threat and began to
move the hostages to strategic locations in Iraq and Kuwait for use as "human shields."
On 22 August, Bush sent a clear message to Iraq that he and the United States were truly
committed to protecting its national interests in the Persian Gulf. He announced that he
was activating 40,000 reserve troops for deployment to the area and to serve as

replacements for forces already committed to the crisis. The activation of the reserve forces involved more Americans in the crisis -- both directly and indirectly -- than the initial deployments had. As thousands of reservists left behind family and friends to join units headed to the Gulf, the American people came to realize the potential seriousness of the situation. For the first time since World War II and the Korean War, the president had mobilized a large portion of the civilian reserve population for military action -- and in the process closely linked the people of the United States to the crisis.\footnote{George Bush, "In Defense of Saudi Arabia," 8 August 1990, Daily Guidance File, BPR, GBL. One of the main criticisms of the Vietnam War was that the nation never fully became committed to the conflict. The military leadership in the immediate post-Vietnam era devised a way to assure that America was fully mobilized to wage a war if it was ever necessary in the future. Under the leadership of General Creighton Abrams, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the military transferred many of its support units to the reserves. This move meant that if the country were ever to become involved in a sustained conflict, the political leadership would have to mobilize the reserves. Abrams hoped that such a move would force the American public to realize the extent of American commitment and would also help to solidify popular support for the endeavor. See Robert K. Griffith, Jr., The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974 (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997).}

On the eve of his deadline for the closure of foreign embassies in Kuwait, Saddam Hussein appeared on television with the families of some of the hostages taken earlier in the month. During that inept attempt to communicate with the world through the media, Saddam appeared jovial as he talked with the Westerners. In a particularly memorable and chilling moment, the Iraqi leader addressed a young British boy. The television cameras clearly captured the young boy's fright at facing the man who had deprived him and his family of their freedom. Whether Hussein meant the television appearance to frighten off the nations opposing his regime or to demonstrate that he was not the vicious aggressor
that Bush and others were portraying, Saddam succeeded mainly in stiffening the resolve of the leadership of the United States. Two further actions by the Iraqi strongman further contributed to his loss of international standing. On 24 August, Saddam placed troops around those embassies, including the U.S. embassy, that did not heed his order to close. Four days later he declared that Kuwait no longer existed as an independent nation, but was now the 19th province of Iraq. Because of these actions, the international Coalition, led both politically and militarily by the United States, seemed even more justified in its opposition to Iraq.

In the United States, the Bush administration continued to work toward the goals that the President had outlined in his address to the American people on 9 August. Diplomatically, Secretary of State James Baker expanded his efforts to build international support of the UN resolutions condemning Iraq. Baker had been able to acquire the unprecedented backing of the Soviet Union. Despite the fact the Iraq had been one of its best client states, the Soviet Union agreed to comply with the UN sanctions and cut off military and other types of aid to the rogue nation. Several states from the Gulf region also agreed to send troops to help defend Saudi Arabia from further Iraqi aggression. This helped dispel accusations that the United States was acting alone in a campaign against a Muslim nation as some critics of Bush's actions claimed. On 11 September, President Bush addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress on the crisis in the Gulf. In his remarks, Bush continued to state the same four principles that guided his policy in the

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Gulf and called upon Congress and the American people to show support for the troops in the Gulf. Bush also took the opportunity to push for the speedy conclusion of other issues that threatened to distract the legislature and the country from the crisis in Southwest Asia. He urged the leaders of Congress to show unity during the time of crisis and to pass a reasonable budget proposal that increased defense spending. The president was able to make such demands because he enjoyed high public approval ratings throughout the first half of September. Driven by the president’s strong leadership on the Gulf crisis, the public opinion polls showed that the nearly 75 percent of the public approved of the president in mid-September. The public also largely approved of his response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. Polls showed that a nearly identical level of public support for the president’s Gulf policies with 71 to 75 percent of respondents approving of his actions.

In the days following Bush’s address to Congress, Great Britain and France strengthened the Coalition against Iraq by agreeing to send combat troops to the region. The addition of troops from these two leading European nations expanded both the political and the military power of the Coalition. Between 2 August and 30 September 1990, more than thirty nations joined the Coalition and supplied forces to oppose Saddam Hussein’s aggression in the Middle East. While the United States, Britain, and France provided the most troops, other nations -- Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Pakistan, and

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50 Remarks by the President to the Joint Session of Congress, 11 September 1990, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C., Daily Guidance File, Box 122, BPR, GBL.

51 Mueller, Public Opinion and Policy, Table 1, 180; Table 8, 193; Table 9, 194.

52 Blair, At War, 24.
Bangladesh — deployed military contingents to the region.\textsuperscript{53} In addition to those countries pledging material aid to the Coalition, the governments of West Germany and Japan agreed to share responsibility for the cost of fielding the large military forces and for defraying Coalition member’s losses for imposing economic sanctions against Saddam Hussein. Perhaps the most important nation supporting the Coalition was the Soviet Union. When Secretary of States James Baker had succeeded in convincing his Soviet counterpart, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, to issue a joint statement condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, he removed many of the obstacles that could have limited the Coalition’s effectiveness. The inclusion of many Arab and Muslim nations also helped to dispel charges of American imperialism in the Middle East and served as a counterweight to Saddam Hussein’s attempts to incite Pan-Arab opposition to the

\textsuperscript{53}The following is a listing of the who committed troops to the Gulf as of 25 January 1991.

Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Gulf Cooperation Council, Honduras, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Syria, Turkey, USSR, United Kingdom, and United States. While all supported the U.S.-led Coalition and contributed to its success not all thirty nations provided combat forces. Denmark assigned one merchant ship to assist the U.S. sealift to the Persian Gulf. Germany, in keeping with its constitutional restrictions on deploying combat forces overseas, provided fourteen ships to operate in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Gulf Cooperation Council (comprised of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) dispatched its entire military arm, the Peninsular Force, augmented by 7,000 Kuwaiti soldiers who escaped the Iraqi invasion. Saudi Arabia deployed 20,000 troops along the Saudi-Iraqi (Kuwaiti) border. Syria dispatched 20,200 soldiers to Saudi Arabia and maintained an additional 50,000 troops along its common border with Iraq. For a more complete break-down of deployment numbers see \textit{Access Guide to the Persian Gulf Crisis}, Mary E. Lord, ed. (Washington, D.C.: ACCESS: A Security Information Service, 1991), 15.
Coalition.\textsuperscript{54} One of the added benefits of the strong international Coalition was the impact it had on the domestic support for U.S. policy in the Gulf. George Bush’s decisive leadership on the crisis in the Gulf and his success at building an international community opposed to Iraq resonated with the American people. Although he had always enjoyed relatively high approval ratings, Bush’s numbers jumped dramatically during the first two months of the Gulf crisis. Immediately after the invasion, public approval for the president jumped to 74 percent. Throughout August and the first half of September, polls indicated that nearly three-fourths of the public approved of their president. Most presidents historically have enjoyed a boost in popularity following the use of U.S. forces in a military operation. Bush’s popularity numbers followed that same pattern, but with several important differences. First, no U.S. forces had actually engaged in combat by the middle of September 1990, yet the president’s rating remained steady. Bush had enjoyed a similar “rally-round-the-flag” phenomenon following the dispatch of U.S. forces to Panama, but the jump in his approval ratings had been short lived.\textsuperscript{55} In contrast, during

\textsuperscript{54}For a discussion of the diplomatic measures taken to build the Coalition see Baker, \textit{Politics of Diplomacy}, Chapter 16, “Building the Coalition,” 275f.

\textsuperscript{55}Political scientist John Mueller studied presidential popularity during the Korean and Vietnam wars. Earlier scholars of the presidency had noted that certain intense international events generated a rally-round the flag-effect that tended to give a boost to the president’s popularity rating. In Mueller’s analysis he attempted to clarify what constituted a rally event. Mueller defined rally events by three characteristics: the event must be international, involve the United States and particularly the president, and cause a specific, dramatic, and sharply focused increase in presidential approval ratings. For a discussion of rally events and Mueller’s methodology see John Mueller, \textit{War, Presidents, and Public Opinion} (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1973), 208-13.
the first month and a half of Operation Desert Shield, Bush enjoyed sustained support from the American people, both for his policies and for his presidency.\textsuperscript{36} The absence of a vocal opposition -- from members of Congress, the media, or other elites -- meant that Bush and his delegates held sway over the formation of public opinion on the crisis in the Persian Gulf. The high level of public support for both the president and his policies allowed the Bush administration to focus during the first six weeks of the conflict on other issues. Nevertheless, the president’s popularity began to decrease as Americans began to question why U.S. forces were in the Gulf and what was the president’s ultimate goal. Members of the public and Congress accepted the deployment of U.S. forces to the region and supported economic sanctions against Iraq but were not prepared in the Fall of 1990 to support more aggressive measures to force Saddam Hussein to give up his occupation of Kuwait.\textsuperscript{57}

Although the media did not explicitly oppose the U.S. involvement in the Middle East, by September some members of the press had begun to question the military’s rules governing their coverage of the operation. Most of this criticism did not originate with the journalists and reporters in Saudi Arabia. Instead, the complaints came from news executives in the United States. As early as 22 August, several print and television bureau chiefs joined forces to protest the handling of the press.\textsuperscript{58} In a letter they sent to the

\textsuperscript{36}Polling data gathered from Mueller, Policy and Opinion, 179-182.

\textsuperscript{57}Baker, Politics of Diplomacy, 330-335.

\textsuperscript{58}The bureau chiefs who wrote to Fitzwater were Bill Headline (CNN), Nicholas Horrock (Chicago Tribune), Leonard Downie, Jr. (Washington Post), Sandy Johnson (Associated Press), Jack Nelson (Los Angeles Times), Tim Russert (NBC News), Berle
president, the news executives expressed concern about the Saudi Arabian government’s restrictions on the press. While acknowledging that the DOD Pool had provided “minimum” access to the deployment, they sought greater freedom to cover the U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. “Never in American history,” their letter continued, “has this country been faced with as large a commitment of manpower and equipment with as little opportunity for the press to report. . . . We respectfully request that the administration do everything in its power to gain full media access to Saudi Arabia and to the American presence there. Perhaps accreditation through the American military would be the correct solution.”59 The news executives hoped to secure greater access for the own reporters and did not take into account the fact that more journalists had gathered to cover the military build-up in Saudi Arabia than had covered the entire European Theater of Operations during the Second World War.

White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater replied to the news managers’ letter on 6 September. He assured them that the president shared with them a “strong sense of responsibility for reporting to the American people on events related to our military forces in the Middle East.” But Fitzwater went on to note that at times certain restrictions on press access were necessary. “The various necessities for pool arrangements, which we have learned to live with in every aspect of journalism today,” Fitzwater wrote, “are never

Schwartz (United Press International), Philip Taubman (New York Times), Evan Thomas (Newsweek), Stanley Cloud (Time), Barbra Cohen (CBS), and George Watson (ABC News). See Alphabet File, Box 37, BPR, GBL.

59Letter to the President, re: press access to Saudi Arabia, 22 August 1990, Alphabet File, Iraq, BPR, GBL.
the desired course. Yet, we know them to be necessary in certain circumstances. There will always be disagreement between us about those circumstances and about the size and access of pools. Nevertheless, please be assured that we will do everything possible to help meet your needs. 

Despite the complaints from the press about access to Saudi Arabia and U.S. troops in the desert, few journalists questioned the wisdom of Bush's policies or actions in the early fall of 1990. Their criticism focused almost exclusively on matters dealing with how they would cover the operation, accepting at face value the importance of U.S. involvement in the Gulf crisis.

Others within the press were also concerned about the way that the military and the press were handling coverage of the crisis in the Gulf. NBC News president, Michael Gartner, came out early in the crisis against any type of military restriction on the press. Writing in his weekly column for the Wall Street Journal, Gartner complained about press access and the ground rules under which they had to operate. "So what we have here," he wrote, "is this: A war, or near war, that has not been declared by the president, that has not been debated by Congress, and that cannot be reported by the press." He concluded by asserting, "This is no way to run a war." Many writers for the newspapers and news magazine writers quickly began to compare the journalists' level of access in Saudi Arabia with correspondents' access to the U.S. military during the Vietnam war. On 10 September 1990, Stanley Cloud wrote a story that Time magazine printed. Cloud's story,

60 Letter to Bureau Chiefs from Marlin Fitzwater, 6 September 1990, Alphabet File, various folders, BPR, GBL.

entitled “The First Casualty: In the post-Vietnam era, reporters get a short leash,” blamed the military’s experience in Vietnam for the restrictions on the press in the Persian Gulf. Noting the Defense Department’s explanation that the Saudi Arabian government was ultimately responsible for granting access to the press, Cloud wrote that many in the press believed that other factors were involved in limiting the number of reporters who covered the earliest stages of the deployment. “Many journalists suspect that the unstated purpose of the pool is to prevent serious coverage, at least in the early stage of any military action.” As Jonathon Wolman, the Associated Press’s Washington bureau chief told Cloud, “If they [the military] can send in tanks, planes, ships, and thousands of troops, they can send in 11 reporters and photographers at the start of an operation.” Cloud also noted that once unilateral coverage replaced the DOD Pool, the newly arrived journalists demonstrated a penchant for hurting their own case for a better relationship with the military. During a visit by Senator Sam Nunn, members of a TV crew shoved Nunn aside to capture a better “visual.” One U.S. military official remarked to a reporter afterwards, “Sometimes you don’t do yourselves any favors at all with some of this ragtag, rat-pack journalism.” Former CBS correspondent Bernard Kalb offered a different criticism of the press at a CNN-sponsored conference. Kalb criticized the U.S. press, especially those in television journalism, for being “too jingoistic, too much focus on the military [and] a rush to avoid complex issues.” Kalb described the early coverage of the war as a “press rally ‘round the flag.” He also criticized CNN for broadcasting an unedited, live Iraqi TV

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63 Ibid.
feed of Saddam Hussein’s meeting with the hostages on 23 August. "You were given a slice of baloney of what [Saddam Hussein] wanted you to get out," Kalb told the conference sponsors. Members of the press continued to raise each of the criticisms that Gartner, Cloud, and Kalb lodged during September 1990-- that the military was restricting the press’ access to news, that the press was at times its own worst enemy, and that some journalists stridently supported the U.S. government’s policy in the Gulf without their usual objective analysis -- over and over again.

Although reporters claimed the military and government would not give them access or information, they had in fact enjoyed many opportunities to speak with high ranking officers since the beginning of the crisis. This openness with the press led to a major U.S. crisis within the political-military leadership when, on 16 September, Air Force Chief of Staff Michael Dugan spoke candidly with reporters from the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post about future U.S. military options in the Gulf. Dugan, who had begun his tenure as Air Force Chief of Staff only seventy-seven days before, had been attempting to form a closer relationship between the Air Force and the press since he began his duties as the leader of his armed service. In fact, he had instituted a theme of "openness" with the press in an attempt to dispel the stereotype that the Air Force was the most isolated branch of the U.S. military. However, the Air Force Chief of Staff had a tendency to promote his service in a way that some felt diminished the role of the other military branches. General Powell had spoken with him twice before the September

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incident about the Air Force general's attempts to enhance his service's image. 65 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Williams remembered the Air Force Chief telling him that he was the "top Air Force public affairs guy." 66

Dugan, in keeping with his policy of openness with the press, had taken two journalists with him on a tour of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia in early September. He had done that against the expressed wishes of both General Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. 67 During flights between the U.S. and the Persian Gulf, Dugan had spoken with the two reporters for over ten hours. When they returned to Washington on 15 September, both reporters quickly wrote similar stories from their notes and filed them with their offices. On Sunday, 16 September, the L.A. Times and the Washington Post printed their journalist's respective stories on the front page. The Washington Post ran the story under the headline, "U.S. to Rely on Air Strikes if War Erupts." 68 Other media outlets quickly retold the story. CNN broadcast a report based on Dugan's statements. The Air Force general had outlined for the two journalists U.S. plans for an offensive war against Iraq to force it from Kuwait. According to the report in the Washington Post, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded that U.S. military air power -- including a massive bombing campaign against Baghdad that specifically targets Iraqi President Saddam Hussein -- is the only effective option to force Iraqi forces from Kuwait if war


66 Woodward, Commanders, 294.

67 Cheney, interview, 1 February 1999.

68 Washington Post, 16 September 1990.
erupts, according to Air Force chief of staff Gen. Michael J. Dugan." The story went on to say that Dugan had asserted that the other service chiefs, as well as General Schwarzkopf, agreed with his belief that "air power is the only answer that's available to our country to avoid a bloody land war that would probably destroy Kuwait." He also listed planned targets of the air campaign and stated that he had urged his planners to consult knowledgeable individuals outside the military to augment the list with targets that would make a psychological impact on the population and regime in Iraq. As part of his discussions, the Air Force general described the capabilities of the Iraqi air force and air defenses, stating that the Air Force had received information from Israeli sources that "the best way to hurt Saddam is to target his family, his personal guard and his mistress."^69

The Dugan story unsettled the military and political leadership in Washington. General Colin Powell first learned of his subordinate's views when he watched a CNN broadcast the morning of 16 September. He later read the full story in that day's Washington Post. As he read through the story, he noted that the overriding theme of Dugan's comments was "Victory through Airpower approach." The piece concluded with comments that Dugan had made to an F-15 squadron about U.S. support for the operation: "I think they'd support this operation longer than you would think... The American people will support this operation until body bags come home."^70 What he read disturbed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Powell had worked hard to maintain inter-service cooperation during Operation Desert Shield. Dugan's comments weakened

^69 Ibid.

^70 Washington Post, 16 September 1990.
that cooperation by asserting the supremacy of the Air Force. The Air Force chief had also given a very accurate status report on the deployment of U.S. forces to the region and their general readiness for battle. The story included details about numbers and types of specific aircraft -- information that Powell had tried diligently to keep out of the press. Powell had recently commended Dugan on his policy of openness toward the media but had also warned him against overstepping his authority when dealing with reporters. Dugan had obviously gone beyond acceptable "openness" in the interview.\footnote{Woodward, \textit{Commanders}, 292; Cheney, interview, 1 February 1999; Powell interview, 23 March 1999; Williams, interview, 8 January 1999.}

An hour after first learning of Dugan's comments, Powell called Secretary of Defense Cheney, who had not yet seen the \textit{Post}, and told him about the Dugan story. Cheney immediately went to read the story and then called his chief of public affairs, Pete Williams, at home. Both men realized the military implications of Dugan's statements. They reached conclusions similar to General Powell's -- Dugan had said too much. They also realized that Dugan's comments undercut the Bush administration's stance that offensive military options had not yet been accepted as future U.S./Coalition policy. The more Cheney reflected on the general's statements the more furious he became. He telephoned National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft to give him his views on Dugan before Scowcroft appeared on the Sunday Morning news program "Face the Nation." Scowcroft and Cheney agreed that they were not prepared to support Dugan's assertion that air power could win a major conflict that the United States president had not yet decided to fight. Scowcroft informed Cheney that he would distance the administration
from Dugan during his television appearance. Cheney, after a two hour walk, called
President Bush at Camp David where the president was playing tennis. After the match
Bush returned Cheney’s call. The president had seen the story, but had initially believed it
was some sort of clever attempt by the Pentagon to scare Saddam. Cheney had to inform
the president that unfortunately it was not a ploy. The Secretary said that the general’s
statements were so extreme that he was considering relieving Dugan. Bush said that he
supported whatever Cheney decided was best.72

The next morning, Cheney met with Dugan and went over the general’s statements
in the story point by point. Dugan admitted that the two reporters had indeed represented
his remarks fairly. Cheney then informed the general that he would have to relieve him of
his duties as Air Force Chief of Staff. The secretary outlined nine reasons for his decision,
including violations of operational security, denigration of the role of the other services,
and egregious judgment.73

Dugan’s dismissal was immediately the top story in the nation’s press. Just as his
statements the day before had raised considerable attention, so too did Cheney’s decision
to fire him. Some praised Cheney’s actions as a reaffirmation of “the primacy of civilian

72 Woodward, Commanders, 293, Cheney interview, 1 February 1999; Guidance on
Washington Post Article of 16 Sep 90, 172100Z SEP 90, MBF, PAG, Box 2, RG 518,
NAB II.

73 Ironically, later that morning Cheney had an appointment to address a meeting of
the Air Force Association, a private group with 200,000 members nationwide. He felt a
moment of awkwardness when he walked in the association meeting and received a big
cheer. Cheney Interview, 1 February 1999; Williams Interview, 12 January 1999;
Woodward, Commanders, 295.
leadership in determining what to do to force Saddam to quit Kuwait.”74 Others noted that what Dugan had said on the record to the reporters for the L.A. Times and Washington Post had already been said by others on “background.”75 In fact, some journalists reported that they were surprised at the “candor of many of the generals at the Pentagon with whom they have dealt since the crisis began.”76 The press, however, feared that the greatest potential impact that Dugan’s comments would have was to make other commanders too afraid of disciplinary action to speak with the press. Molly Moore of the Washington Post wrote that Cheney’s decision to dismiss Dugan was viewed as an example of the Pentagon’s continued struggle with “striking a balance between informing the press and public about its massive buildup in the Gulf region and, at the same time, trying to maintain the secrecy of its operations.”77 She noted that before the firing of Dugan, the military had used the deployment of forces to the Gulf to bolster its image. “At a time when the budget-pinched Pentagon is in search of a post-Cold War mission, Operation Desert Shield has become a showplace of U.S. military might and weaponry,” Moore concluded. The Post reporter also claimed that Cheney and Williams were using the mission in the Gulf as a way to test their revamping of the military’s media policy in


the wake of the problems encountered during the Panama operation.”

Williams had attempted to allay journalists’ fear that military commanders would shy away from public statements. In a press conference on 18 September, Williams said: “It would be a complete misreading of yesterday’s events to conclude that there is now some sort of reason not to talk to reporters or the public... What it does say is what the secretary said yesterday. We don’t speculate on future operations, especially when they are not our decision to make. We don’t discuss classified information.” However, in an interview several years after the incident, Secretary Cheney did not deny that his actions may have discouraged other military commanders from being as open with the press as Dugan had been. According to General Powell, Cheney’s dismissal of Dugan reminded senior officers that they needed to deal with the press in a sophisticated manner. Generals and Admirals could not “pop off” to the press without consequences.

The Dugan episode marked the beginning of domestic problems for the Bush administration. Although international opposition to Iraq continued to strengthen and grow during the early fall of 1990, some members of Congress were beginning to express doubts about the president’s strategy toward Iraq. On 2 October, both the House and the Senate adopted resolutions supporting the President’s actions to date. However, neither

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78Ibid.

79Department of Defense News Briefing, 18 September 1990, MBF, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II.

80Cheney Interview, 1 February 1999.

81Powell Interview, 23 March 1991.
chamber’s resolution endorsed the use of force to expel Iraq from Kuwait. Two influential Democrats, Senator Sam Nunn (Chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee) and Congressman Les Aspin (Chair of the House Armed Service Committee), vocally stated that they believed that the administration should give sanctions time to convince Saddam to withdraw his troops from Kuwait. Nunn and Aspin began to wonder publicly if Bush and his national security advisors were willing to wait for sanctions to work, but with Bush’s popularity at an historic high, no Democrat was prepared to go too far in challenging the president. Nevertheless, the momentum pushing the president toward war had already begun to build. Since August, Bush had compared the crisis in the Gulf with his own generation’s experiences during the period of fascist aggression in the 1930s. Privately, he began referring to Saddam Hussein as a modern day Hitler to members of the administration.\textsuperscript{82}

Despite his conviction that Hussein had to be stopped and Kuwait liberated, Bush faced domestic challenges in the Fall of 1990 that threatened his ability to maintain public and congressional support for his Gulf policy. In October, the president began intense negotiations with Congressional leaders to pass a new budget. Opposing political parties controlled the executive and legislative branches. Bush, a Republican, attempted to use the crisis in the Gulf to force the Democratic controlled Congress to accept a budget that increased military spending, reduced the deficit, and included increased taxes. The United States was at the beginning of a recession and many Americans had begun to doubt the vitality of the nation’s economy. Consumer confidence, a measure of public attitudes

\textsuperscript{82}U.S. News, \textit{Triumph without Victory}, 153.
toward the economy, began to fall off sharply in October. The Consumer Confidence
Index dropped from a rating of 85.6 in September to 62.6 in October.\textsuperscript{83} Polling
organizations also attempted to gauge the public’s feelings toward the economy. In one
poll, Gallup asked respondents to state whether they thought they would be better off, the
same, or worse off in the following year. Fifty-one percent of respondents thought they
would be better off in September 1990 (20 percent responded “same”, 17 percent
“worse”). By October 21, only 41 percent thought they would be better off the following
year.\textsuperscript{84} The differences between the Bush administration’s budget and the one supported
by the Democratic-controlled Congress reached a head when the president threatened to
shut down government operations at the end of the fiscal year on 1 October 1990. Many
critics of Bush began to charge openly that the confrontation in the Gulf war was based on
economic considerations. They speculated that the president had sent U.S. troops to the
Gulf in an effort to intimidate Iraq and other Arab countries to lower oil prices and to
distract public attention in the U.S. away from the troubled economy. The price of oil
continued to rise and by 17 October it had reached $40 per barrel. The U.S. economy and
the budget crisis distracted the public and weakened their support of the president.\textsuperscript{85}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{83}Mueller, \textit{Policy and Public Opinion}, Table 203, 296. In a similar measure, the
University of Michigan-sponsored Consumer Confidence tables showed a decrease from
72.8 in September to 63.9 in October. Mueller, \textit{Policy and Public Opinion}, Table 202,
294.

\textsuperscript{84}Mueller, \textit{Policy and Public Opinion}, Table 201, 293.

\textsuperscript{85}President Bush’s approval rating slipped during the budget crisis in October.
From his high of 76 percent in the last week of August, the president’s approval slipped to
just over 50 percent by the end of October (54 percent on 28 October). The level of
support for the president’s policy regarding Iraq also fell throughout the fall, decreasing
\end{footnotesize}
Throughout October, Bush tried to answer his critics and to garner congressional support for his policies opposing Saddam Hussein by telling Americans that the crisis was about more than just oil. At a Republican fund-raiser on 15 October, Bush stated, "What is at stake is whether the nations of the world can take a stand against aggression. Whether we live in a world governed by the rule of law or by the law of the jungle."

While the budget crisis continued, Secretary of State Baker went before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to discuss the administration’s policy toward Iraq. Members of Congress told Secretary of State Baker that the president should seek congressional authorization before the U.S. made any major move against Iraq, as stipulated in the War Powers Act of 1975. Baker stated that the president would “consult” the congressional leadership if he called for military action, but said that he did not believe that the Constitution required the president to get advance approval from Congress for the use of force against Iraq. Not only were members of Congress beginning to question the administration’s Gulf policy, but portions of the American public also began to voice opposition to the U.S. operation in the Middle East. On 15 October, demonstrators in several large cities gathered to protest the U.S. deployment to Saudi Arabia. Many from 80 percent in August to just over 60 percent in October. Although the crisis in the Gulf continued to dominate news stories, public worries over the economy eroded Bush’s approval ratings and public support for his handling of the situation in the Gulf. See Mueller, Policy and Public Opinion, Table 1, 180; Table 8, 193.


*America’s Stake in the Persian Gulf Crisis,* Statement by the Honorable James A. Baker III, before The House Foreign Affairs Committee, 4 October 1990, Daily Guidance File, Box 122, BPR, GBL.
charted slogans from the Vietnam War and urged the president not to spill U.S. blood for oil. Several antiwar demonstrators disrupted a speaking engagement by the president in Des Moines, IA, shouting “No blood for oil!” Three youths interrupted Bush’s speech and started yelling slogans against his policies in the Gulf, blaming them on economic considerations. Bush responded to the youths by stating that the war was not for oil, but to show that the world would not stand idly by while one nation attacked its neighbor.88

Bush continued to articulate the country’s war aims and the rationale behind his Gulf policies despite increased opposition. In New Hampshire on 23 October, the President stated that there could be no compromise with Saddam, despite the Iraqi president’s recent offers to begin negotiations over his seizure of Kuwait as long as the U.S. and the UN tied such talks to the Arab-Israeli issue. “I am more determined than ever,” Bush told the audience at a GOP rally in New Hampshire, “to see that this invading dictator gets out of Kuwait with no compromise of any kind. It isn’t oil we’re concerned about, it is aggression, and this aggression is not going to stand.”89 The following day the budget crisis ended, with Bush having to make many concessions to the Democratic-controlled Congress. Many political observers viewed the budget deal as a defeat for the president. Less than two weeks later Bush experienced a further setback when Americans went to the polls for in the midterm elections. On 6 November, the public reacted to the protracted budget debate and uncertainty about the country’s economic future, voting

88-“Motorcade to State Historical Building; Motorcade to Civic Center; Motorcade back to Hotel,” Corrected Pool Report #6, Daily Guidance File, Box 126, BPR, GBL; White House News Summary, 17 October 1990.

against several Republican candidates who were expected to win easily. Although the composition of the Congress did not change dramatically, the Democratic party managed to pick up six seats in the House and one in the Senate. The perceived Republican electoral defeat further weakened the president’s influence with the legislature. Despite Bush’s attempts to focus the public on events in the Gulf, much of the electorate went to the polls thinking of the economy.90

One of the difficulties facing the president during the Congressional campaign in October 1990 was the future of U.S. forces in the Gulf. Although Bush had made it clear from the outset of the crisis that the primary U.S. aim was the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, he had not yet defined how he would accomplish that goal. While the UN-imposed economic sanctions were impacting Iraqi imports and exports, many within the administration doubted that sanctions had the power to force Saddam to withdraw his troops from Kuwait. On 10 October, Major General Robert Johnston (USMC), the Central Command Chief of Staff, briefed members of the Joint Staff on an offensive plan to force Iraq from Kuwait. Johnston’s plan was the product of a request from the president for an offensive option based on the forces already deployed to Saudi Arabia. General Schwarzkopf flew into a rage when he heard about the request from Washington to provide such a plan. He thought he had been very clear in August about the differences between the defense of Saudi Arabia and an offensive plan that would push Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. Schwarzkopf dispatched Johnston to give the leadership in Washington their best option. It consisted of a lengthy air campaign and then a frontal

attack against Iraqi positions in Kuwait. Both Central Command and the Joint Staff considered the plan seriously flawed but recognized that it was their best option with the forces currently in the Gulf. The following day Johnston accompanied Secretary Cheney and General Powell to the White House where the Marine briefed the president and his national security council. Bush accepted the air campaign, but he and his advisors wanted CENTCOM to modify the to take advantage of the U.S. military's superiority in mobility and command structure. Johnston also raised the question of additional forces deploying to the theater of operations, especially the U.S. VII Corps in Germany. When the president asked how long it would take to move the VII Corps from Europe to the Saudi desert, Johnston told him at least several months.\textsuperscript{51}

General Johnston's briefing forced key decision makers to consider the future course of U.S. policy in the Gulf. On 19 October, General Powell contacted Secretary of State Baker and requested a private meeting to discuss the possible augmentation of U.S. forces. Both agreed that the Coalition needed a more aggressive policy, both militarily and diplomatically, if there was to be any hope of getting Iraq out of Kuwait. They also felt that the existing policy was "drifting." The initial deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia had succeeded in containing Saddam Hussein's aggression to Kuwait and the economic sanctions had isolated him from the international community, but neither measure had forced him to pull his troops from Kuwait. Baker and Powell identified three options for the future: they could keep all options open and risk perpetuating the perceived policy drift; they could accept containment of Iraqi aggression as the aim of

U.S. policy, strengthen economic sanctions, and keep U.S. forces deployed in the region indefinitely; or they could build a deliberate offensive capability to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. The two men both agreed that the third option — an offensive capability to force Iraq from Kuwait — was their best choice and they accepted the basis of Johnston's briefing as the outline of how to structure the new force. The following day, 20 October, Baker summarized his meeting with Powell and noted that to "get ahead of erosion of support" the president needed to announce some sort of deadline for the use of force. Baker was also worried that the Bush team had not made it clear to either the American people or Congress why they had stationed U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf. On 21 October, the Secretary of State presented his recommendations to the president. Bush considered his options for several days and did not inform his advisors until 24 October of his decision. At a meeting of the Group of Eight, Bush announced that, pursuant to Saudi Arabian acceptance, he was going to double the size of U.S. forces in the region to nearly 500,000 and order them to prepare for possible offensive operations to drive Iraq's forces from Kuwait. Although diplomatic efforts would continue to try and persuade Saddam Hussein to relinquish his control of Kuwait, the United States and its Coalition partners would begin to plan for war.92

On the same day that Major General Johnston had briefed the president on the feasibility of an offensive campaign in the Gulf, an event occurred in the desert of Saudi Arabia that would have lasting repercussions for the military and the media. On 11

92Baker, Politics of Diplomacy, 300-03; Bush and Scowcroft, World Transformed, 392-95.
October, *New York Times* reporter James LeMoyne and CBS journalist Bob Simon arrived at the bivouac of the 2d squad, 4th Cavalry, of the 24th Infantry (Mechanized) Division. The two reporters had gone to the unit to conduct an overnight media visit arranged through the JIB in Dhahran. They hoped to talk with some of the U.S. soldiers deployed to the border of Saudi Arabia. The 24th’s original mission was to serve as a covering force for the XVIII Airborne Corps in case Iraqi forces attacked into Saudi Arabia, a mission that forced the unit to endure “six stressful weeks in the desert at the farthest end of a precariously extended supply line that offered only the barest of wartime essentials.”

The two reporters arrived at the soldiers’ bivouac area, named Fort Apache. The public affairs officers of the 24th Division had assigned the two visitors to a scout platoon for their visit. Ironically, LeMoyne’s brother, Colonel John LeMoyne, was serving as the 24th Division’s Chief of Staff during Operation Desert Shield and was present with the men of the 2d squad on the night of 11 October. James LeMoyne had almost turned down his chance to visit the unit because of fears of a conflict of interest due to his brother’s position with the division. However, members of the JIB staff had assured the reporter that it was unlikely that he would run into his brother while in the desert. When the two brothers met they shared a touching moment. Little did either know that the events over the next twenty-four hours would have a dramatic impact on how the U.S. Army and the media interacted for the remainder of operations in the Persian Gulf region.

The reporters from the *New York Times* and CBS accompanied the platoon as it

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93 Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 19.

conducted a night-time training mission into the desert. Perhaps because they had just completed a very strenuous operation, the unit did not perform well. They became lost and began to complain about "being kept in the dark" about the length and course of deployment as part of Operation Desert Shield. The soldiers also took issue with the harsh living conditions in the field. James LeMoyne concluded from his time with the platoon that the Army needed more preparation before it would be ready to go to war.95 Bob Simon also noted the unit's difficulties with navigation in his report for CBS news. The next morning Simon and his crew concluded their piece by shooting background footage that showed vehicles racing across the sand. The CBS report, while discussing the desert navigation problems, was overall fairly positive.96

LeMoyne, meanwhile, had left the scout platoon and begun to interview members of the 2d Squad's support platoon.97 According to LeMoyne, as soon as he approached the platoon its soldiers "spilled their guts." He quoted them as criticizing their living conditions, their lack of information, and their uncertainty over why they were in the Gulf region. One soldier, Private Brett Thompson, even went so far as to attack the president. "Tell George Bush to get off the golf course and out of his fishing boat and come out here


97In later interviews, participants differed on how LeMoyne came to interview members of the squadron's support platoon. LeMoyne maintained that an officer had asked him to talk with the squadron support platoon because they often did not receive media attention. Members of the 2d squad remembered the event differently, claiming that LeMoyne went to the support platoon on his own. See Fetig, 23, "Fort Apache," 26-7.
in the desert to take a look at what we're doing and drink some hot water with us," he said. "We're tired of being kept in the dark like we don't have the intelligence to be told what's going on," Thompson continued. Other soldiers expressed similar views. "In shouted comments, more than a dozen soldiers in the unit complained of very slow mail, no news, no clear definition of their mission, few cots, no chance to phone home, almost no recreational equipment, and a feeling that senior commanders either do not listen or do not want to hear their complaints." Another soldier besides Thompson questioned the integrity of President Bush. "Why is it that when the U.S. economy gets bad we always go to war?" 98 The reporter, a veteran journalist who had covered several military operations, quickly concluded that the unit was losing control and told 2d Squad's executive officer Major Clay Edwards. LeMoyne included the remarks of the support unit in his article describing his visit to the unit which the New York Times published on 18 October. However, he took pains to shield the soldiers' potentially startling views. LeMoyne told his editors in New York that he did not want a small group of "unhappy guys" to represent the whole unit. The Time's editors agreed with their reporter. LeMoyne's story on the scout platoon ran on the front page of the 18 October edition of the paper, but placed the piece on the support platoon only as a 450-word sidebar on page A-13. 99

Despite the relatively minor role the incident with the support unit had on LeMoyne's overall account of his visit with the 2d Squad, the military's reaction was

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98 LeMoyne, 18 October 1990.

99 Fetig, "Fort Apache," 32.
dramatic. LeMoyne later recalled that military and political leaders in Washington immediately fired “rockets” at Central Command in Riyadh. The journalist was unprepared for the “atomic effect” his story had and learned that “all hell had broken loose.”

100 Captain Michael Sherman (USN), commander of the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran, described the military response to the story as “an excessive over-reaction.”

101 Reaction from Washington stemmed from the statements LeMoyne had attributed to Thompson and the other soldier who questioned the president and the reasons for their deployment to the desert. Many officials in the Pentagon and the White House remembered the negative criticism of common soldiers during the Vietnam War. They also feared that other journalists would begin seeking out other disgruntled soldiers to find inflammatory statements that could damage public support for the president and Operation Desert Shield. 102

The military reacted quickly to LeMoyne’s story. Only a few days after his story appeared, the U.S. military headquarters in Riyadh canceled LeMoyne’s previously scheduled interview with General Schwarzkopf. When LeMoyne went to argue with Central Command Public Affairs Officer Captain Ronald Wildermuth (USN) about the cancellation of his interview with Schwarzkopf the two nearly came to blows. 103

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100 LeMoyne quoted in Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 25.

101 Memo from Director JIB, Dhahran to USCENTCOM PAO, 29 Nov 90, MBF, PAG, Box 2, RG 518, NAB II.

102 Williams, interview, 8 January 1999.

in the 24th Division was also immediate and highly critical of the reporter. Members of the Division’s staff questioned the 2d Squad, including soldiers from the unit’s support platoon, about the accuracy of LeMoyne’s story. Pvt. Thompson admitted to most of what LeMoyne had attributed to him but denied using the president’s name in any of his statements to the reporter. Word quickly spread among the Division that LeMoyne had “violated” his brother’s unit. Some within the division and the Army began to ask, “If a journalist would do this to his brother, what would one do to me?”

Members of the support unit decided to write a letter to the New York Times protesting LeMoyne’s story. General Barry McCaffrey, commander of the 24th Division, permitted the unit to send the letter. It was such a strong challenge to LeMoyne’s original story that the managing editor of the New York Times told his reporter that “either you or they made up your stories.” The Times attempted to clarify the situation and requested that the Army allow LeMoyne another opportunity to speak with the soldiers that he had interviewed before. The Division denied the request, although General McCaffrey did

104 Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 27.

105 Quoted in Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 28. The soldiers letter read as follows: “Outrage, disgust, and betrayal are just a few of the emotions that we, the Support Platoon of the 2nd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, felt after reading the article written by James LeMoyne in your 18 October edition. A reporter representing a paper the caliber of the New York Times should show more professional ethics, discretion, and concern for an honest representation of the facts. We are professional soldiers with great respect for our President; we did not and would not insult him. To us, the calm image that Mr. Bush projected during the first days of the crisis showed his confidence in us, the U.S. Armed Forces. We feel betrayed; we are proud soldiers serving our country, and we deserve a fair portrayal of our thoughts and opinions in your paper. The misquoting and twisting of words that Mr. LeMoyne did brought discredit upon his newspaper and his profession.” Letter reprinted in Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 28.
agree to allow any reporter other than LeMoyne to visit the unit.\textsuperscript{106}

The impact of LeMoyne's story went far beyond just the members of the 24th Division. Central Command canceled LeMoyne's interview with Schwarzkopf, and the New York Times, one of the country's most prestigious newspapers, was not able to meet with the general until late in October -- and then only after LeMoyne had left the region. Schwarzkopf was clearly punishing the reporter and his newspaper for critical reporting, especially the story on the 2d Squad. Other major news organizations also experienced difficulty in interviewing Schwarzkopf. The Los Angeles Times and Wall Street Journal both had to wait months before their reporters finally had an opportunity to sit down with the commander of U.S. forces in the Gulf. According to the Central Command public affairs officer, Schwarzkopf himself selected the news organizations he would allow to interview him.\textsuperscript{107}

Beyond limiting the New York Times' ability to cover the war, military reaction to LeMoyne's 18 October story impacted journalists from other news organizations. Many reporters noted a change in the military's general attitude toward the press after LeMoyne's story. Other journalists wrote and broadcast stories during September and October describing some units' poor morale and the difficulties with equipment in the desert environment. Some reporters reacted to LeMoyne's story by trying to match it. Douglas Jehl, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times, received a copy of LeMoyne's 18 October piece from his Washington bureau. "Damn," he said to himself, "LeMoyne gets

\textsuperscript{106}Fetig, "Fort Apache," 29.

\textsuperscript{107}Fetig, "Fort Apache," 48-9.
that kind of trip and people are saying the kind of things we knew they were saying when
we weren't around.” According to Jehl, “These were the kinds of quotes our editors had
been desperate for, for a long time.” Following LeMoyne’s stories the military began to
restrict media access to units. Even the U.S. Marines, the most media conscious of the
U.S. armed services, canceled media visits for “a week or so” following the Fort Apache
stories. Many journalists noted that the Army was especially wary of the press. Unlike
the Marines who for the most part accepted reporters as another “environmental feature of
the battlefield, kind of like the rain,” many officers in the Army feared the press and were
often reluctant to give them assistance. The director of the Joint Information Bureau
and his deputy urged Army public affairs officers to increase media access to their units.
But unit commanders often foiled the work of their PAO’s, overruling the attempts to ease
restrictions on the press. Between October and November, JIB commanders noted a
sharp increase in media complaints about access and interfering escort officers. In
response to growing media, Captain Wildermuth released a memo to his service
component (Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force) public affairs officers beseeching them
to increase media access. Wildermuth informed the public affairs officers that he felt that
unless they increased access and they implemented a more pro-active media program, the
media would become distrustful of the military and begin to produce even more negative

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109 Chief Warrant Officer Eric Carlson, quoted in John Fialka, Hotel Warriors

The deterioration of the military/media relationship in the fall of 1990 worried military leaders in the Pentagon, many of whom feared that if the situation worsened it would diminish public support for Desert Shield. 112 By the end of October, Brigadier General William McClain, Chief of Army Public Affairs, dispatched his deputy, Colonel David Fabien on a two-week fact-finding mission. Fabien’s mission was to learn how the Department of the Army could assist Central Command and its Army units in the handling of public affairs. During his visit to Saudi Arabia, Fabien met with public affairs officers and commanders from all major Army units. Upon returning to Washington, he presented his findings to McClain and Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Pete Williams. Fabien’s report was not encouraging. He determined that the U.S. Army’s public affairs efforts suffered from many problems. “The unilateral, unfocused, and uncoordinated efforts stemmed from ‘erratic’ policy guidance; equipment shortages; insufficient transportation and communication; burned-out Joint Information Bureau staff; and the fact that public affairs units in country were being misused.” 113 He reported that although the press headquarters at Riyadh was equipped with escort officers and transportation, the bulk of the press corps was situated at Dhahran. Most important for the future, Fabien

111 Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 60.

112 Although the military worried about how the public would react if the press became hostile, none of the polling data from the war suggested that military/media relations impacted public opinion. See Mueller, Policy and Opinion, 129-32.

113 Fetig, “Fort Apache,” 64; Mulvey, interview, 21 May 1991.
observed that the "theater position on media pools during hostilities is unclear."\textsuperscript{114}

Even before Colonel Fabien delivered his report on the status of Central Command's and the Army's public affairs efforts in Saudi Arabia, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD[PA]) had begun talks with news executives over how best to cover operations in the Gulf region. On 9 October, six mid-level newspaper executives wrote a letter to Pete Williams (ASD[PA]) requesting more visas than the one per corporation then being issued by the Saudi government. In the letter, the news executives wrote that they were "greatly concerned about the prospect we will have less than adequate coverage from the Persian Gulf, under the conditions that currently exist, should fighting begin." According to the letter, the limitation of having only one journalist in Saudi Arabia from each newspaper hampered the press' efforts to provide comprehensive coverage of the crisis. The news managers also stated that they feared that if hostilities broke out, they would not be able to rely on commercial transportation to ferry more reporters to the region to cover the fighting.\textsuperscript{115} To solve these two problems, the newsmen offered two solutions. First, they urged the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) and the Secretary of Defense to ask the Saudi

\textsuperscript{114}Fabien quoted in Mulvey, interview, 21 May 1991.

\textsuperscript{115}The reporters request for assistance in gaining access for additional reporters in the Gulf at first appears illogical when one considers that at the time they wrote to Williams over 400 journalists were already reporting from Saudi Arabia. However, when one considers that the Saudi Arabian government was willing only to grant a single visa to each news organization the problems of covering the conflict become more obvious, especially for large media groups. The effect of every media organization — from the New York Times to Mirabella magazine — deciding to send a reporter to the Gulf was to dilute the depth of coverage. Williams, interview, 8 January 1999.
government to relax the restriction on the number of reporters each news organization could send to the area, increasing the number from one to two. Second, they asked if the military could provide "some form of a military, or military approved commercial press charter, that the news organizations would pay for, that would leave the United States on day one of the conflict and take a pre-selected group of military reporters . . . into the region." This would require a third visa from the Saudi government. The letter writers made no mention of the military's ground rules or the use of pools.  

In response to the requests of the newsmen and their broadcast colleagues, Pete Williams scheduled a series of meetings during the fall of 1990. The first meeting took place on 25 October. Attending the meeting were the bureau chiefs from each of the four major television networks, the six newspaper managers who had sent the 9 October letter, Steve Kurkjian of the Boston Globe, Andrew Glass of Cox Newspapers, Pete Williams, and his deputy. Williams addressed the two problems highlighted by the newspaper bureau chiefs. He blamed the Saudi government for the restrictions on the number of reporters allowed to cover operations in the Gulf and promised to work with the Secretary of Defense to gain a relaxation of the restrictions. Williams also promised to secure a plane that could transport additional news personnel to the region in the advent of hostilities. But the Assistant Secretary warned that pools would be necessary to cover the

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initial phase of any conflict. Each pool would remain in the field for five to seven days before being rotated. Although pools were not meant to replace unilateral coverage, the military would not permit unescorted journalists near the battlefield until they had achieved the "maturity of the battlefield." The military would also provide the necessary gear for survival in the desert and combat environments. Williams went on to explain that there would be no censorship. However, the military escorts would conduct security at the source. None of the media representatives objected to the proposed plan for coverage. 117

On the diplomatic front, the last two months of 1990 and the first month of 1991 marked a period of last-minute peace initiatives and preparations for war. Starting on 3 November and continuing for most of the month, Secretary of State Baker embarked a diplomatic odyssey that would take him to twelve countries, some of which he would visit twice. During his diplomatic offensive, Baker worked to strengthen existing Coalition support for the sanctions against Iraq as well as to build acceptance within the UN Security Council for a resolution allowing the international community to force Saddam Hussein's troops from Kuwait. At the same time, President Bush still held hope that the economic sanctions and the threat of military action might yet compel Saddam to relinquish his hold on Kuwait. However, the president was accepting the advice of several key members of the Group of Eight to keep all of his options open, including offensive action to liberate Kuwait. By the end of October the president had made his decision. He would authorize the deployment of additional U.S. forces to the Gulf, giving the Coalition

an offensive capability. Bush announced his decision to the nation during a press conference on 8 November 1990. The president told the American people that he had ordered the increase in U.S. forces committed to Operation Desert Shield "to ensure that the coalition has an adequate offensive military option should that be necessary to achieve our common goals."^118

Although Bush had been considering increasing U.S. commitment to the region for nearly a month, neither he nor anyone on his staff had first consulted Congress or prepared the people for the possible shift in the military's mission from defending Saudi Arabia to forcibly evicting Iraq from Kuwait. When Secretary of State James Baker learned that Bush was going to announce the additional troop deployments, the president's timing surprised and angered him. Baker and his staff had assumed that the White House would consult with Congress before making such a dramatic shift in policy, ensuring that the legislative branch understood and supported the president's policy and would help sell it to the public. Baker was aware that polls showed that the American public was uncertain about the president's policy. In mid-October, a Washington Post/ABC News poll had shown that 70 percent of the respondents believed that the United States should "take all action necessary, including the use of force," to oust Saddam Hussein's army from Kuwait. That same survey, however, reported that only 46 percent supported a military attack in the event the economic sanctions failed to persuade Saddam to get out of Kuwait peacefully. Polls also showed that the public had little confidence that economic sanctions

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^118Press Conference by the President and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, 8 November 1990, Daily Guidance File, Box 129, BPR, GBL.
would be able to force Saddam to comply with U.S./UN desires. Baker had warned the president of the public’s confusion and the lack of Congressional support for an abandonment of defensive military policy. Despite those warnings, Bush made his announcement on 8 November. According to the Secretary of State,

It took two months of intensive damage control, a United Nations resolution, and a final diplomatic effort by the President, culminating in direct talks between [Baker] and the Iraqi Foreign Minister, to persuade legislators to support the option of U.S. military intervention — a policy course Congress has viewed with wariness ever since Lyndon Johnson seized upon the 1964 Tonkin Gulf congressional resolution as justification for the Vietnam buildup.\footnote{Baker, \textit{Politics of Diplomacy}, 331. Baker had assumed that the White House, having delayed announcement of the president’s decision to increase U.S. troop levels to provide an offensive option until after the elections, would “at least arrange briefings for senior members of Congress shortly before the President’s public announcement.”}

Congressional reaction to the president’s decision of 8 November to double the size of the U.S. deployment was at least as bad as Baker had predicted. Member of Congress and many in the press saw the increase in forces as a clear sign that the Bush administration was preparing to go to war — a war that many still believed was unnecessary. Although Congress had adjourned for the winter holidays on 28 October, the president’s announcement that he was doubling the U.S. deployment to the Gulf caused many Congressmen and Senators to return to Washington. Others appeared on television news programs and spoke with reporters from their homes, criticizing the president’s failure to consult with law-makers before making such a dramatic decision. Bob Teeter, the president’s chief pollster, noted that Democrats in Congress had begun to sense an

\footnote{Polling data cited in U.S. News, \textit{Triumph without Victory}, 173.}
opportunity in the new Gulf policy to attack Bush and other Republicans. Despite the adjournment, some key committee chairmen in both the House and the Senate had begun to hint that they might hold hearings to examine the administration’s Gulf policy. Military and executive leaders feared that any debate would send the wrong signal to Saddam Hussein and Coalition partners. Secretary of Defense Cheney had told Baker just before the Secretary of State left for his overseas mission that any congressional debate might cause Saddam to draw the conclusion that Washington was divided, giving Iraq the opportunity to keep his control of Kuwait. Baker told Cheney that the United States could not afford to get too far out in front of the international community. During his trip in early November 1990, Baker worked with important members of the nations that comprised the UN Security Council to win their support for a resolution authorizing the international Coalition to use force to compel Iraq to leave Kuwait. He assured Cheney that if he could get the Security Council’s approval of such a resolution, he would render the Democrats’ actions impotent.\footnote{U.S. News, \textit{Triumph without Victory}, 174-5; \textit{Baker, Politics of Diplomacy}, 329-35.}

Since the earliest days of the crisis, the Bush administration had presented clear aims for its policy in the Gulf but had difficulty in identifying and adopting a justification for its policies that resonated with the American people and Congress. President Bush, Secretary Baker, General Powell, and others had explained that the U.S. was involved in the Iraq-Kuwait dispute because America had to stand up to aggression, or to eliminate Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programs, or to preserve the flow of oil from the
Persian Gulf, or to stop a megalomaniacal dictator who was the modern embodiment of
Adolf Hitler. While each justification was at least in part true, the Bush administration
failed to focus on one issue over the others. The scattershot approach led to confusion
and unease among the American people who did not fully understand why U.S. soldiers,
sailors, marines, and airmen were preparing for war half a world away. In November,
people seemed confused as to just why it was the president was sending hundreds of
thousands more U.S. troops to the Gulf. Top Bush administration members identified this
problem and attempted to correct it in their speeches shortly after the president announced
that he was doubling the size of the U.S. deployment. Just two days after Bush
announced the troop increase, Vice-President Quayle attempted to explain the rationale
behind the administration’s Gulf policy. American soldiers were in the Gulf, Quayle said,
to contain Iraq and prevent Saddam Hussein from using his weapons of mass
destruction.\footnote{Quayle speech paraphrased in U.S. News, \textit{Triumph without Victory}, 179.}
On 13 November, Secretary Baker attempted to further clarify the U.S.
policy in a speech on the island of Bermuda. He maintained that economic reasons
compelled the United States to take action in the Gulf.

The economic lifeline of the industrial world runs from the Gulf,
and we cannot permit a dictator such as this to sit astride that economic
lifeline. And to bring it down to the level of the average American citizen,
let me say that means jobs. If you want to sum it up in one word, its jobs.
Because an economic recession worldwide, caused by the control of one
nation, one dictator if you will, of the West’s economic lifeline will result in
the loss of jobs on the part of American citizens.\footnote{Baker speech quoted in Baker, \textit{Politics of Diplomacy}, 336.}

Baker had deliberately chosen his words when he spoke on 13 November. According to
his memoirs, the Bush administration "had done a lousy job of explaining not only the fundamental economic ramifications of Iraq's aggression but also the threat to global peace and stability from his weapons of mass destruction, and we were beginning to pay a political price at home as a result of our rhetorical confusion." During the fall of 1990 public support for the president and his Gulf policies had dropped and hecklers shouting "No Blood for Oil" had disrupted several of the president's public engagements. However, Baker's attempt to redefine the rationale behind Desert Shield "failed badly." Journalists immediately paraphrased Bakers' comments, describing the reasons for U.S. opposition to Iraq as "jobs, jobs, jobs." Critics in Congress spoke out loudly against any offensive option, calling on the president and the military to give the UN-imposed economic sanctions "a chance to work." While support for the president and his Gulf policy never dropped below fifty percent, the Bush administration continued to have problems articulating its justification for sending nearly a half million U.S. soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen to the Gulf. On the same day that Baker spoke in Bermuda, Republican Senator Richard Lugar, a respected foreign policy expert, called on the president to ask Congress to return

124 Quoted in Baker, Politics of Diplomacy, 336.


126 Eventually, Bob Teeter's polling would show that concern over Saddam Hussein's potential for atomic and other weapons of mass destruction was a real "hot button" issue with the American people. Key administration spokesmen -- especially the president, Baker, Cheney, and Powell -- would quickly conclude that it would be the threat of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction that would enable them to forge and maintain a domestic consensus for war with Iraq. See U.S. News, Triumph without Victory, 179.
from its recess and convene an immediate special session to consider a resolution
authorizing military action against Saddam Hussein. Lugar had taken his action because,
as he explained to the president, his constituents in Indiana did not understand why more
troops were necessary to carry out the country’s policies.\textsuperscript{127} In the face of growing
criticism and failing support, the Bush administration attempted to enlist more forcefully
the Congress’ support for its offensive option in the Gulf.

Just one day after Baker made his attempt to clarify the U.S. justifications, the
National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC/USA) issued a statement urging the
president to find a peaceful solution to the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait as well as the
Israeli-Palestinian dispute that had threatened the region for forty years.\textsuperscript{128} That same day,
14 November, President Bush, tried to calm the situation by saying that he had not yet
resolved to use force and that the buildup of forces only made the use of force possible
and credible.\textsuperscript{129} Public opposition to offensive military action grew throughout November.
On 15 November, both Protestant and Catholic organizations in the United States took
positions opposing a military action to force Iraqi troops from Kuwait before “all other
options had been exhausted.” The president of the National Catholic Council of Bishops
said that an attack on Iraq might not satisfy the Catholic Church’s definition of “just

\begin{footnotes}
\item[128] National Council of Church of Christ, “On the Gulf and Middle East Crisis,” in
\item[129] White House News Summary, 15 November 1990, Daily Guidance File, Box
130, BPR, GBL.
\end{footnotes}
war. The weakening of national and congressional unity worried many within the Bush administration. Some presidential advisors questioned the wisdom of approaching Congress for any type of resolution of support, citing Article 51 of the United Nations charter as justification for military action to liberate Kuwait. Others believed that only with Congress fully behind the president could the country unite in support for military action. Between 28 and 30 November, the Senate Armed Services Committee, chaired by Georgia Democrat Sam Nunn, held hearings discussing the crisis in the Gulf and the wisdom of pursuing an offensive option. Two former Chairmen of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crow and Air Force General David Jones, both told Senators on 28 November that they believed that the U.S. should give sanctions more time to take effect.

While the U.S. Congress held hearings on the administration’s Gulf policy, Secretary Baker concluded his round-the-world diplomatic journey to enlist international support for a use of force resolution. Returning to New York City to serve as chair of the UN Security Council on the day it voted on the American proposed resolution, Baker felt confident that he had been able to enlist support from all five permanent members of the council. The United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union had all agreed to support the U.S.-sponsored resolution. However, in a hurried meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister in an airport VIP lounge, Baker had not been able to receive any guarantee on

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131 Press Briefing by Marlin Fitzwater, 29 November 1990, Daily Guidance File, Box 131, BPR, GBL.
how the Chinese would vote. On the day of the vote, 29 November, no one new for sure how China would vote. In the end, China abstained and only two non-permanent Security Council members -- Yemen and Cuba -- voted against the resolution, making the final vote 12 supporting, two against, and one abstaining. The resolution authorized "Member states co-operating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January 1991 fully implements . . . the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area." 132 The passage of Resolution 678 was a major victory for the Bush administration, giving the U.S. and its allies an international mandate for an offensive option to force Iraq from Kuwait. Not since the Korean War had the Security Council given its approval for the international community to use force to punish a member nation for an act of aggression. 133

Although UN Security Council Resolution 678 marked a major diplomatic victory for Bush, domestic uncertainty remained. Members of Congress, leading religious leaders, and portions of the public opposed what they felt was the president's headlong rush into battle with Iraq. The president's political advisors had been urging him for weeks to do something to calm the public's growing fears regarding the Gulf. On 30 November 1990, just one day after the historic UN Security Council vote, Bush addressed the country during a morning news conference. He took the opportunity to explain clearly why the


U.S. and the international community were preparing for a possible war with Iraq. "We are in the Gulf because the world must not and cannot reward aggression. And we are there because our vital interests are at stake. . . . And we're in the Gulf because of the brutality of Saddam Hussein." Bush announced that, in a final effort to avoid war, he was willing to send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad to meet with Saddam Hussein. Baker, according to Bush, was to look Saddam "in the eye" and explain that America and its allies were deadly serious about the 15 January UN imposed-deadline. The president reassured the country that there should be no doubt about his desire "to go the extra mile for peace," but no one, especially not the Iraqi leader, should doubt his resolve to use force if necessary.134

In addition to sending Baker to Baghdad, the president invited Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington during the week of December 10 for talks at the White House. Bush said that he earnestly hoped that Baker would be able to meet with Saddam in Baghdad "at a mutually convenient time" but limited the dates to between 15 December and 15 January. "I will be prepared, and so will Secretary Baker," he said, "to discuss all aspects of the Gulf crisis. However, to be very clear about these efforts all means for achieving a political and diplomatic solution, I am not suggesting discussions that will result in anything less than Iraq's complete withdrawal from Kuwait, [the] restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government, and the freedom for all hostages." If Iraq was unwilling to comply with all three U.S. aims by 15 January, Bush stated that American and its allies

134Press Conference by the President, 30 November 1990, BPR, DGF, Box 131, 30 November 1990, GBL.
would be obliged to resort to force. However, he continued, war in the Gulf would "not be another Vietnam. This will not be a protracted, drawn-out war... If one American soldier has to go into battle, that soldier will have enough force behind him to win and then get out." Even as Bush was speaking, armored units from the U.S. VII Corps in Germany and the 1st Infantry (Mechanized) Division in Kansas were heading toward Saudi Arabia to join other U.S. and Coalition forces poised to drive Iraq from Kuwait.

After reading his statement, President Bush answered a few journalists’ questions. Near the end of the press conference, New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd, comparing Bush to a service member’s parent, asked the president if he felt that the “issue [was] important enough... that [he] could conceive of giving up one of [his children’s] lives for it?” Bush seized upon the question to communicate just how strongly he felt about his Gulf policy.

... People say to me, how many lives? How many lives can you expend? Each one is precious. I don’t want to reminisce, but I’ve been there. I know what it’s like to have fallen comrades and see young kids die in battle. It’s only the President that should be asked to make the decision: Is it worth it? How many lives is it worth? Is it worth it to commit one life, put one life in harm’s way to achieve these objectives? And that’s why I want to get a peaceful resolution to this question.

You ought to read my mail. It is so heart-moving. Supportive, and yet, please bring my kid home. Please bring my husband home. It’s a tough question. But a president has to make the right decision. These are worldwide principles of moral importance. I will do my level-best to bring those kids home without one single shot fired in anger. And if a shot is fired in anger, I want to guarantee each person that their kid, whose life is in harm’s way, will have the maximum support, will have the best chance to come home alive, and will be backed up to the hilt.

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135 Ibid.

Because of that question that weighs on my mind, I added that language this morning about how this will not be a Vietnam. They can criticize me for moving force. And if we've got one kid that's apt to be in harm's way, I want him backed up to the hilt by American firepower, and others as well. That's why I'm working as hard as I am not only to hold this coalition together, but to strengthen it. The best way to safeguard the lives of Americans is for Saddam Hussein to do what he should have done long ago. And if force has to be used, the best way to safeguard lives is to see that you've got the best and you're willing to use it. That's my posture.\textsuperscript{137}

Bush's answer demonstrated his resolve to force Saddam from Kuwait. It also showed that the president understood what he was asking American servicemen and their families to sacrifice.

As the president was trying to prepare the country for the possibility of war, the Pentagon was attempting to allay media concerns that the military would not allow reporters to cover the fighting if it began. On 28 November, the second meeting between the media representatives and the Pentagon leadership took place. Again Williams assured the press of the military's desire to cooperate but told the news people that the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Commander in Chief or the U.S. Central Command each had denied the request to have unescorted journalists cover future operations. The military's position was further defined in a memo Williams sent on 14 December to the news executives he had been meeting with. In the memo, Williams informed the news representatives that the military would review all pool material. 

Although the security review of journalistic material had been a subject of neither of the first two meetings, the provision for review at the source was consistent with the media

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid.
ground rules issued when the Department of Defense National Media Pool deployed to
Saudi Arabia in August. In fact, the grounds rules had largely remained unchanged since
the beginning of Operation Desert Shield. The memo also informed the media executives
that the military would provide a C-141 transport plane to convey additional news
personnel to the region if fighting started. Williams went on to ask for comments and
questions from the news personnel regarding the concept of combat pools. “The objective
[of the media feedback was] to help prevent the pool operation from breaking down
through a lack of news media representatives necessary to make it work -- the editors,
producers, technicians, writers, and pool coordinators who will be essential to successful
pool operation.” Williams concluded the first section of the memo by stating, “The
Pentagon wants to help you tell the Pentagon’s story.” The second section outlined the
military’s view of how coverage would occur during any upcoming conflict. Coverage
had been divided into three phases. In the first, only combat pools would have access to
units engaged in the fighting. They would be escorted at all times and their stories would
be subject to military review. The second phase included a relaxation of the strict ground
rules of phase I and allowed for greater unilateral coverage of operations. The third and
final phase would see pools disbanded completely, and all media would operate
independently, although under U.S. Central Command escort.¹³⁸

The media representatives had little to say, publicly. Only two recipients of the
memo, Chuck Lewis of Hearst Newspapers and Howell Raines of the New York Times,
objected. Lewis wrote to Williams, calling the description of phase III — independent

coverage with military escorts -- an "oxymoron." Raines stated that the proposed
description of how coverage would be handled "flew in the face" of earlier discussions.\textsuperscript{139}
Despite criticisms of the plan leveled by these two newsmen, there was little initial outcry
against what Williams proposed. Much of the lack of opposition stemmed from the
media's dependence on the military for information and support. News organizations,
according to one executive, "could not afford to opt out of pools for commercial and
competitive reasons; [they] had to be seen with reporters 'on the ground.'"\textsuperscript{140} These
constraints forced the press to accept almost any plan that the military proposed. Events
during the end of December also distracted the media from worries about how they would
cover combat operations. The media was preoccupied with last minute diplomatic
initiatives, and the challenge of covering an actual war had receded from their collective
consciousness.

Bush's attempt at finding a last-ditch diplomatic solution to the crisis eased many
American fears that the country was rushing into war, but his offer to meet with Aziz and
to dispatch Baker to Baghdad worried some Coalition members. When Hussein
conditionally accepted Bush's offer on 1 December, several foreign countries worried that
the United States would accept a negotiated settlement that liberated Kuwait but left Iraq
as a threat to regional stability. Saddam heightened those fears when he continued to
insist that any talks dealing with the future of Kuwait also include discussions of the
Palestinian problem. Although the Bush administration wanted a peaceful solution, they

\textsuperscript{139}Quoted in MacArthur, \textit{Second Front}, 29.

\textsuperscript{140}MacArthur, \textit{Second Front}, 23.
were not willing to link the future of Kuwait with any other issue. The same night Bush made his offer to send Baker to Baghdad, he met with congressional leaders. The president told the Congressmen and Senators that he welcomed their scrutiny of his Gulf policy and that he was doing everything possible to avoid a war. Nevertheless, he told the legislators that if Saddam did not leave Kuwait by 15 January he would not wait to consult with Congress before ordering U.S. forces into battle. The Congressional delegation reacted badly to Bush's posturing, leaving the president with the feeling that he did not have the votes in either House to win approval of a U.S. resolution to use force. Late that night, Bush retired to Camp David where he and his key advisors spent much of the Christmas holidays debating how best to build domestic support for the possible start of the war in less than six weeks.

While the Bush administration felt that it had to make its last ditch effort to win a diplomatic settlement if it hoped to sustain the American people's support, the president's offer to send Baker to Baghdad and to meet with Aziz in Washington angered some members of the international community. Some of the U.S.'s partners in Europe and the Arab world worried that America was not prepared to use force and was desperately looking for some way to avoid war. Other members of the Coalition -- like the Soviet Union and France -- welcomed Bush's willingness to pursue diplomatic resolutions up to the last minute. For the next month, diplomats in Washington and in Baghdad haggled over when the meetings between foreign ministers and national leaders would take place.

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Predictably, the Iraqis wanted the meeting to take place as close to the UN-deadline of 15 January as possible. The Americans dismissed such notions and stipulated that the meetings had to take place in early January if a diplomatic solution was to be possible. By the middle of December, the Iraqis had not been able to offer an acceptable date to the Americans and Bush announced that the talks were on hold. Shortly after New Years, Bush told his foreign policy team that he was canceling Baker's trip to Baghdad altogether. Instead, the president wanted to make one last offer for a negotiated settlement, proposing that Baker and Aziz meet in Geneva on 7, 8, or 9 January. On 3 January, Saddam Hussein signaled that he would allow his Foreign Minister to go to Geneva on 9 January. The United States had won another important diplomatic victory. Not only had the president succeeded in forcing the Iraqis to the bargaining table on his terms, but Bush had also shown his critics in the Congress and the public that he was not rushing off to war until he had pursed all other options.\(^{143}\)

During the six weeks between the start of the last diplomatic efforts to end the crisis and the UN-imposed deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, the Bush administration and the military attempted to formulate a consistent message that they would send to Saddam and the American public, showing the seriousness of the Coalition’s threat to use force. Called “Blink Saddam, Blink,” the operation was primarily a public relations campaign, although it did have an operational component.\(^{144}\) According


\(^{144}\)According to the *U.S. News and World Report* history of the war, the administration had discovered that Iraq did not print its own currency, but rather relied on two other countries for the production of their currency. Washington persuaded those
to a White House Communications Office memorandum, the White House and other
"appropriate agencies" had formed a Communications Working Group on the Gulf whose
the purpose was to "strengthen public support for Operation Desert Shield." During the
first two weeks of the operation, the group had distributed talking points and briefing
material to nearly 20,000 individuals, groups, and opinion leaders across the country;
faxed excerpts of recent speeches and testimony daily to key constituencies such as
administration spokesmen, Members of Congress, and political leaders; scheduled
surrogates in targeted TV markets via satellite; coordinated appearances by administration
surrogates on 42 targeted call-in radio programs across the country; provided background
material, testimony and speeches to 780 major TV and radio stations and newspapers
across the country; developed a surrogate speakers program; organized presidential and
non-presidential briefings for concerned constituent groups; and developed OP/EDs for
placement in key newspapers across the country.145 Although it was unclear what direct
impact the White House-directed public relations campaign had on the domestic audience,
public support for the president and his policies increased during the month of December.
When polling groups asked respondents if they approved of the president, only 58 percent

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145 Memorandum for the President, from David Demarest and Deb Amend, re:
Communications Working Group on the Gulf, 10 December 1990, Daily Guidance Files,
BPR, Press Office, Box 132, GBL.
said they did in the first week of December. By the next week, that number had risen to 63 percent. When asked if they approved of Bush’s handling of the situation in the Middle East, 57 percent said they did on 9 December, while 63 said they approved of Bush’s actions on 13 December.146

While many still hoped that negotiations would succeed, Americans were preparing themselves for the start of a war that seemed increasingly unavoidable. However, public statements from the Gulf disrupted the president’s carefully constructed message that the United States and its allies were prepared to begin the war one minute after midnight on 15 January. In Riyadh on 17 December, General Schwarzkopf told reporters that a war against the dug-in Iraqi forces in Kuwait could last as long as six months. He also predicted that Saddam’s soldiers would put up a tough fight. Two days later, on 19 December, Lieutenant General Calvin Waller, Deputy Commander of Central Command, went even further than Schwarzkopf in a statement to the press. Waller told reporters that he did not believe that U.S. forces would be ready for combat until sometime after 1 February 1991, echoing earlier statements by both General Powell and Secretary Cheney. However, Waller’s comments came at an inopportune time for the Bush administration because they threatened to weaken the credibility of Bush’s threat to use force around the UN deadline to force Iraqi forces from Kuwait.147 Rumors that the military needed more time to prepare before going on the offensive continued throughout

146 Mueller, Public Opinion and Policy, Table 1, 180; Table 8, 193.
December. On Christmas Eve, newspaper stories appeared claiming that Secretary Cheney and General Powell both believed that U.S. forces would not be ready for war by 15 January.¹⁴⁸

Shortly before Secretary of State Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz met in Geneva, the U.S. Congress returned to Washington for a special session. On 4 January, both Houses began debates on resolutions supporting the use of force to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait. On 8 January, with only a week to go before the United Nation's deadline, President Bush formally asked Congress for authorization to use force to compel Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. When Baker and Aziz met in Geneva the whole world watched and hoped for a last minute resolution to the crisis that had begun four months before. Baker presented Aziz with a letter President Bush had written to Saddam Hussein. After reading the communiqué, Aziz refused to deliver it to Hussein and the talks ended. The following day the House of Representatives and the Senate continued their debates on the authorization to use force, continuing until 12 January when both Houses cast their votes. The final tally in the House of Representatives was 250 supporting the use of force and 183 opposing. In the Senate the results were much closer. By a margin of only five votes (52 to 47), the Senate approved its resolution supporting

¹⁴⁸When Waller made his comments, both Secretary of Defense Cheney and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Powell had been in Saudi Arabia conducting a review of the troops. When they returned to Washington, they spoke with Bush who was understandably confused by the military commanders' statements. Cheney and Powell reassured the president that the military would be ready to carry out his orders whenever he needed them. Cheney told the president "not to worry." U.S. News, *Triumph without Victory*, 191. See also Cheney, interview, 1 February 1999; Powell, interview, 23 March; *New York Times*, 25 December 1990.
the use of U.S. troops to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The political debate over the use of force ended in a major victory for the president.149

As the diplomatic efforts ended, the Pentagon was still trying to plan for the media's coverage of the impending war. The last meeting between Williams and news representatives took place on 4 January but included over fifty news representatives who met to receive the first draft of the military's ground rules governing the press during combat in the Gulf. Three days later, Williams sent each media organization a copy of the proposed ground rules. Largely drawn from the initial set of guidelines issued to the DOD National Media Pool in August, the combat ground rules stipulated that pools would cover combat operations, that reporters would be escorted at all times, that journalistic products would be subjected to security review, and that photographers and cameramen could not photograph wounded or killed U.S. soldiers.150

The press reaction was immediate and highly critical. Unlike earlier meetings, the issuance of ground rules galvanized the media against what they saw as unnecessary restrictions and infringements on their constitutional rights. Some news executives went so far as to say that the restriction of the press would invite coverups similar to the one


that occurred following the My Lai Massacre during the Vietnam war.\textsuperscript{151} Within days, Williams answered some of the media’s criticism of specific rules by modifying them. On 9 January, he announced that although the military sought to protect the families of soldiers serving in the Gulf from unnecessary shock and anguish, they had agreed to drop an outright ban on publication of photographs or video showing troops in agony or “sever shock.” In an editorial published on 11 January, Williams addressed the media’s criticism of the ground rules and attempted to explain why they were necessary. “The rules,” he wrote, “are not intended to prevent journalists from reporting on incidents that might embarrass the military or to make military operations look sanitized. Instead, they are intended to do just what they did in World War II -- to prevent publication of details that could jeopardize a military operation or endanger the lives of U.S. troops.\textsuperscript{152} The Pentagon spokesman also explained the security review process.

If the field public affairs officer believes information in a story violates the ground rules, public affairs officers at the press center will review it before release. If they, too, believe the story would break the ground rules, they’ll call us at the Pentagon for our opinion.

We will call bureau chiefs and editors stateside and discuss any problems with them. We understand that news must move quickly, and we’ll act as fast as we can. But the ultimate decision will remain in the hands of journalists. Our appeal process is intended only to allow us to discuss potential ground-rule violations with editors and bureau chiefs and to remind them of the need to protect sensitive information.

In today’s world of instant communication, a slip-up in reporting critical details could put U.S. troops at risk. But history has shown that most reporters understand ground rules, and they don’t want to endanger


troops or military operations. That's why our system depends, in the final measure, on an atmosphere of trust, common sense and understanding.\textsuperscript{153}

Certain members of the media became so upset at the military's restrictions on press access to the war zone that they filed suit challenging the military's ground rules governing the reporters in Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{154} On 10 January 1991, a group of small, primarily left-wing news organizations and four journalists sued the U.S. military leadership in the Second District Federal Court of New York. Representatives of the news magazine \textit{The Nation} led the plaintiffs who charged that the Pentagon's rules governing the press in Saudi Arabia were unconstitutional. The plaintiffs invited members of the main stream media to join their suit. The three main television networks, as well as the \textit{Washington Post} and the \textit{New York Times}, all declined to join the suit or contribute a

\textsuperscript{153}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{154}The plaintiffs in the suit were as follows: 
\textit{The Nation Magazine} (a/k/a The Nation Company, Inc.), \textit{Harper's Magazine}, \textit{In These Times} (a/k/a The Institute for Public Affairs, Inc.), Pacifica News Service (a/k/a Bay Area Institute, Inc.) \textit{The Guardian} (a/k/a Institute for Independent Social Journalism, Inc.), \textit{The Progressive Magazine} (a/k/a The Progressive, Inc.), \textit{Mother Jones Magazine} (a/k/a Foundation for National Progress, Inc.), \textit{The L.A. Weekly} (a/k/a Los Angeles Weekly, Inc.), \textit{The Village Voice} (a/k/a VV Publishing Corporation), \textit{The Texas Observer} (a/k/a The Texas Observer Publishing Company), \textit{Pacifica Radio News} (a/k/a The Pacifica Foundation, Inc.) and Sydney H. Schanberg, E. L. Doctorow, William Styron, Michael Klare, and Scott Armstrong.

The case named several defendants:  
The United States Department of Defense, Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense, Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and George Bush, President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

In a separate case that was later joined to \textit{The Nation}'s suit, Agence France-Presse and Michael Sargent brought suit against the same defendants.

amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs' position. The case, known as The Nation et al. v. The Department of Defense, was only the second legal challenge to military restrictions on the press' access to the battlefield. The courts had dismissed the first case, filed during the brief U.S. operation in Grenada in 1983, on the grounds that since the crisis had ended before the case appeared before the court the issue was moot. In The Nation et al., the chance for a legal ruling before the end of the crisis appeared possible. In the case, the plaintiffs insisted that they had a constitutional right to gather information about the war from the battlefield. The military's restrictions on journalists' movements, according to the plaintiffs, infringed upon the media's First Amendment rights of free press. The presiding judge, Leonard B. Sand, ordered Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Pete Williams to submit to a deposition and to provide documents detailing the military's rationale for their policy toward the press. The legal wrangling between the media and the military continued from January to March. Because the crisis in the Gulf did not end in a matter of days as had happened in Grenada, the legal challenge to the military's handling of the press during Operation Desert Shield was much more serious.155

155 762 F. Suppl. 1558; 1991 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 4853; 19 Media L. Rep. 1257. On April 16 1991, Judge Leonard B. Sand dismissed the case on the grounds that the plaintiffs had not presented a strong enough case and that the end of the war and the lifting of official restrictions on the media removed the urgency, or live controversy, of the case. Judge Sand stated that he had found some merits in the law suit. In his opinion, the judge rebuffed the government's contention that the president's war power under Article II of the Constitution was superior to the press' freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment. Sand also rejected the government's argument that a court could not mediate a dispute between the military and the press over First Amendment rights during a war. However, the judge did refer to the relevant case law that maintained that the First Amendment did not provide the press with a right of access. Additionally, Sand noted that the plaintiffs' failure to offer a better alternative to the military's plan to handle the press weakened their claims that a better system could be found.
While the ground rules were hot news in the United States, they did not have much impact on the press corps already in Saudi Arabia. Those reporters had been operating under a similar set of guidelines since they had first arrived in the theater. However, in addition to the Pentagon ground rules, the director of the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran implemented a physical fitness test for reporters hoping to cover combat operations in the field. Colonel William Mulvey, who had replaced Captain Michael Sherman, started the fitness tests to encourage reporters to take seriously the physical demands of keeping up with U.S. forces during combat to help reporters form a sense of cohesion among themselves that they could rely on one another during combat. "Well, I'm just a dumb infantry man," Mulvey recalled later, "and if you go out and you run together and complain about it and do a little PT [physical training] together -- I've seen units built with a PT program."\(^{156}\) The test, which some journalists said they feared more than the Iraqis, required reporters to meet the standards the military sets for its own men and women for sit-ups, push-ups, and a mile-and-a-half run.\(^{157}\) Although Mulvey had threatened reporters with loss of their place with the combat pools, he did not have to remove any reporter for failure to pass the fitness test. A few journalists, after doing poorly on the test, voluntarily gave up their positions. The purpose of the test was not to weed out unfit journalists or to restrict the access of journalists to military units. Instead, Mulvey hoped that the tests would show journalists just how strenuous combat operations

\(^{156}\) Mulvey, interview, 21 May 1991.

would be and to remind them that they would have to keep up with younger, more fit soldiers during combat. 158

While it was difficult to gauge the impact of the media’s coverage of the war on public opinion, the American public had paid close attention to developing events in the Gulf region since the crisis began in early August 1990. Although the public might not have come to view war as more desirable, polling data clearly indicates that they increasingly came to see some sort of conflict as inevitable. The trend was not linear. The president’s announcement in November that he had ordered more troops to the region to provide an offensive option to military commanders did not appear dramatically to effect public feelings that war was inevitable. However, at the end of November and December, public opinion clearly indicated that many respondents felt the war between the U.S.-led coalition and Iraq seemed more likely. Following the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 678 in late November and the failed diplomatic missions in December and early January, numb respondents consistently voiced their opinion that some sort of conflict was imminent. By January 9, three separate polls indicated that over 80 percent of respondents felt that it was likely that U.S. military forces would enter into combat with Iraqi troops. 159 Other polls suggested that the American public expected any conflict between the U.S. and Iraq to conclude quickly with a relatively easy U.S. victory. 160 As one scholar on public opinion has written, “Clearly, if people come to think war is


inevitable, their resistance to having it happen will diminish, particularly if, . . . they think their side will be victorious and if they think the costs are likely to be modest.\textsuperscript{161}

As the UN-imposed deadline drew closer, much of the world turned to CNN and other news outlets to see if Saddam Hussein would finally back down. The 15 January deadline came and went without any movement of Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. The number of journalists operating in Saudi Arabia had decreased during the Christmas holidays. During the first week of January only 285 reporters remained in the region. That number quickly grew. On the eve of the UN deadline, over 600 journalists had crowded press facilities in Dhahran and Riyadh. On 14 January, the Department of Defense fulfilled its earlier promise and brought an additional 125 journalists to Dhahran on a military transport aircraft. The first test of the combat pools had taken place on 2 January when two pools of eighteen journalists had left to join ground units of both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marines. The JIB at Dhahran rotated pool members approximately every ten days.\textsuperscript{162}

No military action took place on 15 January or the following day. However, by the end of the UN-deadline, Bush and his advisors had succeeded in building a strong international coalition and in securing the support of the U.S. Congress, the American people, and even the press for the war. On the evening of 17 January, at 5:30 EST the U.S.S. \textit{Bunker Hill} launched a Tomahawk cruise missile destined for targets deep within Iraq. One minute later, the U.S.S. \textit{Wisconsin}, the venerable battleship that had seen action

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{161} Mueller, \textit{Public Opinion and Policy}, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Mulvey, interview, 21 May 1991.
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in all U.S. wars since World War II, fired a similar missile. Attack aircraft were already in the air. With the firing of the unmanned missiles the Coalition was committed to war. A possible violation of operational security occurred when an intelligence unit embarked on the Wisconsin dispatched a report of the firing on the military’s CRITIC emergency alert system. The military had designed CRITIC to send out a flash message whenever “strong indications of the imminent outbreak of hostilities of any type” were imminent. Originally intended to provide all U.S. forces worldwide with the earliest alert of possible hostilities, especially attack by the Soviet Union, no one had authorized the use of the CRITIC system to broadcast the beginning of the war against Iraq. General Thomas Kelly, chief of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, saw the message from the Wisconsin and notified General Powell. Both men were furious and immediately ordered a cancellation message. Powell was especially concerned about maintaining operation security. Despite the fact that the whole world knew that a confrontation was imminent in the Gulf, few knew when military operations would start. Although news commentators had been speculating about when the U.S. would launch its first attack against Iraq, secrecy about the start of the operation had remained intact.^{163}

At the same time that U.S. forces were firing the first shots of the war, CNN had been conducting an interview of the former CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite. CNN correspondent Bernard Shaw, speaking from Baghdad, spoke with Cronkite in New York about the elder journalist’s experiences covering previous wars. Secretary of Defense Cheney sat in his office at the Pentagon watching Shaw and Cronkite. At one point in the

interview, Shaw told Cronkite that he would be leaving Baghdad the following day since he had failed to secure an interview with Saddam Hussein. As Cheney listened to Shaw’s plans, he felt a sense of unreality. The secretary knew that Shaw would not be leaving Baghdad the next day. According to one insider, Cheney “felt a strange sensation watching [the] conversation, knowing that hundreds of attack missions were heading for Kuwait and Iraq, unbeknownst to the media and almost all Americans.”164 Shaw and other CNN personnel, like several other television news organizations, had traveled to Baghdad during the last few days before the UN deadline to cover last minute diplomatic initiatives. On the night of 17 January, they remained in the Iraqi capital ignorant that they were about to witness the opening of the conflict.

Six months separated Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and the beginning of the air war to force Iraqi troops from their illegally seized “19th providence.” During that period, the Bush administration had succeeded in doing what many would have said was impossible in July 1990. Under the leadership of Secretary of State James Baker, the United States forged an international Coalition -- included the Soviet Union, Arab states, and the powers of the West -- determined to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi control. Not only had the United States formed an international alliance more diverse and encompassing than any since World War II, the president and his advisors had also managed to gain the support of the American people, the U.S. Congress, and even the media. By 17 January, when the first missiles streaked toward Baghdad, the people of the United States stood united behind their president and his determination to reverse Iraqi aggression.

164 Ibid.
How had the Bush team managed to build such unity in such a short time? Much of the credit goes to the president and his Secretary of State. Both men recognized that if they could secure broad international support for first economic sanctions against Iraq and later the option to use force to compel Iraq to leave Kuwait, the American people and, more important, the Congress would have an obligation to support U.S. involvement in the crisis. Baker used a combination of friendship, offers of aid, and hard-nosed diplomacy to build the international coalition. He maintained throughout the six months of the crisis before war began that without strong international unity, the United States would never be able to support military action in the Gulf. President Bush heeded Baker’s advice and worked hard to shore up international cooperation.

However, even after the international community first isolated Iraq and then agreed to use force to compel its troops to leave Kuwait, the president and his administration found themselves facing the most difficult part of the crisis: building support for war at home. The American public had approved of their president’s decision to deploy troops to Saudi Arabia to deter Saddam Hussein from seizing more territory. Bush’s approval ratings soared during the first month of the crisis. However, as time wore on and Iraq did not seem poised to strike again, the American people’s attention drifted away from international issues to domestic problems. During the fall of 1990, as the international community was pulling closer together in opposing Iraq, Americans watched the president and the Congress drift apart over the federal budget. When Bush had to make concessions to Congress and break his promise of no new taxes, Americans went to the election polls in November and punished the president’s political party for the
troubled economy.

By November it appeared that America was more divided that it had been before the crisis in the Gulf began. When President Bush announced that he was doubling the number of U.S. forces in the Gulf, public and Congressional reaction was immediate and angry. While the president had been clear in describing what he hoped the U.S. forces would accomplish, he had been less clear on why they were there in the first place. For the next eight weeks, Bush and his advisors went on a public relations offensive to explain to the American people why economic sanctions were not enough to force Saddam Hussein to give up Kuwait and why military action was necessary to force him out. Only after two months of intensive efforts, an international mandate to use force, a last-minute diplomatic initiative, and difficult battle in Congress did the president finally receive the undivided support of the country. Although it was a difficult struggle, by the time U.S. forces fired the first shots of the Gulf War, George Bush had succeeded in uniting the United States and the world behind his decision that the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait "would not stand."
Chapter 8
Weathering the Storm:
Waging War and Sustaining Popular Support in a Limited War in the Persian Gulf

At 3:05 a.m. local time on 17 January 1991, the first U.S. Navy-launched Tomahawk cruise missile arrived over the Iraqi capital and struck its target. Minutes later, the second missile struck a communications node in Baghdad. Twenty-five minutes after the two missiles struck their targets, pilotless and unarmed drones (called Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or UAVs) took off from air bases in Saudi Arabia. Ten minutes later, Navy jets based on aircraft carriers in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf launched more UAVs. The fleet of pilotless aircraft reached Baghdad at 3:50 a.m. and began their mission as decoys, causing Iraqi air defense units to open fire. To the south, an air armada of American F-4G Wild Weasels, EF-111 electronic-warfare planes, EA-6B Navy Prowlers, and F/A-18 attack jets destroyed radar facilities that were tracking the decoy drones. In the first hour of the war against Iraq, code named Operation Desert Storm, six groups, or packages, of bombers, fighters and electronic warfare aircraft attacked Iraq, including a squadron of F-117A stealth fighter-bombers. British Tornado ground attack jets, U.S. F-15E fighter-bombers, and B-52 bombers comprised other attack groups. By the end of the first three hours of the air campaign, more than 400 combat planes and 160 tankers and command aircraft swarmed across the dark skies of the Persian Gulf theater.¹

The air attack on 17 January was just the first step in the Coalition’s plan to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. As the UN deadline had approached, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf as Commander in Chief of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM or CENTCOM) and Supreme Allied Commander in the region, set out the objectives of the four-phase offensive campaign. Phase I was a strategic air campaign, which began in the early hours of 17 January. Phase II would be a short but intense effort to establish air superiority in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. The third phase would consist of air attacks on the Republican Guard and other Iraqi army forces in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. The first three phases would overlap each other, with air attacks against strategic targets continuing throughout the six weeks of the war. The campaign would culminate in Phase IV, a ground offensive supported by air and naval forces to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait and destroy the offensive capabilities of the Iraqi military.²

Just two days before the first attacks against Baghdad, USA Today, the nation’s largest circulating newspaper, published a story profiling television correspondents stationed in the Persian Gulf region. The story in USA Today led with the prediction, “Whatever happens in the Persian Gulf, four people will be on network TV’s front lines covering the story.” The paper profiled television correspondents Bill Redeker (ABC), Bob Simon (CBS), Christiane Amanpour (CNN), and Arthur Kent (NBC).³ Although the newspaper was right that the American public would turn to their television sets for


information on the war, it did not select the television reporters that would be most remembered for their coverage of the first hours of the air campaign. Relatively unknown personalities from the newest network, CNN, would dominate the TV screens during the first hours of the war.

The Cable News Network, CNN, was a new-comer to the world of television news. Founded in June 1980 by Ted Turner, CNN was different from the major broadcast news organizations. Instead of confining itself to specific news programs and specials, the all-news network offered twenty-four hour news on its two cable networks (CNN and CNN Headline News). Ted Turner’s network got off to a “rocky start” because it made a “multitude of mistakes . . . trying to maintain twenty-four hour news coverage and keep it fresh and interesting.” However, during the first ten years of its existence, the new network worked hard to learn from its mistakes and improve its product. By the time the crisis in the Gulf began, it was positioned to take advantage of its unique format. Earlier successes, most notably in covering the Chinese crackdown on the Tiananmen Square democracy demonstrators in 1989, had already established CNN as a viable alternative to the traditional news broadcasts. One of CNN’s biggest strengths was its technical ability to compile large amounts of information from various places and then feed them to its headquarters in Atlanta where producers were able to choose from a variety of material including live and taped shots, live telephone hookups, and expert commentary on the products of their journalists in the field. The flexibility of the CNN system allowed it to find the most interesting eyewitness reports and combine them with in-depth analysis. Its

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"Perry Smith, How CNN Fought the War (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1991), 11."
world-wide focus also gave CNN additional credibility in the international market. Unlike the big three American networks -- that non-Americans viewed as biased toward the United States -- CNN enjoyed international acceptance by 1990 similar to that of the British Broadcasting System. Additionally, by removing the time constraints that the other television networks had to operate under, CNN could pursue a story, offer fast breaking accounts of events, and then use its relatively unlimited news time to place the events into context. The result was a combination of the visual impact of television with the analysis of print journalism.

In early January, several members of the CNN staff were present in Iraq as the UN imposed deadline for Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait approached. Bernard Shaw, the CNN anchor and most recognized personality at the time, had gone to Baghdad to interview Saddam Hussein. On 12 January, veteran war reporter Peter Arnett arrived to augment the CNN staff that included correspondents Shaw and John Holliman already in Iraq. The CNN reporters waited in Baghdad for the start of the war, knowing that they were at ground zero of any Coalition air campaign.

On 17 January, the CNN crew began to set up their cameras at 2:00 a.m. in the Al-Rashid hotel in Baghdad. They had heard rumors that some U.S. pilots were saying they would use the hotel as a landmark in the expected air campaign. Suddenly, all of the dogs in the surrounding neighborhood began barking and in the next instant, reporters Arnett,

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5Smith, CNN Fought the War, 12-13.

Shaw, Holliman, and camera man Mark Biello saw a tremendous flash in the southern sky. The air war had begun, and unlike earlier conflicts, reporters were on hand to cover the first shots. The CNN men scrambled to make contact with the network's headquarters in Atlanta. "Come to Baghdad, Come to Baghdad. Something is happening, something is happening," Shaw repeated over the air. \(^7\) Outside the windows of their hotel room, the sky was lit with red and yellow lights as bombs and missiles landed in the Iraqi capital and air defense systems attempted to engage the attackers. In Atlanta, CNN interrupted an interview with former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to go live to Baghdad. Shaw and Arnett began a running commentary, describing what they saw. Suddenly the lights and power went out across the city. The reporters did not know if they still had contact with Atlanta but continued to broadcast. John Holliman managed to maintain transmissions via a battery operated microphone. Although there was no response from Atlanta for several minutes, the journalists continued their work. Holliman even placed the microphone out his window so that the network might receive the sounds of the air attack as he continued his monologue on the action. During the next break in his description, Holliman heard for the first time from Atlanta since the power went out, learning that CNN was still receiving their transmission. The network had listened for ten minutes without interrupting their correspondents' descriptions of the attack. Peter Arnett remembered Holliman dancing for joy after learning that the transmissions were getting through, just as a large bomb detonated three blocks from their hotel. \(^8\)

\(^7\) Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 365.

\(^8\) Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 366.
The three correspondents continued their broadcast throughout the first wave of the attack, passing their one microphone back-and-forth among them. During the second wave, the attack moved closer to the center of the city where the journalists' hotel was located. Holliman asked Atlanta repeatedly if he and his fellow CNN correspondents were still getting through. Atlanta-based anchor David French informed them that the U.S. military headquarters in Saudi Arabia had announced that the war had begun. “I suppose that information is superfluous to you,” French informed the CNN team in Baghdad.

“You’re watching it.” CNN had scooped the military with news of the start of the war by at least twenty-seven minutes. Despite urging from the hotel switchboard to leave their room and retreat to the hotel’s shelters, the reporters remained on station throughout the night. No other news organization offered an eyewitness account of the start of the air war from Baghdad. The CNN crew continued to broadcast until Iraqi government

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9 In a statement from General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the U.S. Central Command announced the beginning of Operation Desert Storm.

“Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines of United States Central Command. This morning at 0300C we launched Operation desert Storm, an offensive campaign that will enforce United Nations resolutions that Iraq must cease its rape and pillage of its weaker neighbor and withdraw its forces from Kuwait. The President, the Congress, the American people and indeed the world stand united in their support for your actions.

You are a member of the most powerful force our country, in coalition with our allies, has ever assembled in a single theater to face an aggressor. You have trained hard for this battle and you are ready. During my visits with you, I have seen in your eyes a fire of determination to get this job done quickly so that we all may return to the shores of our great nation. My confidence in you is total. Our cause is just! Now you must be the thunder and lightning of Desert Storm. May God be with you, your loved ones at home, and our country.”


10 Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 367.
"minders" forced them to go off the air after seventeen hours of continuous reporting.\textsuperscript{11}

The newest broadcast news organization had scored a tremendous victory with their broadcast from Baghdad.

At 7:08 p.m. EST, nearly two hours after CNN broadcast the first pictures of the air attacks over Baghdad, presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater delivered a brief, anticlimactic statement to the press, announcing that "the liberation of Kuwait" had begun.

"In conjunction with the forces of our coalition partners," Fitzwater said, "the United States has moved under the code name Operation Desert Storm to enforce the mandates of the United Nations Security Council." The spokesman gave few details, saying only that "forces were engaging targets in Kuwait and Iraq."\textsuperscript{12}

Two hours later, the president went on national television to speak with the nation. Bush told the nation that "air attacks are underway against military targets in Iraq." He outlined the goals of the air campaign. "We are determined to knock out Saddam Hussein's nuclear bomb potential. We will also destroy his chemical weapons facilities. Much of Saddam's artillery and tanks will be destroyed." The president also reminded the American people of the strategic goals of war. "Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait," he promised. "The legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place and Kuwait will once again be free. Iraq will eventually comply with all

\textsuperscript{11} Arnett, \textit{Live from the Battlefield}, 374.

\textsuperscript{12} Statement by the Press Secretary, 7:08 p.m. EST, Alphabet File, 16 January 1991, Iraq - Operation Desert Storm, Day 1-2, Box 18, Bush Press Records, Press Office, George H. W. Bush Library, College Station, TX. Records from the Bush library hereafter cited as BPR, GBL.
relevant United Nations resolutions. And then, when peace is restored, it is our hope that
Iraq will behave as a peaceful and cooperative member of the family of nations, thus
enhancing the security and stability of the Gulf.” The president also said that he was
forced to take action when he did because sanctions did not appear to be working. And
despite clear signals from the international community through the United Nations’
resolutions and the U.S. congressional resolution supporting the use of force, Saddam
remained stubbornly in defiance of calls to remove his forces from Kuwait. Bush prayed
for the safety of the innocent people of Iraq. The Coalition forces were fighting against
the Iraqi president and not against the Iraqi people. “We have no argument with the
people of Iraq,” Bush said, “[and] our goal is not the conquest of Iraq . . . .” However,
the forces arrayed against Saddam Hussein would continue to fight until they had liberated
Kuwait. Bush ended his statement by talking about the U.S. soldiers involved in the war.
He appealed to the American people to support their military men and women engaged in
conflict half-way around the world. “Tonight, as our forces fight, they and their families
are in our prayers. May good bless each and every one of them, and the Coalition forces
at our side in the Gulf -- and may He continued to bless our nation, the United States of
America.”\(^{13}\)

Even before the first bombs fell on Baghdad, the public was increasingly tuning in
to television news programs. Roughly two million more households watched evening
newscasts the week before the beginning of the air campaign. CNN viewership on the day

\(^{13}\)Statement by the President, 9:01 p.m. EST, 16 January 1991, Iraq-Operation
Desert Storm, Day 1-2, Alphabet File, BPR, GBL.
the war started rose 314 percent from the same period the year before. Eleven million
viewers tuned into CNN alone from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. EST on the first day of the war.
Television's coverage of the start of the air campaign garnered the largest prime-time
audience in history.\textsuperscript{14} CNN's performance from Baghdad received praise from many
quarters. Many local stations affiliated with either ABC, CBS, or NBC switched their
feeds from their national news centers to CNN. Although each of the major news
organizations received limited coverage from their own reporters, they remained on the air
for only a fraction of the time that the CNN reporters did. In a press conference shortly
after the president announced the beginning of the air campaign, Secretary of Defense
Cheney offered high praise for CNN's coverage of the opening of the air campaign. When
a reporter asked Cheney if he was concerned about civilian casualties in Baghdad, Cheney
responded, "The best reporting I've seen on what transpired in Baghdad was on CNN.
And it would appear, based on the comments that were coming from the CNN crew at the
hotel in Baghdad, that the operation was successful in striking targets with a high degree
of precision. At least that's the reporting according to CNN." Walter Goodman, the \textit{New
York Times} television critic, gave praise to television for its early coverage of the war.
"Television achieved the excitement of the old-time radio reporting last night as war began
in the Persian Gulf."\textsuperscript{15}

As the air attacks continued the next night, millions of Americans again turned


\textsuperscript{15}Walter Goodman, "On Television, the Theater of War," \textit{New York Times}, 17
their television sets on to watch the evening news. The networks quickly shifted their coverage from Baghdad to Israel. Viewers saw ABC correspondent Dean Reynolds, NBC's Martin Fletcher, and CNN's Larry Register don gas masks as Iraqi SCUD missiles sped toward Israel. Competition between the networks to produce the first pictures remained high. The news organizations quickly switched from Israel back to Baghdad as the air attacks on the Iraqi capital began once again. ABC aired the first shots of the second nights' attack, and only later shared its footage with the other networks. CBS was the first network to report that a SCUD missile had landed in Tel Aviv. After that, all networks were "pretty much neck-and-neck." Following the first night when CNN dominated public attention, the other television networks "were in the game" of covering the war.16

Outside Baghdad and Israel, members of the Saudi Arabian-based press corps also covered the start of the war. Television once again dominated the first hours of the war. Carrera crews showed dramatic footage of aircraft roaring into the night to begin their combat missions against Iraqi positions. Reporters interviewed pilots as they returned from the first missions. In one interview, a journalist shoved his microphone in the face of a young fighter pilot just as he returned from his first combat mission. The pilot, walking down the runway with his helmet under his arm, had not even been able to file an official debriefing before the press approached him. After answering the reporter's questions about his mission, the pilot walked a short way past the journalist and then turned back to

the camera. "I thank God I completed my mission and got back safely," he said. "I thank God for the love of a good woman. And I thank God I'm an American and an American fighter pilot." General Collin Powell, watching on his television set in the Pentagon, swelled with pride. He felt that the words of the anonymous pilot had shredded the old stereotype that the military was comprised of unmotivated "dropouts from nowhere-town" and provided the American people with an example of "the smart, motivated, patriot young Americans, the best and the brightest" that made up the new military.¹⁷

Although television reporters had been able to broadcast live from Iraq, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, the bulk of information available to the press and the country came from the military and the government during the first days of the war. The military held two briefings each day. One was conducted in Saudi Arabia at the Joint Information Bureau located at Riyadh. A second briefing took place at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Unlike Vietnam where fairly junior officers conducted briefings, during the Gulf War senior military officials met with the press. While Secretary Cheney, General Powell, and General Schwarzkopf appeared before journalists on occasion, usually senior staff officers provided the information to journalists. In Riyadh, Major General Richard Johnston (USMC), USCENTCOM chief of staff, was the most frequent briefer. In Washington, Lieutenant General Thomas Kelly (USA), Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, held a similar position. Through briefers such as Johnston and Kelly, the military provided informed spokesmen that were able to win the public's trust through their obvious knowledge and honest answers. Despite the military and the government's desire

to provide as much information as quickly as possible, Bush and Powell remained concerned about operational security and too much enthusiasm. During the first days of the air war, the Coalition stunningly lost no aircraft to enemy fire. The press trumpeted the success and began to offer wild speculation on what was to come next. Some went so far as to predict that ground operations would begin in only a few days.\textsuperscript{18}

In an effort to keep public expectations reasonable, official spokespersons portrayed a cautiously optimistic view of the initial attacks. General Powell was particularly concerned that the sense of euphoria present in some news accounts “made it seem that all that remained was to organize the victory parade.” Powell contacted Pete Williams and asked the Pentagon spokesperson to speak with the press and remind them that they had seen only “the beginning of a war, not the end of a ball game.”\textsuperscript{19} According to Powell, over the next several days, the press’ mood shifted from one of euphoria to one of frustration. Some journalists wondered why, after the success of the first attacks, the war was not yet over. Others chafed under the military-imposed restrictions on reporters in Saudi Arabia. In order to put the operation in perspective, Powell and Cheney held a televised news conference on 23 January. In their presentation that outlined what had been accomplished so far and what still remained to be done, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff kept their message understated and unemotional. Powell ended the meeting with the press with a summation of the overall military objective of the war. “Our strategy in going after this army is very simple,” Powell told reporters.


\textsuperscript{19}Powell, \textit{American Journey}, 494.
"First we are going to cut it off, and then we are going to kill it."\textsuperscript{20} The next day headlines in many papers carried Powell's last sentence. However, after the first few hours of the war when the media were too busy scrambling to get the first account of the war to question military policies toward the press, the old difficulties between the military and the media resurfaced and intensified.

Although accounts of the air war dominated the press during the first three days of Operation Desert Storm, major news organizations quickly began to voice criticisms of the military's handling of the press as early as the third day of the war. On 20 January 1991, David E. Rosenbaum of the \textit{New York Times} wrote a story that described the frustrations of some reporters. According to Rosenbaum, "Journalists feel they and by extension their readers and viewers do not have the information they need to assess how the war is going, information that reporters and editors believe could be provided without compromising security."\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{New York Times} journalist also noted that government officials were critical of the press for disseminating stories that later proved incorrect as in the case of CNN correspondent Charles Jacco who inaccurately reported that Iraqi missiles carrying chemical munitions had struck Dhahran.\textsuperscript{22}

Reporters in Dhahran also complained that military officers assigned as press escorts did not fully understand the ground rules they were enforcing. Malcolm Browne,

\textsuperscript{20}Powell, \textit{American Journey}, 495.


\textsuperscript{22}Richard Zoglin, "Volleys on the Information Front," \textit{Time} (4 February 1991), 47.
also of the *New York Times*, noted that a pool dispatch he had prepared on the performance of the F-117A stealth bomber had been delayed unnecessarily. According to Browne, "An Army public information officer cleared the dispatch on the spot for transmission to pool headquarters in Dhahran and then to news organizations themselves." However, three hours later the unit commander of the F-117A had "second thoughts" about the story and altered Browne's piece. To hasten the transmission of his story, the *Times* reporter agreed to the changes. The next day, Browne learned that the F-117A unit headquarters in the United States had suppressed the entire article. Only after a delay of over a full day, was Browne able to send his story on. By then the military had released the information contained in his piece, about the first extensive use of the stealth aircraft in a combat situation, during one of its regular briefings.23 Browne also described some military personnel's hostile attitude, recalling that one Air Force officer who opened a briefing by stating, "Let me say up front that I don't like the press. Your presence here can't possibly do me any good, and it can hurt me and my people."24

Because of the public's interest in the war and the difficulties with gaining information from the military, news organizations began to find other sources to satisfy the public. All of the major television networks had hired or quickly employed military analysts to explain the weapons systems, tactics, and strategy to the viewing public. Most analysts had prior military experience and were familiar with many of the key commanders

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24Ibid.
involved in the war. Experts like Anthony Cordesman, Michael Dugan, Bernard Trainor, and Perry Smith appeared on television to give their views of what was happening and what to expect in the future. News organizations had used military analysts since at least the Second World War, most notably during the British campaign to regain the Falkland Islands in 1982. During the Gulf War these experts appeared more regularly and spoke with more authority than they had in the United States' previous wars. Military analysts provided an important service. Like print correspondents who specialized in military matters, the experts placed the reports from journalists and military officials in context. Perry Smith, who worked for CNN during the war, attempted not only to interpret what military spokespersons said in briefings but also what they had not said.²⁵ In addition to hired analysts, news organizations also began to show dramatic graphics depicting the locations of fighting and the effects of the Coalition's air attack on Iraqi targets. Newspapers like USA Today and all of the television networks spent lavishly on colorful depictions of the war. Military experts and hi-tech graphics supplemented the accounts of journalists in an attempt to provide as much information as possible to the public.²⁶

The U.S. public's response to the beginning of the war was fairly predictable. The president enjoyed a dramatic upward swing in public approval. Just days before the beginning of the war, 64 percent of respondents said that they approved of the president.

²⁵Smith, CNN Fought the War, 79.

Three days after the war had begun, that number had risen to 82 percent.\textsuperscript{27} The change in support for Bush's handling of the situation in the Middle East mirrored his personal approval ratings almost perfectly. On 13 January, 62 percent of respondents supported Bush's Gulf policy. By 20 January, that number had risen to 86 percent.\textsuperscript{28} Not only was the public supportive of the president, they were also paying more attention to the crisis itself. When polling agencies asked between 13 January and 20 January about how closely they were following news about events involving the invasion of Kuwait, 70 percent responded that they were following news very closely, and 27 percent fairly closely. Just a week before only 50 percent were following the news very closely with 41 percent following it fairly closely.\textsuperscript{29} When asked about their expectations for the conflict, most respondents believed that the war would last for several weeks or even a few months.\textsuperscript{30} Respondents to another poll expressed their opinion on how many casualties the United States military would suffer. The poll asked respondents what they felt "the number of Americans killed and injured" in the war would be. The largest number of respondents (28 percent) believed the U.S. would suffer several thousand casualties, while 14 percent thought there would be up to a thousand, 21 percent several hundred, 12 percent fewer than one hundred, and 4 percent tens of thousands. The polls showed that while Americans were supportive of the president and his policy that led to war against Iraq,

\textsuperscript{27}Mueller, \textit{Policy and Opinion}, Table 1.

\textsuperscript{28}Mueller, \textit{Policy and Opinion}, Table 8.

\textsuperscript{29}Mueller, \textit{Policy and Opinion}, Table 46.

\textsuperscript{30}Mueller, \textit{Policy and Opinion}, Table 223, Table 224.
they believed that the conflict would last for a relatively extended period of time and could cost thousands of American soldiers their lives.

Perhaps one influence on public attitudes toward the Gulf War in later January was news coming out of Iraq. Information from Iraq was confined to just two sources following the third day of the air war. The Iraqi government had decided that all journalists, except for those representing CNN, would have to leave their country. CNN's Baghdad reporters provided the West with its first line of communication into Iraq during the war. However, CNN's original team of three journalists also had diminished with the departure of John Holliman and Bernard Shaw. By the end of the fourth day of the war, the only American journalist in Baghdad was Peter Arnett.\(^{31}\) The Iraqis had allowed CNN to resume broadcasting from Baghdad late in the night of 18 January. Arnett worked under the close supervision of an Iraqi official named Sadoun from the Ministry of Information who acted as both escort and censor. Sadoun told Arnett that there were three rules governing what the reporter could include in his stories. Arnett could not divulge any logistical information or any military information, and he could not travel without permission.\(^{32}\) Arnett's stories provided dramatic accounts of the continued air attacks against the Iraqi capital. On the fourth day of the war, awakened from a nap in his hotel room, Arnett watched out his window as two elongated projectiles sailed over a conference center located across the street from his hotel. The projectiles, Tomahawk

\(^{31}\)Arnett was by birth a New Zealander, but had become a United States citizen following the Vietnam War. Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 337-8.

\(^{32}\)Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 379.
missiles, pivoted around the hotel and then headed toward targets in downtown Baghdad. That night during a monitored phone conversation with anchors back in Atlanta, Arnett told of the missile attack and reactions to the Iraqi decision to parade captured Allied airmen before Iraqi television cameras. CNN had decided to label all of Arnett’s reports as monitored by Iraqi censors. Nevertheless, the correspondent found that he was able to convey nuances about the situation in Baghdad in response to the anchors’ questions. Since there was no competition with other journalists, Arnett was able to operate without the time pressures that other journalists were experiencing.33

The Iraqi government also sent film footage and televised reports about the war to the rest of the world. Although the Coalition air forces had been successful in destroying much of the Iraqi government’s ability to communicate internally and externally, Saddam Hussein still managed to appear on television to speak with his people. In an address to the people of Iraq on 20 January, Hussein assured his countrymen that the military and the government were remaining steadfast against the attacks of the Coalition. Saddam told his people, “When the war is fought in a comprehensive manner, using all resources and weapons, the scale of death and the number of dead will, God willing, rise among the ranks of atheism, injustice, and tyranny. When they begin to die and when the message of the Iraqi soldiers reaches the farthest corner of the world, the unjust will die and the ‘God is Great’ banner will flutter with great victory in the mother of all battles [emphasis

33 Arnett, Live from the Battlefield, 379-80. In fact Arnett was not the only journalist remaining in Baghdad. “Three Russian reports were stuck there with no money for the trip home to Moscow, along with several Jordanian journalists and a Spanish reporter.” But Arnett had the only means of communication with the outside world. Arnett, 382.
added]." Saddam's threats to use all the weapons in the Iraqi arsenal -- a veiled reference to his feared chemical and biological arsenals -- and his promise of a coming *mother of all battles* may have caused many in the United States to wonder how costly the war would be.\(^{34}\)

Arnett used a satellite phone to communicate with CNN headquarters in Atlanta. CNN officials had given Arnett strict instructions that he was the only person allowed to use the phone. CNN had two reasons for this restriction. One of the prime goals of the Coalition air campaign was to sever all communications between Baghdad and the rest of the world. They had informed the Pentagon that they had supplied a means of communication to their reporters but had assured the military that the Iraqis would not be permitted to use the communications link. If Arnett broke that rule, he would become fair game for Allied reprisals. Second, CNN was in the business of being the first with the story. Arnett's privileged position as the only reporter still in Iraq with the means to dispatch his reports allowed CNN to scoop the world. If others were allowed to use the phone to contact rival news organizations, CNN's exclusive would be over. On day six of the war, the Iraqis provided CNN with an unexpected bonus. They decided to allow the news organization to bring a portable TV satellite up-link into the country so that the network could augment Arnett's voice reports with pictures.\(^{35}\)

Arnett's first major news story of his solitary stay in Iraq came on 23 January when

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\(^{35}\)Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 386.
his Iraqi escort took him to a bombed out factory. A sign on the barbed wire fence surrounding what remained of the structure read “Baby Milk Plant Iraq” in English. A solitary guard tower stood off to one side of the destroyed facility. Arnett broadcast his first report on the destruction of the factory, giving details of what he had seen and quoting official Iraqi claims that the factory had housed the only source of infant formula for Iraqi children. CNN’s reporter in Iraq believed that the factory was in fact what the Iraqis claimed it war. The news anchor gave the report scant attention, quickly shifting from Arnett’s report to a CNN journalist who had information on a SCUD missile attack against Israel.36 Two days later on 25 January, Arnett listened to the BBC as White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater denounced the journalist’s report on the factory stating that it was not a baby milk factory but “a production facility for biological weapons.” Fitzwater described Arnett and CNN as “conduits for Iraqi disinformation.”37

The Bush Administration’s response to Arnett’s piece on the facility won the reporter favor with his Iraqi handlers. They began to take the journalist to other sites they claimed were not legitimate military targets. The Iraqis attempted to show that despite the reassurances from the U.S. military and government the air attacks were in fact hitting non-military facilities and killing innocent Iraqi civilians. For the next several days, Arnett traveled to sites with his Iraqi escorts and showed damaged homes and mosques supposedly hit by Coalition bombs. Anchors in Atlanta repeatedly questioned Arnett on the accuracy of what he was being shown and the amount of control the Iraqi escorts had

36 Ibid.

37 Arnett, Live from the Battlefield, 388.
over what he filmed and reported. Arnett maintained that his reporting was as accurate as he could make it.\textsuperscript{38}

On 28 January, Arnett was escorted to a small bungalow on the edge of Baghdad. Inside sat the president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. For the next ninety minutes, Arnett interviewed the man who had invaded his neighbor and set in motion the events that led to war. The following day Arnett arranged to broadcast the interview at 1:00 a.m. local time, 5:00 p.m. EST. Three hours later, Arnett began a live interview with his former Baghdad colleague, Bernard Shaw, as the lead story on CNN's evening news broadcast. Following the interview, Arnett listened as Bill Moyers recalled that he had been present in the White House "when Lyndon Johnson used to shake the foundations over Peter Arnett's reports out of Vietnam. Johnson actually said, 'You know he must have communist sympathies,' only he said it worse than that." Shaw replied, "And, of course, there is the present-day situation of the Bush White House and the Bush Pentagon and its negative reaction to some of the reports filed by CNN's Peter Arnett."\textsuperscript{39}

Throughout January, Arnett remained the only reporter able to transmit information about the war from Iraq. During those two weeks, his Iraqi minders gave him greater freedom but still monitored his broadcasts and controlled his movements. On 1 February, the Iraqis granted visas to another group of journalists who stayed for one week before their visas expired. Shortly thereafter, the first American journalists entered the country since the beginning of the air war. Bill Blakemore and a television crew from

\textsuperscript{38}Arnett, \textit{Live from the Battlefield}, 388-97.

\textsuperscript{39}Arnett, \textit{Live from the Battlefield}, 405.
ABC News brought mail and messages to Arnett when they arrived in Baghdad. It was the first time that Arnett had more than sparse contact with the outside world other than through his conversations with news people at CNN and his daughter. As the statements of Marlin Fitzwater indicated, many government officials disagreed with the tone and content of Arnett's reports from Iraq. Representative Lawrence Coughlin of Pennsylvania (Rep.) had charged, "Arnett is the Joseph Goebbels of Saddam Hussein's Hitler-like regime." On 7 February, Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming (Rep.) told reporters in a press conference on Capital Hill that Arnett was "what we used to call a sympathizer. . . . He was active in the Vietnam War and he won a Pulitzer Prize largely because of his anti-government material. And he was married to a Vietnamese whose brother was active in the Vietcong. I called that 'sympathizers' in my early days in the Second World War."\(^{40}\)

Other members of the press were mixed in their reviews of Arnett's coverage. Most major news organizations came out in defense of Arnett following Senator Simpson's personal attack on the CNN reporter. In the *Washington Post*, Howard Kurtz gathered comments from other prominent journalists like David Halberstam who defended

\(^{40}\)Coughlin and Simpson quoted in Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 408-9. See also Howard Kurtz, "Sen. Simpson Calls Arnett 'Sympathizer,'" 8 February 1991, *Washington Post*. Ironically, Simpson had been part of the Senate delegation that had met with Saddam Hussein in April before the Iraqi leader ordered the invasion of Kuwait. Simpson had offered advice to Hussein on why he was not more acceptable to the United States people. "Your problems lie with the Western media and not with the U.S. government. As long as you are isolated from the media, the press -- and it is a haughty and pampered press -- they all consider themselves political geniuses. That is, the journalists do. They are very cynical. What I advise is that you invite them to come here and see for yourselves." Quoted in Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 409-10.
Arnett's record as a war reporter. But others, like NBC military analyst Harry Summers, continued to criticize Arnett. Summers went so far as to speculate that Arnett's reporting verged on treason. Public reaction to Arnett's reporting was highly critical. Telephone calls, faxes, and letters soon flooded CNN headquarters in Atlanta. During the war, CNN received more than three-thousand letters and faxes a day, with about half discussing Arnett. Not all of the mail was negative, but the majority was. Most of the letters that were negative tended to be highly critical. Some viewers branded the reporter as a traitor. Others accused him of being a spy or lackey of the Iraqi government. Many viewers charged Arnett with being anti-American. The anger of viewers toward Arnett spread to CNN as a whole. Ted Turner, the founder of CNN, was at the time dating the actress Jane Fonda. Fonda was still remembered for her trips to Hanoi during the Vietnam War when she denounced the United States policy in Southeast Asia. Some Americans began to refer to Turner and Fonda as "Baghdad Ted and Hanoi Jane." Those supportive of Arnett feared that such attacks on the journalist signaled an attack on the constitutional right of freedom of the press and a return to an era of McCarthyism. Although government officials like Marlin Fitzwater attempted to discredit some of Arnett's stories, the feeling of other officials was that Arnett was actually providing a service to the country by showing the success of Coalition efforts to limit collateral damage.  

When Arnett showed only a few examples of supposed destruction of civilian
facilities, he unintentionally demonstrated that the Coalition was in fact taking every step it could to prevent unnecessary destruction and death in Iraq. Arnett also filed reports showing Iraqi civilians conducting their daily business in the markets of Baghdad, where they practically ignored air attacks nearby. However, he failed to point out that one possible reason for the Iraqi civilians’ aplomb was the fact that Coalition pilots had been so accurate in their bombing that the civilians did not fear the continuing air raids. As one commentator stated, “It is not CNN’s transmission of these images that is disturbing. Nor is there anything wrong with CNN’s maintaining a correspondent in Baghdad. What is most troubling is Arnett’s refusal to engage his Iraqi interlocutors; his reluctance to ask any probing questions or to take a single one of the Iraqi claims at anything other than face value.” Controversy over the “Arnett issue” continued throughout the air war. Only when the fighting shifted from Iraq to Kuwait did the debate decrease. After the war, however, many commentators and reviewers of the conflict continued to discuss the merits of Arnett’s reporting from Iraq.

As the air war continued through the end of January, tensions between the military and the media heightened. With public interest in war news increasing, the press felt that they needed more information from the military. The media responded to public demand

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43 Williams, interview, 9 January 1999.


45 Brian Donlon, “Poll: TV Viewers Devour War News,” USA Today, 24 January 1991. In a confidential survey conducted by Frank N. Magid Associates, over 99.5 percent of those contacted stated that they had seen a gulf war news update. Seventy-one percent said they were making a point of getting as much war news as possible.
by lengthening their normal broadcasts and expanding their coverage of the war. The saturation coverage of the conflict was something new. In a story on the media in the Gulf, *Time* magazine noted, “Vietnam, the last TV war, was reported mostly after the fact on film or videotape. The invasions of Panama and Grenada were over too quickly, and conducted too secretly, for TV to be much of a factor. The gulf conflict — the first full-scale war fought in the age of worldwide satellite communication — is being relayed immediately, moment by moment.” According to the report, “The upside is that the nation and the world are able to monitor a crucial episode in history in unprecedented detail. The downside is that every unconfirmed rumor or twist in the story is exaggerated, with all the attendant swings in emotions and expectations.”

Because of the nature of the air war and the military’s restrictions on travel, reporters had to rely for the most part on military briefings to acquire information about the war. Many within the press felt that the military was reticent in providing information on the air campaign’s effectiveness because of its experience in the Vietnam War. “The military -- having been pilloried and laughed at for the ‘body count’ that was announced every day in Vietnam, giving the American command’s ludicrously precise tally of enemy casualties -- has gone to the other extreme in the gulf, insisting that not even rough estimates of the damage done to enemy troop strength and combat readiness can be made public.”

One reason for the military’s reluctance to provide too much information to the press during its briefings was the fact

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that they were not just communicating with reporters. There were multiple audiences watching each briefing, which was carried live on CNN and other television networks -- the press, the American people, foreign nations, the enemy, and U.S. troops throughout the world.  

Government and military spokespersons had to take each of the five audiences into account every time they met with reporters. However, these legitimate concerns did little to appease the over 700 reporters from around the world who were "going stir crazy in Saudi Arabia" in January and February 1991.  

In an effort to calm the growing anger of reporters covering the war from Riyadh and Dhahran, General Schwarzkopf personally took steps to improve the situation. Initially, the military conducted a thirty-minute, televised news conference each day in Riyadh. At the end of the allotted time, the briefer took no more questions from the press. Reporters had to submit additional queries, via written form, to the public affairs officers of the various services. The appropriate commands often took several days to respond. Reporters in the Gulf region also found that their Pentagon-based colleagues were "scooping" them with information from military sources in Washington. They complained about the delays and the military briefers charging that Riyadh briefers "were uniformed, had not read pool reports from journalists with troops in the field, or were withholding information without explaining why."  

In response to the complaints, the military

\footnote{Powell, American Journey, 515.}

\footnote{Jonathon Atler, "Showdown at ‘Fact Gap’," Newsweek (4 February 1991), 61.}

\footnote{Paul Hoversten, "Military, Media and Middle Ground," USA Today, 8 February 1991.}
modified its briefing format. By the first week in February, briefings consisted of a morning summary of the allies’ overnight activities, then two officers from the U.S. Central Command’s intelligence and operations sections conducted a thirty to forty-minute off camera “background” briefing. The military imposed only one restriction the press: journalists could not identify either briefer by name or position; reporters attributed information from those sessions only to “a U.S. military officer.” In the evening, a televised half-hour military briefing capped “a round of sessions that [included] updates from British and Saudi forces.” The military did not provide the same information at each of the three daily sessions with the press. As a consequence, reporters found that they had to attend all three briefings to have a full grasp of what information the military was providing each day. Following the end of the evening briefing, the press turned off the cameras and received another background briefing that provided the context they needed to frame their stories. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings with the press, the military also provided special background briefings with officers knowledgeable on such subjects as Geneva Convention rules on prisoners of war, battle damage, and Iraq’s Republican Guard.\footnote{Ibid.}

Although Schwarzkopf attempted to accommodate the press, he was still frustrated by members of the media. In the Central Command daily log, the general recorded two entries on the press during the first weeks of February. On 4 February, he wrote that he had spoken with General Powell about the press corps, which “[remained] upset and [was] growing increasingly hostile. Their problem [was] that there [were] a
thousand people over here yet only 75 or so [were] out on pools at any given time. The other 925 [were] sitting around with nothing to do except complain. Curiously, the press [was] upset [most] with CNN, mainly because CNN reports inaccurately in trying to get scoops.” Just four days later, Schwarzkopf’s public affairs officer informed the general that “a couple of journalists had crossed the border, picked up some fully armed Iraqis, snuck them by border checkpoints, [and] handed them over as POWs to the Egyptians, all to get an interview.” The CINC commented “that [because of press stunts like the capture of the Iraqi EPW] someone [was] going to get killed. When our troops see fully armed Iraqis, before they ask questions, they will simply open fire.”^52

The press also proved to be its own worst enemy in other situations. During briefings, some members of the press demonstrated an amazing lack of knowledge regarding military terms, capabilities, and views toward security. Although some reporters were experienced defense correspondents, the vast majority in Saudi Arabia did not have any prolonged experience covering military affairs. As a result, they often asked blatantly absurd questions. And since many of the press conferences were carried live on television, the whole country had a chance to see the press at work. Perhaps journalists were simply using the briefings as an outlet for their frustrations when they aggressively questioned military officials. Or maybe they did not care that many of their questions sought clearly sensitive information. No matter what the reason, the result was alienation from the public that was highly supportive of the military. The journalists’ antics became so ridiculous

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that they became the butt of many jokes. In an episode of *Saturday Night Live* broadcast in late February, the opening skit depicted a typical briefing from Riyadh. In the spoof, a public relations officer, “Lieutenant Colonel Pierson” strode confidently to a podium from off camera. Pierson began with a short statement. “I’m happy to take any questions that you might have,” the officer said, “with the understanding that there are sensitive areas that I’m just not going to get into -- particularly information that might be useful to the enemy.” With that said, Pierson looked out on the usual forest of waving hands and heard shouted questions from the comedians/journalists. Pierson pointed to each journalist with his fist in the shape of a pistol -- a gesture that General Powell occasionally used when dealing with the press and perhaps intended to show what Pierson really thought of the journalists who were peppering him with questions. “Colonel, where would you say our forces are most vulnerable to attack?” “Are we planning an amphibious invasion of Kuwait? And if so, where would that be?” “On what date are we going to start the ground attack?”\(^{53}\) The skit was effective because it was only a slight distortion of reality. The military briefings during the Gulf War were as laughable as the five-o’clock follies of Vietnam had been, but with an ironic twist. Instead of a military half-wit like General Haltrack from the *Beetle Bailey* comic strip facing a savvy press corps, during the Gulf War the general impression was of a very competent military facing an out of control and uninformed press.\(^{54}\)


\(^{54}\)Powell, *American Journey*, 515.
Other than information on the Iraqi air force, U.S. briefers in Riyadh were reluctant to provide specific information on casualties among Iraqi troops and civilians as a result of air attacks. From the beginning of the war, the U.S. leadership, from the president down to the military briefers in Riyadh, had stressed that the Coalition was waging a war against Saddam Hussein and not the people of Iraq. Central Command took every step to protect civilians from injury and death during the air campaign. But with the lack of independent coverage of the repeated air attacks’ effects on Iraq, journalists remained skeptical of U.S. claims of precision bombing. In a briefing on 27 January, General Schwarzkopf himself appeared before the press and explained the lengths to which the Coalition was going to protect Iraqi civilians. “I need to point this out, and everybody should clearly understand this, we are probably endangering our pilots more than they would otherwise be endangered by following” a bombing campaign similar to the “carpet bombing” attacks conducted during the Vietnam War. Schwarzkopf continued: “This is something that hasn’t been stated. But by requiring that the pilots fly in a certain direction of flight or use a certain type of munition that requires them to go to altitudes that they normally wouldn’t be required to go to, those pilots are at much more risk than they would be otherwise. But we have deliberately decided to do this in order to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties.” CENTCOM altered flight operations not only to limit injury and death to the Iraqi people but also to preserve cultural and archeological sites in Iraq. U.S. pilots were taking steps to “avoid destroying these religious shrines and that sort of thing . . .,” the general said, “[and] I think we should be pretty proud of the young men who are out there willing to do that in order to minimize damage of this
nature.\textsuperscript{55}

In order to highlight U.S. pilots’ abilities to avoid collateral damage, Schwarzkopf authorized the release of “gun-camera” footage to the media.\textsuperscript{56} On 30 January, Schwarzkopf met again with reporters, this time accompanied by his principal target planner, Brigadier Buster Glosson (USAF). Glosson and Schwarzkopf showed footage to the gathered reporters of laser-guided bombs from F-117A aircraft as they destroyed hardened Iraqi aircraft hangers and several railroad bridges connecting Iraqi military units to supply depots. During the showing of gun-camera film from an attack on a highway bridge, Schwarzkopf directed the press to watch the monitor closely. “I’m now going to show you a picture of the luckiest man in Iraq on this particular day,” the general told the press as a lone automobile begins to drive across a highway bridge. “Keep your eye on the cross-hairs. [The bomb from the U.S. aircraft comes on screen.] Right through the cross-hairs. And now in his rear view mirror . . . [the bomb and bridge exploded].”\textsuperscript{57}

During the question and answer portion of the briefing on 30 January, reporters pressed Schwarzkopf for a numerical figure to describe the damage that Coalition air forces had inflicted on the Iraqi Republican Guard Units. “I don’t like dealing in rough

\textsuperscript{55}General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, CENTCOM Briefing, 27 January 1991, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, MBF, 17-31 January 1991, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II.

\textsuperscript{56}Many combat aircraft carry two types of cameras: a gun camera, which points straight ahead and takes pictures of missile and gun shots, and a strike camera, which points downward and takes pictures of a ground target before, when, and after it is hit by a bomb. Smith, \textit{CNN Fought the War}, 78.

estimates when you start talking about enemy casualties," the general responded to the reporter who had posed the question. "I told you, I'm anti-body count. Body count means nothing, absolutely nothing. All it is, is a wild guess that tends to mislead people as to what's going on. That's not the way we do business, a la guessing, so I personally don't like the idea of issuing body counts on a comparative basis. I think it puts undue pressure on commanders to come up with numbers that are unreal." Later in the briefing, a reporter asked Glosson about civilian casualties. Schwarzkopf jumped in to answer the question. "We have never said there won't be any civilian casualties. What we have said is the difference between us and the Iraqis is we are not deliberately targeting civilians -- that's the difference. There are going to be [civilian] casualties," Schwarzkopf continued, "unfortunately, that's what happens when you have a war. But we are certainly not deliberately targeting civilians, we never have and we have no intention of doing it in the future."

Sensitive to the possibility of international and domestic outrage at the indiscriminate bombing of Iraqi civilians, the Coalition took all steps possible to safeguard the Iraqi people. The use of so-called smart bombs, changes in bombing tactics, and the avoidance of certain targets reflected this policy.

The information that the military provided to the press during the air campaign consisted mainly of statistical figures describing the impact of Coalition attacks on Iraqi targets. Each day, the military briefer began with a general account of operations in the previous twenty-four hours including the number of sorties flown the previous day as well as total sorties flown to date, a description of targets attacked by air units, Coalition

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58Ibid.
casualties if any, the activities of ground and naval forces, Iraqi military activities, and the firing of any SCUD missiles by the enemy. During the briefing on 5 February for example, Major General Robert Johnston (USMC) informed reporters that as of the 20th day of Operation Desert Storm, the Coalition had flown 47,000 sorties, with 2800 sorties flown in the previous day. Air attacks on 4-5 February included strategic targets and units of the Iraqi Republican Guard. During the previous day, ten more Iraqi aircraft had flown to Iran, bringing the total number of Iraqi planes that had sought sanctuary in Iran to 110. Ground operations remained relatively quiet, although Iraqi forces continued to conduct reconnaissance operations along the front. Naval operations for the period included naval air attacks on suspected Silkworm anti-ship missile sites and a shore bombardment from the USS Missouri. The Iraqi military did not fire any SCUD missiles. Johnston also mentioned a reported terrorist attack that had occurred in Saudi Arabia the previous day. He referred reporters to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Information for additional details. Following the first part of the briefing, journalists asked questions about what they had just learned or any other subject.

The Coalition air campaign against Iraq was very successful, especially during the first hours of the war. The first night's objectives had been to deliver quick disabling blows to the Iraqi air-defense system; to Saddam Hussein's command, control, and communications network; and to the electric power generation and transmission facilities that supported modern communications, computers, and other military functions. By the

59See for example CENTCOM News Brief 5 February 1991, MBF, 17 January-20 February 1991, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II. There were no U.S. casualties reported on 4-5 February.
end of the first day, the Coalition had inflicted serious damage to all three objectives as well as won virtual air superiority over Iraq. During the next two weeks, Coalition aircraft returned to many of the targets hit the first night and expanded their objectives to Iraqi infrastructure, military depots and storage facilities, and front-line units both in Iraq and in Kuwait. Although the weather in the region took a turn for the worse on day three (20 January) of the war, the Coalition air forces were able to achieve air supremacy, reducing Iraqi anti-aircraft radar activity from 1800 events on the first night of the war to virtually none by the fourth day. In addition to conventional targets, the Coalition dedicated attack aircraft to the destruction of Iraqi nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs (including the airplanes and missiles to deliver the weapons). Air planners scheduled and prioritized such attacks to maximize their impact on the war effort, ordering aircraft to attack storage areas first to preclude the use of ready weapons, then targeting production facilities to prevent new weapons from being made, and finally including research and development facilities to cripple the Iraqi’s future potential for build and deploying such weapons. During the first two weeks of the war, Coalition pilots and aircraft flew thousands of sorties. On 23 January alone, the Coalition launched over 2500 sorties of all types against Iraq.60

President Bush, as the leader of the Coalition forces arrayed against Saddam Hussein, had made it clear from the very beginning of the crisis that he wanted to protect non-combatants from suffering. Whether the civilians were Israeli citizens attacked by

SCUD missile or the common people of Iraq, Bush repeatedly said that the war was between the Coalition and Saddam Hussein, and not Iraqi civilians. Because of this, the president had directed his military commanders to construct an air campaign that would inflict the maximum damage on the Iraqi military forces and infrastructure while sparing civilian targets from unnecessary destruction. Very early in the war, Saddam Hussein recognized the U.S. president’s desire to keep civilian casualties to a minimum and the Iraqi president attempted to take advantage of Bush’s concern. In the first hours of the air war, Iraq had launched seven SCUD missiles at targets in Israel. During the first SCUD attacks, the world had watched as journalists, broadcasting live from Tel Aviv, donned gas masks, fearing that the missiles were armed with chemical warheads. Intense diplomatic communications were the only thing that kept Israel from launching its Air Force in a retaliatory strike against Iraq. Such an air strike could have had serious repercussions for the Coalition. Within an hour of the first SCUD attack came another launch — that time a lone SCUD aimed at Dhahran. On the third day of the air war, Iraq fired three more SCUDs at Israel (two toward Tel Aviv, one at Jerusalem). By that point, Coalition aircraft had bombed every known fixed-launch site for SCUD missiles in Western Iraq.

61 According Schwarzkopf, “The SCUD was a clumsy, obsolete Soviet missile which had been originally designed to lob a half-ton warhead 190 miles and be able to hit within a half mile of its target. . . . The Iraqis had learned to roughly double the missile’s range by welding two SCUDs end to end, or adding a section to the original framework, but in doing so they had to drastically reduce the payload. So in essence what they had was a weapon that could fly 300 miles and miss the target by a couple of miles with a warhead of only 160 pounds. Militarily, that was equivalent of a single aircraft flying over, haphazardly dropping one small bomb, and flying away — terrible for anyone it happened to land on, but in the grand scheme of warfare, a mosquito. However, the SCUD was [emphasis in the original] effective as a terror weapon against civilian populations.” Schwarzkopf, It Doesn’t Take a Hero, 484.
Nevertheless, SCUD attacks continued against targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia. Although air defense weapons like the Patriot antimissile-missile system had success against some incoming SCUDs, the Coalition had to find a way to stop the attacks before Israel felt compelled to retaliate. The pressure from Israel and Washington to do something about the SCUDs became intense. As a result, the Coalition air forces diverted fully one third of the more than two thousand combat and support missions scheduled each day for the strategic targets to hunt SCUD launch sites. In addition to F-15 and F-16 jets, slow-flying A-10 attack airplanes went out daily hoping to catch mobile launch platforms on the move. By the end of the war, Iraq would launch 88 SCUD missiles at targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia, and Coalition air planners would divert as much as one-third of the total combat sorties per day to the search for SCUD launchers. Despite the diversion of resources from other areas, the Coalition fortunately had ample air resources to take part in the "SCUD hunt" and to carry air operations against strategic targets and Iraqi military forces.\textsuperscript{62}

Iraq also used its own civilian population as a means to foil Coalition air attacks. In a callous move, Saddam Hussein ordered strategic facilities and weapons systems moved into civilian and cultural areas. Knowing that the U.S. and its allies were reluctant to target such sites, Hussein hoped to save some of his command structure and his military's weapons from the highly effective Coalition air attacks. During a briefing in Riyadh on 4 February, a reporter asked Major General Robert Johnston (USMC) about reports claiming that the Iraqi military had moved weapons systems and command and

\textsuperscript{62}Winnefeld, et al., \textit{A League of Airmen}, 132-4.
control centers into residential areas. Johnston replied "I think that happens to be a true fact, and I think even in some of the airfields we find them trying to move their aircraft into residential areas -- again, recognizing what I've been saying all along, that we have avoided civilian targets, and clearly, one of their modus operandi is to move into civilian targets to protect their military capabilities." In a follow-up question, the reporter asked if the Iraqi tactic was working. "Yes," answered Johnston. "We have avoided anything that has any [civilian] significance, and we'll continue to do so." 63 Throughout the war with Iraq, the Coalition selected targets for air attack under two limitations: the need to minimize Iraqi civilian casualties and the requirement that special cultural and religious sites be spared. These limitations required allied pilots to alter their normal attack tactics. Planes flew on tracks that would minimize the effect of target misses on the adjacent civilian population, even though some of those tracks put the aircrews at greater risk or reduced the chances of weapon effectiveness. 64 The Coalition used only laser-guided munitions and Tomahawk cruise missiles, with their superior guidance systems, against targets in downtown Baghdad. 65

Despite efforts to limit civilian casualties, Iraq citizens died during the allied air attacks. On 12 February two U.S. Air Force F-117A Stealth fighter aircraft dropped laser-guided bombs onto an underground bunker in the Amariyah neighborhood of

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64 Winnefeld et al., League of Airmen, 178.

65 CENTCOM Briefing, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf (USA), Riyadh, 27 January 1991, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II.
Baghdad. The building had been constructed by the Iraqi government in the 1980s as an air raid shelter during the Iran-Iraq War. Later, the Iraqi military converted the structure into a command and control headquarters. Central Command air planners had targeted the building in the later phases of the air campaign. The first of the two bombs the U.S. Stealth fighters dropped penetrated the roof of the bunker, tearing through three layers of concrete and leaving a hole about nine feet in diameter. The second bomb struck several seconds after the first and penetrated forty feet into the building, setting fire to the facilities cooling and electrical systems, blocking the exits with fallen debris. As the U.S. planes raced away from the area they believed that they had just destroyed an important strategic target.⁶⁶

Unbeknownst to the two pilots, hundreds of civilians were inside the facility on the night of 12 February and their bombs killed more than four-hundred Iraqi civilians, many of them women and children. Wire services provided the first reports of the largest loss of civilian life so far in the war.⁶⁷ Peter Arnett, the CNN correspondent, was still in Baghdad and had received word of the bombing early on the morning of the attack. His Iraqi minder found him at breakfast and told Arnett that a civilian air raid shelter had been bombed that morning. Arnett quickly boarded a government bus that transported him to the scene of the attack. Bill Blakemore of ABC was already there, along with other journalists who had obtained permission to report from Baghdad. When Arnett arrived at the bunker, he saw a sign in English and Arabic that read “Shelter.” The CNN reporter


pushed his way to the chain link fence that surrounded the building and watched as rescue
workers and fire fighters raced to find any survivors among the flames and debris.
Arnett’s cameraman filmed the chaotic scene. The two men from CNN gained access to
the destroyed facility, escorted by an Iraqi firefighter. After spending several long minutes
looking at the destruction inside the portion of the bunker that still stood, Arnett left his
crew behind and raced back to his hotel. He immediately contacted the overnight editor
of CNN and demanded to go on the air live. While the network was making the
arrangements, Arnett called for an Iraqi censor. Sadoun, his assigned escort, came over
and told him, “No censorship today. Say what you like about this. We have absolutely
nothing to hide.” Arnett began his report: “There has been a major disaster here, a
tragedy, a civilian air raid shelter has been hit.” Arnett finished his report and waited for
the footage that his team had shot of the scene to reach Aman, Jordan, where it would be
sent via-satellite to Atlanta.

The military quickly responded to the allegations that its pilots had bombed a
civilian shelter. At the end of his prepared remarks to correspondents during the
scheduled briefing in Riyadh on 13 February, Brigadier General Richard Neal (USMC)
addressed the situation. “I’m here to tell you that it was a military bunker. It was a
command and control facility. It’s one of many that have been used by the Iraqi
government throughout this operation. We have been systematically attacking these
bunkers since the beginning of the campaign.” Neal continued: “Within the last two
weeks, this particular bunker became even more active as a command and control facility.

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*68 Arnett, *Live from the Battlefield*, 410-2.*
It's a hardened shelter. It was just recently -- the roof was just recently painted with a camouflage patina to further try to keep it out of the aviation vision. And we have no explanation at this time really why there were civilians in this bunker."

The first question from reporters offered a plausible explanation for why the civilians were in the bunker when it was attacked. "General," a journalist began, "is it possible at least conceivable that as part of Saddam's warfighting strategy, he purposely puts women and children in command and control structures, having heard the command here, General Schwarzkopf, say that we will not attack civilian targets." Neal responded: "Obviously, sir, that is a very plausible explanation. I don't have high evidence to that effect I still -- as my last comment on the bunker was, we don't understand why civilians were in this military command and control bunker at 0400 in the morning. It belies logic."

The next questioner was not so quick to offer Neal and the military an easy explanation of what had happened. The second reporter asked if it wasn't possible that the military had made a mistake and inadvertently bombed the civilian target. Neal responded that the military was confident that it had not "attacked the wrong bunker or that we made a mistake." The reporter then asked how the general could be so sure. Neal continued to maintain that Central Command had targeted the facility based on highly reliable intelligence and while the loss of life was tragic, the selection of the target had been justified."


70Ibid.
Perhaps because President Bush and General Schwarzkopf’s earlier statements that the United States would strive to limit civilian casualties, the deaths of four hundred Iraqi citizens in one attack stunned the world. In Washington, Marlin Fitzwater had seen the footage of the destruction aired on CNN. He felt that the Bush administration needed to demonstrate compassion for the victims while at the same time reaffirming its resolve to continue the war. After checking with Richard Haass of the National Security Council and Pete Williams, Fitzwater drafted a short statement on the bombing. However, the president’s national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, informed Fitzwater that he wanted no immediate comment on the bombing. Fitzwater disagreed with Scowcroft’s recommendation. Since the beginning of the Gulf crisis in August, the White House Press Secretary had talked many times with the president about how best to prepare the American public for the realities of war. Bush had delegated responsibility for the task to Fitzwater. After his conversation with Scowcroft, the press secretary quickly left his office and went to see the president. He told Bush that the White House needed to get out in front of the story and make a statement as soon as possible. Fitzwater outlined the statement he had prepared to the president. Bush listened and then told Fitzwater that Secretary of Defense Cheney had assured him that the bunker was a legitimate target. However, Cheney argued against making any expression of compassion, fearing it would signal a weakening in American resolve. Fitzwater told the president he disagreed with Cheney and thought that Bush must show compassion for the deaths of so many civilians. If Bush did not issue a statement, Fitzwater insisted, reports about the bunker in Baghdad might destroy the public’s support for the war. Bush considered Fitzwater’s views and
then told his aid to make a statement.\(^7\)

Fitzwater’s statement consisted of six paragraphs. “Last night,” it began, “coalition forces bombed a military command and control center in Baghdad that, according to press reports, resulted in a number of civilian casualties.” The statement continued:

The loss of civilian lives in time of war is a truly tragic consequence. It saddens everyone to know that innocent people may have died in the course of military conflict. America treats human life as our most precious value. That is why even during this military conflict in which the lives of our servicemen and women are at risk, we will not target civilian facilities. We will continue to hit only military targets. The bunker that was attacked last night was a military target, a command and control center that fed instructions directly to the Iraqi war machine, painted and camouflaged to avoid detection, and well-documented as a military target. We have been systematically attacking these targets since the war began.

We don’t know why civilians were at this location, but we do know that Saddam Hussein does not share our value in the sanctity of life. Indeed, he time and again, has shown a willingness to sacrifice civilian lives and property that further his war aims.

Civilian hostages were moved in November and December to military sites for use as human shields. POWs reportedly have been placed at military sites. Roving bands of execution squads search out deserters among his own ranks of servicemen. Command and control centers in Iraq have been placed on top of schools and public homes and small villages. And only this morning we have documentation that two MIG-21s have been parked near the front door of a treasured archeological site which dates back to the 27th century B.C.

His environmental terrorism spreads throughout the Persian Gulf, killing wildlife and threatening human water supplies. And finally, Saddam Hussein aims his Scud missiles at innocent civilians in Israel and Saudi Arabia. He kills civilians intentionally and with purpose.

Saddam Hussein created this war. He created the military bunkers. And he can bring the war to an end. We urge him once again to save his

people and to comply with the U.N. resolutions.\textsuperscript{72}

Fitzwater's statement combined compassion for the deaths of the Iraqi civilians with a clear message that ultimate responsibility for the deaths lay at the feet of Saddam Hussein. Even after the war no one was sure why the civilians had been in the bunker when the U.S. planes dropped their bombs. Many commentators pointed out at the time that the facility did not much resemble an air raid shelter. The camouflaged rooftop and the chain link fence surrounding the facility implied that the facility was indeed some sort of military bunker. As CNN's own military analyst Perry Smith stated in February 1990, the structure "appeared to be a classic command bunker, heavily fortified with reinforced concrete, camouflaged on the roof and surrounded by a perimeter fence. A standard civilian bomb shelter does not have a perimeter fence, because people have to be able to get into a bomb shelter quickly when the siren warning of an air raid goes off and to get out fast if the shelter is bombed."\textsuperscript{73} Smith, a retired Air Force general, felt that Peter Arnett's coverage of the bombing was incorrect and told CNN Executive Vice President Ed Turner of his views. Turner suggested that Smith do a "perspective," or editorial, on camera on the issue. Smith's editorial described the history of aerial bombardment. He stated that during World War II and Vietnam inaccurate bombing systems had led to high numbers of civilian casualties. The air campaign being waged over Iraq was not like earlier wars, Smith continued. New technology had enabled U.S. pilots to deliver bombs


\textsuperscript{73}Smith, \textit{CNN Fought the War}, 33.
with a high level of accuracy that minimized “damage to nonmilitary targets and casualties to civilians.” Smith concluded his remarks by urging the public scrutinize news reports coming from Iraq. “I would hope that all viewers will view the TV tape coming out of Iraq with considerable skepticism,” he said. “It may not tell the whole story. In fact, it may be telling precisely the story that Saddam Hussein wants to tell.”

Reaction to news of the bombing of the bunker was mixed. The White House and the military’s quick reaction weakened the impact of the story and ensured that the official interpretation of the event reached the public. Iraq’s efforts to use the carnage and outrage of its people was undermined when it was revealed that “one woman wailing in TV-perfect English about civilian casualties turned out, as CNN later reported, to be an Iraqi official” who also appeared on French television speaking perfect French.75 While some members of the press called on the military to release additional information regarding the bombing, such as gun-camera footage of the strike and satellite photos of the building before the attack, most seemed to accept the official interpretation of events. Public reaction to the four hundred deaths was ambiguous. Supporters of the war said the presence of civilians in a legitimate target was an example of Saddam Hussein’s disregard for the lives of innocent people. Those who opposed the war viewed the attack as an example of the horrors of war.76 The long-term impact of the attack was a continued call from reporters for a relaxation of military-imposed restrictions on the press covering the

74Smith’s “Perspective,” reprinted in Smith, CNN Fought the War, 34-5.


76Ibid.
war. In a story written only days after the bombing of the bunker, Richard Cohen of the
Washington Post urged the Pentagon to ease limitations placed on reporters and allow
greater access to the front. Without such access, according to Cohen, the military was
depriving the American people of an objective observer to report what was happening
during the war. Because there were no such observers, Cohen concluded, the public
would have to depend on news accounts from Iraq to provide much of the information
about the course of the war. However, Cohen did not explain how a relaxation of
military control over Saudi Arabian-based journalists would improve the coverage of
events within Iraq.

Since the beginning of the war in January, journalists had been loudly critical of the
military. Most complained that the ground rules under which they were forced to operate
restricted their access to U.S. forces. When the air campaign began, pools of journalists
left to join U.S. units deployed throughout the theater. A total of 175 journalists were
living with the troops in the field from the beginning of the war. While the number of
journalists deployed with troops during the air war was considerably higher than in any
previous U.S. conflict in the twentieth century, it represented only a small fraction of the
total number of reporters present in Saudi Arabia. Most members of the press covered


78"Was First Amendment A Gulf War Victim? Media Chef Says No," Defense
Week (6 May 1991), 8. Colonel William Mulvey, Director of the Joint Information
Bureau in Dhahran, stated that only 27 journalists covered the Allied landings at
Normandy in World War II and in Vietnam only 50 to 80 journalists were covering
combat operations at any given time.
the war from the Central Command briefing room in Riyadh. Non-pool reporters compiled their stories from information gathered during briefings and from reports journalists deployed with the troops sent back. During the air war, with the action taking place hundreds of miles away from the press centers in Riyadh and Dhahran, journalists had little to report other than what the military told them. As a result, many turned their attention away from the combat operations and began to examine the relationship between the military and the media. Rarely did a day go by without one of the major news organizations publishing a story dealing with how the military and the media were interacting during Desert Storm, with most focusing on the military’s ground rules. Throughout the air war, journalists urged the military to relax restrictions on their movement and what they were allowed to include in their reports. Charges that the military was “covering something up” came from such respected figures as Walter Cronkite.79 Nevertheless, the media’s focus on itself showed just how united the nation was behind the war efforts. Just like reporters in World War II, few journalists questioned whether the country should have been fighting the war once the conflict began.

And reporters’ numerous critical stories did not win them much sympathy from the American public. Throughout January and February, the U.S. people remained highly supportive of the war.80 At the same time that journalists and editors were complaining about press restrictions, pool coverage, a lack of information about the war, many Americans began to find fault with the press. “Reporters seem too pushy, too insensitive

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80Mueller, Policy and Opinion, Table 8.
to the need for security, too intent on looking for bad news.”

Much of the criticism of journalists was directed against CNN’s Peter Arnett. One letter writer to the News Orleans *Time-Picayune* suggested that Arnett deserved “the Iraq Medal of Honor” for his coverage of the war from Baghdad. Following the bombing of Almirya bunker, the public expressed outrage -- not at the deaths of several hundred Iraqi civilians, but at critical coverage of the event from the press. Jerry Williams, a radio talk show host for Boston WRKO, noted that “ninety percent of the people calling my show were saying, ‘Hey, this was a military target.’” Williams noted, “We had four full hours of negative reaction to the press.”

While not all Americans were critical of the press’ coverage of the war, many took issue with the media’s aggressive tactics. In a *Times Mirror* survey conducted at the end of January, nearly 80 percent of respondents rated press coverage of the war as excellent. The public also expressed satisfaction with the amount and veracity of news coming from official sources. In the same poll, fully 78 percent expressed that they were satisfied that the military was not hiding bad news. Other polls received similar responses.

The fact that journalists plied their trade in front of television cameras was one reason for the public’s highly critical view of the press during the Gulf War. While the televised news conferences gave viewers a chance to hear information as soon as briefers made it public, they also allowed the public to witness reporters asking probing questions.

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82 Quoted in Richard Zoglin, “Just Whose Side Are They On?,” 53.

83 Ibid.
"More than ever, people have participated in the process of news reporting," Jack Fuller, editor of The Chicago Tribune, told Alex Jones of the New York Times. "They see us at work." Fuller noted that during a briefing on the bunker bombing one journalist asked General Thomas Kelly if the civilian deaths indicated a "failure of intelligence."\(^84\) Fuller defended the question as appropriate but added that "the way it plays on television is an assertion rather than a question, an assertion that we had failed."\(^85\) With Americans so supportive of the war they felt that the press and everyone else should also get "on the team."

The public directed its anger against the press and others who failed to show support for the war. At a college basketball game on 2 February, fans booed St. John’s University’s Marco Lokar each time he touched the ball. Lokar was an Italian citizen and had declined to wear an American flag on his uniform. Other members of his team had worn the flag as a symbol of their support for U.S. troops fighting in Iraq. After the game, Lokar quit the team and left the university. "I have received many threats, directed both toward me and my wife Lara, so that our life has become very difficult here," Lokar explained. In Maplewood, Missouri, Timothy Dunn also experienced the growing public intolerance for anyone who failed to support the war. One morning when he left his house to retrieve his morning paper he found that the antiwar sign that he had placed on his lawn had been destroyed by fire. Such acts, while occurring infrequently, demonstrated the


\(^85\) Ibid.
public's outrage for those who did not share their support for the country's involvement in
the Persian Gulf. Across the country citizens displayed flags and yellow ribbons. Several
colleges and universities relaxed rules governing the display of flags and signs from
dormitory windows. The New York City Police Department modified its stringent
uniform regulations to allow police officers to wear American flags on their uniforms.
One report on the public's feelings toward to war concluded, "As people like Lokar and
Dunn are finding out, the fewer dissenters there are, the more they need protection."36

Although most Americans supported the war after 17 January, a small number
continued to oppose the president's use of the U.S. military to force Iraq from Kuwait.
Antiwar demonstrators had continued to protest U.S. involvement in the conflict. Many
picketed the White House carrying signs that said "I support our troops, not our
politicians," or "No Blood for Oil!"] Just shortly after the war began, the largest antiwar
demonstration of the war took place in Washington, D.C. On 27 January, 75,000
demonstrators marched to protest the air campaign and called for an immediate cease-fire.
However, despite the claims of organizers, the march on Washington was not the "start"
of bigger protests. The late January rally was more of a finale for the movement. Antiwar
groups, a collection of dozens of organizations with specialized interests, were never able
to come up with a solid plan or message that they could relay to the American people.
"No blood for oil" or "cease fire now" were easy to shout but left the United States with
no viable policy option for dealing with Iraqi aggression. Like during the Vietnam war,
the protest movement in 1991 was comprised of a small group of dedicated individuals,

but did not seem to appeal to most Americans. Throughout February, demonstrators attempted to attract attention to themselves and their cause. On 18 February, John Schuchardt, who had a long history of civil disobedience, disrupted the weekend church service that President Bush and his family were attending in Kennebunkport, Maine. Secret Service agents escorted Schuchardt out of the church where the local police took him into custody. The next day tragedy struck the antiwar movement when, during a demonstration in Amherst, MA, Gregory Levy doused himself with gasoline and burned himself. Despite these dramatic acts, the movement remained highly fragmented and largely out of the public view. Unlike the Vietnam war when Americans had watched the media give extensive coverage to war protesters, during the Gulf War the antiwar movement was largely irrelevant.\(^87\)

Despite the American support for the military and the war, reporters in Saudi Arabia continued to be critical of the military-imposed restrictions on covering the war. In an effort to gain more access to U.S. forces, journalists in Saudi Arabia begged, pleaded, and threatened military officers. More often than not, such efforts failed. The U.S. Army was particularly reluctant to grant reporters access to troops during the early weeks of February. Two reasons explained the Army’s reluctance. First, the Army was beginning its final deployments before the beginning of the ground campaign to force Iraqi troops from Kuwait. This deployment entailed the movement of two corps, the XVIII Airborne Corps and the VII Corps, to positions located on Iraq’s far western flank. General

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Schwarzkopf and his operations officers had devised a plan that would utilize the great mobility of the two corps to attack Iraq forces in a wide flanking maneuver. In order to achieve surprise, military commanders did not want news of the movement to reach the enemy. Many officers believed that if reporters were allowed to accompany their units to pre-attack positions, the journalists would file stories and give away the allied plan.\(^{88}\)

The second reason that the U.S. Army resisted accommodating greater numbers of journalists was systemic. All of the top Army commanders had served in Vietnam and many, like General Schwarzkopf, had a distrust for the press. While they understood that they had to make some concessions to the press, high ranking Army commanders did not go out of their way to welcome reporters to their units. In mid-February, General Schwarzkopf watched a live report from a journalist with the 82nd Airborne Division. Suddenly, a television journalist told her network headquarters in the United States that she had just witnessed “a major artillery duel in my location between the 82nd Airborne and the Iraqis.” Schwarzkopf exclaimed, “Son of a Bitch!” The general knew that the division the journalist had just identified was the “American division farthest to the west, and any halfway competent Iraqi intelligence officer watching CNN could easily note the time and then canvass his forces to find out precisely where the exchange of fire had taken place. He would then discover that the 82nd was positioned for a flanking attack,” a fact that Schwarzkopf had taken great pains to conceal for the previous three weeks.

Schwarzkopf demanded an explanation from his public affairs officer on how the reporter had been able to broadcast such sensitive information. The PAO, Captain Ron

\(^{88}\)Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, 505-8.
Wildermuth, said, "We had an escort standing right there. He was just as shocked as everybody else. But by the time she said it, it was out over the satellite. You can't pull it back in." Only a few days later, Schwarzkopf received a copy of Newsweek that included a map which almost exactly depicted the planned flanking plan. The CINC called General Powell: "This stinks! Newsweek just printed our entire battle plan. Now the Iraqis could put chemical weapons in that area and completely reorient their defenses." Powell cautioned Schwarzkopf not to overreact. "That magazine has been on the newsstands for a week. Other magazines are full of maps showing other battle plans. They're all just speculating." The two incidents demonstrated how the press could inadvertently provide sensitive information to the Iraqis, but they were also important for demonstrating General Schwarzkopf's attitude toward the press. Throughout Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Schwarzkopf set the tone for the Army's view toward the press. Journalists were to be tolerated, but not encouraged. Subordinate commanders took their cue from Schwarzkopf.\footnote{Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, 509-10.}

What Schwarzkopf and his subordinates failed to understand was the difference between press coverage in the Gulf and the earlier coverage of the war in Vietnam. Unlike Vietnam, reporters during the Gulf War did not attack the U.S. military or the government's war policies or aims. Most reporters simply wanted to have greater access to the story. Their complaints stemmed from procedural matters. However, with the

\footnote{John Fialka, Hotel Warriors (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1992), 11-24; See also Mulvey interview, 21 May 1991.}
Army's excessive sensitivity to public affairs matters, the strife between the military and the media became overblown. The result was that military officers were angry at the press for demanding fewer restrictions on movement and what they could report and reporters were willing to do anything they could to get to the front and be the first with news.

In contrast to the Army's view of the press, the U.S. Marines welcomed the press to cover their operations. Like the Army, the Marines took their cue for how to deal with the press from their most senior officer in the theater of operations. Lieutenant General Walt Boomer had served during the 1980s as chief of public affairs for the U.S. Marine Corps. During his tour as spokesperson for the Marine Corps, he had become familiar with the Pentagon press corps. Many of those same reporters had traveled to Saudi Arabia to cover the war. Boomer had instructed his Marines to be as open with the press as security would allow. A similar instruction had been given to all services deployed in Saudi Arabia, but the Marines did the most to carry it out. When JIB officers approached commanders to determine if they would accept additional reporters, Marine commanders almost always said, "Yes, how many?"91 The Marine corps had a long tradition of successful public affairs. As the smallest and least autonomous service, the Marines realized that the news media offered it a way to publicize its unique capabilities and garner larger shares of the defense budget. As a result of this sense of accommodation, journalists wrote more stories about the Marine Corps than they did about any other

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91 When Army commanders were approached, their typical response was either "No" or only one. See Colonel William Mulvey (USA), interview by William Hammond and Jack Pulwers, Center of Military History, 21 May 1991.
service.\textsuperscript{92}

The first land battle of the war began on the night of 30 January, when Iraq forces suddenly moved across the Kuwait-Saudi border and seized the town of Kafji. Although the town had once been occupied by U.S. Marines, no U.S. forces had been in Kafji since 17 January. The invaders consisted of 700 Iraqis with about 45 tanks from the Iraqi 5th Mechanized Division. Further to the west, two other Iraqi battalions crossed the border into Saudi Arabia. In the second incursion, U.S. Marines and Air Force anti-tank aircraft repulsed the Iraqis. In the second incident, an Air Force A-10 aircraft attacked a Marine light armored vehicle, killing 7 Marines. It was the first friendly-fire incident of the war. In Kafji, the Iraqis remained in the town for about thirty-six hours when Saudi Arabian and Qatari forces, with support from U.S. Marine artillery and U.S. air power, forced the invaders out. The Iraqis lost over fifteen T-62 tanks and Coalition forces took more than four hundred prisoners of war. For the Saudi Arabian military, the victory at Kafji marked the first successful land battle that the Saudis had fought in the modern history of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{93}

Because it was the first land battle of the war, the fighting in and around Kafji caught world attention. The deaths of U.S. Marines by other U.S. forces also caused many in the media to write stories about the incident and steps the military was taking to

\textsuperscript{92}Fialka, \textit{Hotel Warriors}, 25-32.

\textsuperscript{93}U.S. News, \textit{Triumph without Victory}, 270.
prevent future incidents of fratricide. The battles at Kafji and the surrounding area were minor engagements when placed in the context of the war. However, the engagements provided an important case study for how the media and military might interact once more intensive, sustained ground operations began. A military formed pool of journalists rushed to the area shortly after word of the Iraqi attack reached the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran. Initial reports from the pool members were “absolute mumbo jumbo” according to Nicholas Horrock, print pool coordinator during most of the air and ground war.

“Some [pool reports] had no sense of time in them, some were impressionistic. Some people were out there [at Kafji] developing features, which would have been fine, but twenty other people back in Dhahran were depending on them.” Horrock wanted to send more experienced reporters specializing in military affairs out with the pools so that many of the mistakes made by the Kafji pool were not repeated. “I kept arguing that we were having the wrong people in the wrong places, but whenever I said that, nine little papers jumped down my neck,” Horrock recalled after the war.

Pool coordinators, especially those dealing with print journalists, constantly had to

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95 Horrock, quoted in Fialka, Hotel Warriors, 40-1.

96 Ibid.
juggle the demands of getting knowledgeable reporters into the field and of meeting the needs of smaller publications and special interest journalists. In most cases, the result frustrated all sides. Because so many journalists from all sorts of news organizations flooded into Saudi Arabia in January to cover the war, reporters inexperienced in covering military operations filled many of the combat slots in pools. The problem was exemplified by Jane DeLynn, a reporter for the women’s magazine *Mirabella*. DeLynn was among the reporters waiting for a slot in the combat pools. Under their self-formulated rules, the print pool had determined that the waiting list for pool slots had to be exhausted before the “big papers” could get a second reporter out to a combat unit. When DeLynn’s turn came up for a pool assignment, she spent most of her time writing about the sex lives of female soldiers and the drugs used by medical units. According to Arthur Spiegelman, assistant bureau chief in Dhahran for Reuters, “She shouldn’t have been out there.”

Spiegelman spent upwards of twenty hours a day sifting through pool reports to find serious news items. In his view, “People like [DeLynn] aren’t serving their function. The pool is a camera’s eye. You’re coming up with information for everybody. People out there are in a privileged position to see something, but a lot of the stuff that came through was unusable. It was ‘throw-awayable’.”

The only solution that pool coordinators could devise for the “*Mirabella* problem” was the creation of additional combat pool slots. The military was reluctant in January and early February to allow more reporters out into the field. To complicate matters, some journalists remained in the field after their designated time with a pool ended. Susan Walker of the Copley newspaper chain, refused

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97Spiegelman quoted in Fialka, *Hotel Warriors*, 41.
to leave units of the 3d Armored Division despite a request for her to do so from the JIB in Dhahran and her own editor. Walker had won the favor of Major General Paul E. Funk, commander of the Division, and had decided to stay with the unit throughout the war.\textsuperscript{98}

Another reason for an expansion of the number of journalists working in pools was the fear that if the military did not grant more access to reporters, they would strike out on their own. Journalists operating independently of the pools on the battlefield, called unilaterals, posed serious problems for the military. Despite the U.S. press' agreement with the military to conduct all combat coverage of the war through officially sanctioned pools, the number of reporters operating outside of pools grew as the air war progressed. Pool correspondents operated under the military's ground rules governing coverage of the war. Those ground rules stipulated that journalists could not publish certain types of information that the military had deemed sensitive and mandated that military personnel escort journalists in the field at all times to provide, among other things, security review at the source. The Saudi Arabian government had also decreed that any journalist found without an escort in the field was subject to arrest and deportation. During the battle for Kafji, unilaterals were the first to show allied ground forces in action. Despite their success, unilaterals inhabited a dangerous no-man's land in which they received no official aid from either the military or other journalists. Journalists who chose to operate unilaterally felt that they could gather more information on their own. "If you sit around waiting for the scraps to be fed to you," Carl Nolte, a unilateral reporter for the \textit{San}

\textsuperscript{98}Fialka, \textit{Hotel Warriors}, 41.
Francisco Chronicle noted, "you're going to get the kind of things a dog gets: leftovers." Unilateral reporters ran the risk of arrest, being shot at by both sides in the conflict, and alienation from their journalistic peers. In perhaps the most dramatic example of the dangers faced by unilateral reporters, CBS correspondent Bob Simon and his television crew wandered across the Kuwait border and were captured by Iraqi forces on 21 January. Simon and his crew remained in Iraqi custody for the remainder of the war. During the action around Kafji, pool reporters expressed their anger toward unilateralists covering the fighting. Many reporters who operated within the military system disliked unilateralists because they felt that unilateralists jeopardized the official system. With pools the only guaranteed means of access to the U.S. units deployed near the front, journalists worried that the actions of unilateralists would cause the military completely to bar reporters from access to units. While those reporters who had been in the theater for the longest time accepted the need for pools, many others reporters who had not been in Saudi Arabia for as long broke away from pools to cover the war on their own. For the most part, unilateralists did not provide better coverage then their fellow correspondents who operated in pools. Nevertheless, as the war went on more and more journalists broke away from military control and operated on their own.

During the second week of February the military widened reporters' access to

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ground units readying for war in the Persian Gulf region. In addition to the two eighteen-member pools stationed with Army and Marine units since the start of the air war, Central Command agreed on 12 February to allow five additional seven-member pools access to ground units. The move doubled the number of journalists assigned to ground units.

"This is a response to complaints of the press corps, who have brought to our attention the inadequacies of the current system," Captain Ron Wildermuth, PAO of CENTCOM, said. Of the additional five pools, three were assigned to Army units of the 2d and 3d Armored Divisions. Those two divisions were part of the VII Corps that had begun moving into the area after President Bush's decision to double U.S. forces in the region. Their later arrival and accelerated training in the unfamiliar desert conditions had meant that the corps had received almost no media visits.102 According to an internal CENTCOM memo, the new pools would "ensure broadest possible coverage of ground forces at this stage of the campaign as well as control spurious rumors emanating from 'sources' or 'reports.'"103 CENTCOM placed the two other new pools with naval and Marine units in the Persian Gulf to "cover amphibious forces afloat." The pools with the amphibious forces were to "remain deployed for indefinite period to ensure presence in event of amphibious assault operations."104 In addition to allowing additional journalists


103"Combat Correspondent Pools," 101000Z Feb 91, From USCINCCENT, July 1991, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II.

104"Placement of Media Pools with Amphibious Forces," 110904Z Feb 91, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II. Since Desert Shield, journalists had lobbied for greater access to cover amphibious operations. Many military analysts employed by news
to cover military units from the battlefield, CENTCOM instructed the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran to increase other media opportunities in rear areas for reporters not deployed in combat correspondent pools.\(^{105}\) As February progressed, the U.S. Army attempted to make itself more accessible to reporters. On 17 February, General Schwarzkopf instructed Army units under his command to be prepared to accept additional media pools that would remain with Army units for the duration of Operation Desert Storm. More reporters began arriving with Army units by 19 February. Nearly every major combat unit received additional reporters.\(^{106}\) Although some journalists may have suspected it at the time, few knew that the Army’s decision to invite more reporters to join combat units was part of the larger preparation for the start of the ground war.

organizations believed that U.S. Marines would land on the eastern shore of Kuwait during the first hours of the ground war. The military had held several training exercises in which Marines practiced landings in Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries since August 1990. Each time such a training mission was conducted, the U.S. military observed that Iraqi forces in the area redeployed and entered a stage of heightened alert. According to Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Pete Williams, the military decided to maintain the threat of an amphibious landing even though it was unlikely that such an operation would ever be carried out. By granting the media access to amphibious units, the military accomplished two goals. First, it gave access to units that journalists wanted to cover. Second, it fostered the impression that the Coalition would attack Kuwait with amphibious landings, distracting the Iraqi military from the main attack far on the western flank of the front. Williams, interview, 8 January 1999.

\(^{105}\) "Unilateral Media Coverage," 131230Z Feb 91, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II.

\(^{106}\) "Pool Support for Operation Desert Storm," 170600Z Feb 91, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II. Similar arrangements were made for units of the Air Force and Navy. See "Pool Support for Operation Desert Storm," 172200Z Feb 91, MBF, PAG, July 1991, RG 518. Significantly, no such directive was issued to the U.S. Marine Corps. The Marines had already taken steps to accommodate as many journalists as possible. There was no need for the CINCCENT to order Marine Corps commanders to accept additional reporters.
Although the air campaign had been successful, Coalition leaders knew that they needed a ground offensive to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The U.S. Army's request for additional reporters with front line units was one of the last preparations before the ground attacks would begin.

However, the addition of more journalists to Army units in mid-February did not repair the damage done by the service's earlier reluctance to grant access to the press. Many of the journalists assigned to cover Army units in the third week of February arrived one day before the ground war was to begin. They lacked the time necessary to become familiar with the unit and its personnel. Reporters and soldiers interacted best when they had time to become acquainted with each other. Journalists who had spent extended periods of time with units shared in the daily living conditions, dangers, and demands that come from living in a combat zone. Over time, a level of trust developed between such journalists and the members of the units. With the sudden opening of access in late February, there was no time to develop that level of familiarity and trust between the military and the media.\textsuperscript{107} The lateness of Central Command's attention to media coverage of ground operations also meant that the logistics necessary to transport journalistic copy from the front to the JIB in Dhahran were not fully developed in most Army units. Not until 21 February did Central Command direct unit commanders of Army and Marine forces to provide "the vehicular support required to travel with field units" during the ground war. Understanding that most military transport vehicles were already tasked to combat operations, CENTCOM authorized unit commanders to "place media pools

\textsuperscript{107}Mulvey, interview, 21 May 1991.
members . . . in commercial four wheel drive vehicles." For reporters assigned to Army units, the use of “commercial four wheel drive vehicles” would prove practically useless. Army units for the most part were deployed so far west that it took many hours to drive from the front to a major rear area base to transmit their stories. The lack of adequate logistical support for the media would have repercussions during the ground war.109

The way that the U.S. Marine Corps treated the press during the last few days before the ground war was vastly different from the Army’s handling of the media. Led by Lt. Gen. Boomer’s example of openness with the press, most Marine commanders readily accepted journalists to their units. Journalists who were able to find places with Marine units did not receive preferential treatment. The Marines expected the journalists to pull their own weight. Reporters with Marine Corps assignments had to dig their own foxholes each night, carry their own equipment, and learn how to tend to wounded. However, the Marines did provide a fairly open and non-hostile environment for journalists to work in. Perhaps the best example of the Marine Corps’ general attitude towards the press came just days before the ground war began. On 21 February, Boomer sent invitations to six reporters from such national organizations as The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and U.S. News & World Report. In his letter to the six reporters, Boomer wrote that he did not “promise . . . any major scoops or revealing insights.” The general went on to explain what the reporters could expect if they

108.“Vehicle Support for Media Pools,” 212000Z Feb 91, MBF, PAG, Box 1, RG 518, NAB II.

accepted his invitation. "I'll try to make myself available to you once a day, along with some of my senior staff officers, in an effort to give you a general view of that day's Marine Corps combat action." Boomer stated that the small pool that he invited to accompany his headquarters would still be subject to the military ground rules but promised that the escort officers would not "hover over [the journalists] throughout the course of" their stay. The Marine general's invitation offered the journalists the chance to see the war as the military commander saw it. Boomer made his offer to only a select number of journalists, all of whom he had known before the war and whom he felt he could trust. Out of the six journalists that Boomer invited to join his command group, only one accepted. Molly Moore of the Washington Post, a veteran military affairs correspondent who had known Boomer since the mid-1980s, accepted the Marine commander's invitation. Moore's decision to accompany the Marines was not without risks. She would very probably be cut off from communications with her employers, while only seeing a very small part of the battlefield. Moore, however, decided that the opportunity to experience the war first-hand with a major commander could not be passed up. On 23 February Moore reported to Boomer's command post. Her travels with Boomer and his staff symbolized the contrast between the U.S.M.C. and the U.S. Army in the handling of the press.\footnote{Moore, \textit{Woman at War}, 156-7, 159.} In the last days before the beginning of the ground war, the Marine Corps units in Saudi Arabia continued to accept reporters while some Army units were receiving only their first media visitors.

While Coalition forces continued to pound Iraqi troops from the air and prepared
to meet them on the ground, the government of the Soviet Union put forward one last diplomatic initiative that it hoped would encourage Saddam Hussein to withdraw his military from Kuwait. On 21 February, President Bush accepted a phone call from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. While a White House staff member rushed to find a Russian language translator, Bush watched the evening news and saw reports of a new Soviet overture to Baghdad. The basic premise of the Soviet plan was that in exchange for an announcement of Iraq’s “unconditional withdrawal” from Kuwait, the Soviets would press the Coalition for an immediate cease-fire. After listening to an explanation of the latest Soviet diplomatic initiatives, Bush told Gorbachev that Saddam Hussein had to satisfy two fundamental conditions before hostilities would cease. Every Iraqi soldier had to be withdrawn from Kuwait, and the legitimate rulers of the emirate had to be allowed to return. Bush again refused to link the issue of Kuwait with that of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nor would Bush accept any solution that gave Saddam even the slightest appearance of victory. The next morning, Bush read a short statement in the Rose Garden of the White House that outlined the only terms the Coalition would accept from Iraq. The most important element of the president’s statement was the issuance of an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein: If Iraqi troops had not withdrawn from Kuwait by noon EST on 23 February, the Coalition would take whatever means necessary to force Iraq to comply with the UN resolutions. When the deadline passed and there was no sign of withdrawal, Bush gave his final authorization for ground operations to liberate Kuwait. At 8:00 p.m.
EST, on 24 February 1991, the ground war began.\textsuperscript{111}

The Coalition plan for the ground campaign followed the U.S. military doctrine called Air-Land Battle. In the Persian Gulf, more than 25,000 Marines on twenty-six ships cruised the Kuwaiti coast, fixing Iraqi defenders in their positions. Although the Marines never made an amphibious landing, their presence immobilized the largest portion of the Iraqi army. On the east coast of Saudi Arabia, the 1st and 2nd Marine Division, along with the Joint Forces Commands East and North, prepared to breach Iraqi defenses on the Saudi-Kuwait border. Their mission was to punch through the Iraqi prepared positions and liberate Kuwait. Further to the west, along the Saudi-Iraqi border, the bulk of the U.S., British, and French forces spread across a 150 mile front. On the far left of the Coalition line, the XVIII Airborne Corps and the French 6th Light Armored Division would move the farthest and the fastest of any Coalition units. Taking advantage of the unique capabilities of the Corps’ 101st Division to air assault deep into Iraq territory, hold their airheads, and then linkup with the fast moving 24th Infantry (Mechanized) Division, General Schwarzkopf had designated the XVIII Corps as his left-hook. In the center, the U.S. VII Corps including the British 1st Armored Division would also cross the Iraqi border and drive north and east, acting as the hammer driving Iraqi forces across the Euphrates or into advancing units of the XVIII Corps. Although outnumbered nearly 2 to 1, Coalition forces enjoyed advantages in firepower, command and control capabilities, mobility, training, and technology. The plan for the ground war used all of these

advantages to the Coalition's benefit.\footnote{U.S. News, \textit{Triumph without Victory}, 281-93.}

At the beginning of the ground war, one-hundred and seventy-five U.S. journalists, all members of official pools, were in the field with combat units. For the duration of the conflict, these reporters traveled with their respective military units and witnessed events as they happened. In comparison to earlier conflicts, the number of U.S. journalists who accompanied U.S. forces during Desert Storm was unprecedented. Never before had so many reporters been present on a single battlefield during a major U.S. military campaign. Despite the number of reporters in the field, the coverage of the ground war was not as extensive as journalists hoped it would be. As soon as ground operations commenced, the Secretary of Defense, acting under advisement from General Schwarzkopf, ordered a twenty-four hour news blackout. In a press conference held two hours after the beginning of ground operations, Secretary Cheney summoned reporters to the Pentagon to inform them that, to protect the troops, he had suspended regular briefings in Washington and in Riyadh until further notice. "Even the most innocent sounding information," Cheney told the reporters, "could be used directly against the men and women whose lives are on the line carrying out these operations." Journalists in the field with ground units did not know of Cheney's decisions and continued to send back what stories they could of the fighting. The Defense Department lifted the news blackout less than twelve hours later after receiving reports from General Schwarzkopf that operations were going well. Many within the press were critical of the initial embargo on information from the war zone.

"The Administration wants to use the legitimate theme of security, in some cases, to install
a kind of blanket news management that we’ve never had in this century,” Howell Raines, Washington Editor of the New York Times said in describing the blackout. “No one argues with legitimate security needs. There’s a kernel of truth in Secretary Cheney’s argument.” Jonathon P. Wolman, Washington bureau chief of the Associated Press stated, “Good news defeats a blackout. The military apparently has a good story to tell, and they are abandoning their blackout to let it be told.”

In a televised news conference held in Riyadh on 25 February, Schwarzkopf described the initial stages of the ground campaign to reporters. He warned reporters that the war was not yet over, but that U.S. and Coalition forces were proceeding on schedule. Citing security considerations, he kept details to a minimum. The following day, on 26 February, the Iraqis managed to divert media attention momentarily away from the ground war. During the night of 25-26 February Iraq launched a SCUD missile attack on Dhahran. After a Patriot missile battery failed to engage the incoming missile, it struck a nearby barracks, killing 28 American soldiers and wounding 100 others. Prior to the missile attack the U.S. ground forces had suffered very few casualties during the war. The deaths of 28 U.S. soldiers stunned the nation. Many journalists were still in Dhahran and were able to witness the destruction of the military barracks. Images of the destroyed building brought some of the first casualty pictures of the war to American living room. Reporters who were with U.S. Army units in the field also continued to produce stories, but many stories were delayed getting back to collection points in the rear. Some

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journalists became frustrated with the delays and broke away from pools to provide unilateral coverage of the war. Americans watched on their television screens as reporters sent images of surrendering Iraqi forces via-satellite from Iraq and Kuwait. Many unilaterals decided to attach themselves to Coalition forces that were less strict on their interpretation of media rules than the U.S. military. Bob McKeown of CBS News and his television crew attached themselves to a Saudi unit as it sped toward Kuwait City. When they neared the capital, McKeown and his crew left the Saudis and drove their rented vehicle into Kuwait City ahead of Coalition forces. They were in the capital to witness its liberation. According to one report, “Military briefers in Saudi Arabia and Washington could not keep up with what the public was already learning” from news coverage of the war. 114 With the success of unilaterals like McKeown, journalists in Dhahran appealed to the military to grant them more access to the war. Throughout the ground war, dispatches filed from reporters operating in pools arrived late. As of the second day of the war, only a few pool correspondents had been able to file an account of what they had witnessed in time for deadlines. “By design or default, the biggest day of the war was one of the most underreported days.” 115 The reason for the delay, according to Williams, was a lack of transportation assets to bring news back from the front. With the U.S. Army’s VII Corps battling Iraqi Republican Guard Units more than one hundred miles inside Iraq and U.S. Marines dealing with over 20,000 Iraqi prisoners, the military had little time or equipment


to spare for the movement of journalists’ stories.\textsuperscript{116}

The most comprehensive information about the ground war did not come until the ground war’s third day when General Norman Schwarzkopf stood before the Riyadh press corps and the people of the world to explain the land campaign during a televised briefing. His briefing came to be known as the “Mother of All Briefings” in a parody of Saddam Hussein’s remarks earlier in the war. Schwarzkopf described for reporters how the ground war had progressed. He also thanked the press for its assistance in deceiving the Iraqis. In Schwarzkopf’s comments about the amphibious assault rehearsals during the early phases of Desert Storm, the general asked journalists to recall the amount of attention the press had paid to the operation. Schwarzkopf admitted that he had wanted the Iraqis to conclude that Marines would be landing in Kuwait from the sea and to concentrate their forces in that area, away from the main thrust of the Coalition attack. In response to a question on “other ways in which the press contributed to the campaign,” Schwarzkopf cited what he believed was the most important contribution of the press to the military. “I guess the one thing I would say to the press that I was delighted with is in the very, very early stages of this operation when we were over here building up, and we didn’t have very much on the ground, you all had given us credit for a whole lot more over here. As result, that gave me quite a feeling of confidence that we might not be attacked quite as quickly as I thought we were going to be attacked.”\textsuperscript{117} The press

\textsuperscript{116}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{117}CENTCOM News Briefing, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Riyadh, 27 February 1991, 26-28 February 1991, MBF, Box 2, RG 518, NAB II.
immediately responded to Schwarzkopf’s admission that the press had been used to dupe the Iraqis. Interpreting his words, Walter Mossberg of the Wall Street Journal wrote, “The Pentagon relied on news coverage, carefully constrained by military briefers, to help deceive Iraq and bolster public support in the Persian Gulf war.” ¹¹⁸ The complaints of the press were quickly overshadowed by the tremendous public outpouring of support for its victorious military. Continued criticism from members of the media regarding the military’s handling of the press during the war was drowned out by the cheers of the country as its expressed jubilation at the easy and relatively inexpensive triumph of its armed forces against Iraq.

During the six weeks of the air and ground war, 1352 pool reports were filed by journalists accompanying U.S. forces fighting against Iraqi troops. However, many of those reports took hours, days, and even weeks to reach Dhahran. For the most part, the full story of the ground war was not told as it happened. The speed at which Coalition forces advanced surpassed anything that the military envisioned. A war that they had planned to take days or weeks was over in 100 hours. And while it was a brutal war for the Iraqis, it was a relatively cost free war for the U.S. and its allies. By the third day of the ground war, with Kuwait City liberated and Saddam’s army largely destroyed or surrounded, some members of the Bush administration began to worry that the public would perceive continued fighting as unnecessary. With all of its strategic objectives accomplished, General Powell and others began to question if the war needed to continue.

When pictures began to air on the BBC and other news networks of miles of destruction along the main land conduit between Kuwait and Iraq, known as the “Highway of Death,” many became convinced that the time had come to end the war. On 28 February, President Bush directed General Schwarzkopf to declare a cease-fire. The war was over.119

When the war with Iraq ended on 28 February, the Coalition force had succeeded in driving Iraqi forces out of Kuwait and seriously reducing Saddam Hussein’s war making capabilities. President George Bush had led the United States through nearly eight months of international crisis. From the beginning, he articulated clear aims that he and his supporters hoped to accomplish. In retrospect, Bush enjoyed high support from the American people. After the war, nearly all Americans believed that the United States had done the right thing in going to war to liberate Kuwait. However, the country was not always so united behind the president and his policies. During the fall of 1990, the country seemed too divided to support a war. But once the president had exhausted all of his diplomatic options and the first U.S. forces entered battle, the American people, the Congress, and even the press rallied behind George Bush.

The victory in the Gulf put to rest many of the demons that had plagued the U.S. since the Vietnam War. The military showed that it could wage a victorious war against a serious opponent. The president had built and sustained both international and domestic support for his policies. Not since the Korean War had the UN Security Council

119Cheney, interview, 1 February 1999; Letter from President George Bush to the author, 1 March 1999.
authorized the international community to use force against a member nation. The military
and the government also succeeded in reuniting with the people. The public expressed
support for U.S. soldiers in the desert by displaying yellow ribbons and other symbols.
After American forces returned to the United States, hundreds of thousands turned out to
welcome them home in victory parades in Washington, New York, and many other cities
across the country. Even the press celebrated the military victory and the unity of the
country.

However, some journalists worried that the Gulf War signaled a new shift in their
relationship with the military, the government, and the people. Reporters and
commentators noted that unlike during Vietnam, the military managed to control the press
to a large degree. Journalists for the most part went where military officers told them to
go. While free to write whatever they chose as long as it did not threaten the security of
U.S. forces, journalists found their access to front-line units limited. While some escaped
such restrictions by operating unilaterally, most were not willing to take the risks involved
with breaking away from U.S. military protection and information. The press also found
itself in a diminished role as messenger to the people. Military and government leaders
used satellite technology to communicate directly with the American people live via-
television. With military briefers and administration spokespersons appearing almost
nightly on American television, reporters lost their exclusive hold on information that they
had enjoyed in most earlier conflicts. Perhaps because of this, the American public did not
side with reporters who complained about military restrictions. When Assistant Secretary
of Defense for Public Affairs Pete Williams told the Washington Post that the Gulf War
was "the best covered war ever," most Americans seemed to agree with him.

The Gulf War was the most successful U.S. military action since the end of the Second World War. For a brief time in 1990-1991, the nation stood largely united behind its president and its armed forces. Although journalists chafed under military restrictions on what they could report and where they could go, most supported the U.S. efforts to stop Iraqi aggression and free Kuwait. The military had learned many valuable lessons from earlier conflicts that helped it manage the press and public relations. Although the plan did not always work perfectly, the American public was satisfied with the level of information they received. Because the war was over quickly and ended with relatively few casualties, the nation did not have to face the question of whether the costs were justified. The Gulf War, as President Bush had promised, was not another Vietnam. The United States, and its allies, won a resounding victory and demonstrated that it was still possible to unite a nation behind a leader's cause.
Conclusion

During World War II, the U.S. and British nations faced a struggle for their survival — a struggle that demanded the cooperation of the government, the military, the media, and the people. To aid in achieving victory and uniting their countries, the governments of each country presented clear war aims and communicated the threats of the war to their people. Outlined first in the Atlantic Charter and then repeated during numerous other times throughout the war, the war aims of the leaders of the U.S. and Britain described the ideals Roosevelt and Churchill hoped to preserve during the war and secure through total victory. This united, international approach to the war established a pattern. Through international cooperation and clear war aims, the United States government worked hard to overcome the isolationist feelings that had characterized the nation before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Because of the grave danger facing the country and the government’s strong leadership, the people and the press willingly accepted the need for sacrifice and set aside individual interests for the greater good of the country. The public and the press bowed to the need for comprehensive censorship that not only limited what journalists could report but also involved the censoring of the public mails, telephone and telegraph communications, and radio broadcasts. In the United States, the American people worked long hours and sacrificed many of their comforts so that the armed services could successfully engage the enemy across the globe. The media cooperated with the military and the government in limiting what they reported to keep information from the enemy. However, during the
final stages of the war, when the national danger appeared to decline, this level of commitment wavered. Public expectations of a quick victory worried American military and political leaders. However, following the Battle of the Bulge and again after victory in Europe, the American people recommitted themselves to the idea of total victory over all the Axis powers. Within the media, a similar loss of focus occurred toward the end of the war when some journalists began to break from the censorship policy. Nevertheless, the number of reporters who openly opposed and disregarded the censorship rules was very small. Journalists supported the country's war aims and only occasionally grumbled over minor issues dealing with their coverage of the war. The high level of public support for the war, the grave dangers that faced the United States and Great Britain, and the strong allied political leadership curbed the press' occasional tendency to provide information to the public without regard for its effect. Journalists, statesmen, military commanders, and the public remembered World War II as a time of cooperation with traditional differences largely placed aside for the sake of the war effort.

The experiences of World War II were vastly different from later wars of the twentieth century. Following the Second World War, the world evolved and became more politically complicated. The tensions of the Cold War, with its conflict between communist and the democratic states and constant threat of nuclear war, made subsequent conflicts resemble the limited wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries more than the total wars of the twentieth century. America's involvement in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts lacked the clear justifications and immediate dangers of World War II. As a result, the government and the military were less certain that the country would
support military operations. Without the clear threat to national survival, government and military leaders worried that the public would be unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to win a limited, but costly, war. With the lack of a national commitment that had been present in World War II, the press felt less compelled to accept official explanations and descriptions of military operations. The four components of society that had worked so closely during the world war -- the government, the military, the media, and the people -- drifted apart during the Cold War.

When the Korean War began in June 1950, the United States was thrust into a new conflict half a world away. Without the time to prepare for war like that enjoyed before the country's entrance into World War II, the government, the military, the media, and the people scrambled to make sense of the situation and to stop the spread of Communism. Despite the shock of the North Korean attack, President Harry S. Truman had quickly secured international support -- through the United Nations -- to liberate South Korea from its invaders. However, the American military was not prepared to carry out this war aim and could fight only a delaying action while waiting for more troops and material to reach the area. As a sign of the lack of preparation, the military at first allowed reporters to operate largely unrestrained. Initially, journalists were generally supportive of U.S. efforts, but they careful than during World War II in describing American military problems. After the American-led United Nations Command had first halted and then reversed the North Korean invasion, the military, the press, the government, and the people all saw the opportunity to win a decisive victory against Communism. President Truman changed the war aims -- from a return to the pre-war status quo to the unification
of Korea under a non-communist government — and authorized General MacArthur to expand the war north of the original borders between North and South Korea. The decision to alter the aims of the war had unexpected consequences. When United Nations forces advanced to the North Korean-Chinese border, the People’s Republic of China entered the conflict on the North Korean side, throwing U.S. and UNC forces back down the Korean peninsula. The press criticized the military and the government for the reversal of fortunes and their handling of the war. The Chinese entrance into the war also made military commanders more concerned about the release of information potentially useful to the enemy. As the war progressed, the media increasingly questioned whether the goals of the United States justified the lives and treasure that the war was costing the nation. In response to growing criticisms from the press and the media’s failure to regulate itself, the military imposed theater censorship during the later stages of the Korean War. Although the United States and its allies eventually accomplished their original goal of defending South Korea from Communist aggression, public support for the Korean War diminished after President Truman altered war aims and U.S. losses increased.

Unlike the situation during the Korean War, the conflict in Vietnam was not waged with large armies fighting for possession of territory or the destruction of enemy forces. In Vietnam, the North and the South waged a mixture of conventional and civil war in which the “hearts and minds” of the people were the main objectives of both sides. The United States’ original war aims — to preserve South Vietnam as a non-communist country — remained through the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. However, because of the government’s and the military’s worry that the public would
react negatively if it knew the extent of U.S. involvement in the region, successive U.S. presidential administrations did not fully explain or discuss the United States' Vietnamese policy. While the military and the government did not make many public statements on the conflict, members of the media reported on the war from South Vietnam — describing a succession of corrupt Saigon governments, the poorly trained and led armed forces, and the growing divide between the common people of South Vietnam and the ruling minority. As these problems became more apparent, U.S. leaders had to face a difficult decision: increase U.S. commitment and participation in the war or allow the communist North Vietnamese forces to overrun the South. President Lyndon Johnson chose to maintain U.S. aims to keep South Vietnam non-communist and committed U.S. forces to combat operations beginning in 1964. While the Johnson Administration at first tried to deny the escalation in U.S. involvement, reporters quickly identified the new level of American participation and began to publish stories about U.S. pilots, Marines, and soldiers fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Although such news accounts inspired some within the military and the government to contemplate imposing censorship, most leaders understood that if the press turned against the war, the government would lose the support of a substantial portion of the public. In the end, the military never imposed formal censorship during the Vietnam War.

While reporters were initially supportive of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, they slowly became disillusioned with the war. Public opinion during the Vietnam War also gradually turned against the war. Similar to U.S. experience during the Korean War, public support for the president and the Vietnam conflict decreased as casualties rose.
However, casualties offer only a partial explanation for the decline in popular support for the war. Unlike Korea where the United States altered its aims, American presidents from Eisenhower through Johnson maintained the same primary objective during the Vietnam War -- the preservation of a non-Communist, independent South Vietnam. However, no one in the military or the government ever considered whether that aim was achievable. The cost of preserving a non-communist South Vietnam became higher than the American people were willing to pay. By 1969 public opinion had firmly and irrevocably turned against the war. Anti-war demonstrations, protests marches, and peace rallies marked the loss in public support for the war. Although the protestors did not represent the whole country, by 1969 the majority of Americans wanted an end to the war.

President Richard Nixon, who replaced Johnson in the White House in January 1969, promised Americans that he would find a "peace with honor" and end U.S. involvement in the war. This change in aims -- from preserving South Vietnam to withdrawing American forces from the war -- resonated with many Americans who supported Nixon's Vietnam policy as long as the U.S. military appeared to be withdrawing. Only when U.S. forces appeared to escalate their involvement, most notably during the invasion of Cambodia in 1970, did the public and the press again lash out at the government over the war. Unlike World War II or Korea, the government could not find a way to maintain public support and accomplish its original war aims during the Vietnam War.

The American experience in Vietnam cast a long shadow over future U.S. and British actions during wartime. During the British campaign to recover the Falkland
Islands from Argentina in 1982, British military and government leaders attempted to find some way to build and sustain support for war in the post-Vietnam era. The government of Margaret Thatcher followed closely the model of the Korean War: first seeking international condemnation of the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, next dispatching forces to counter the attack, and last appealing to the British public for support for an internationally sanctioned military operation. The formula worked, although problems still existed between the military and the media. Fearful that negative coverage of the crisis would weaken public support, the Thatcher government severely restricted the number of reporters allowed to cover the war and imposed a censorship program that examined all news accounts both for violations of military security and for the release of information that could be damaging to public morale. The government's and military's handling of the press created as many problems as it solved. However, disagreements over access and communications, not over the justness or appropriateness of government policy or aims caused the tensions between the government/military and the media. In the end, the British were very successful in creating a high level of public unity for the liberation of the Falklands and in removing the Argentine forces from the islands. Margaret Thatcher and her government showed that it was possible to wage a war in the post-Vietnam era and still enjoy the support of the public.

The Reagan Administration took the British model for handling the press one step farther when the United States government and military barred reporters from most of the U.S. operations in Grenada. Unlike Thatcher during the Falklands crisis, President Ronald Reagan acted with only regional support when he authorized the U.S. intervention into
Grenada. However, the speed and the low costs of the successful operation made his
decision very popular in the United States. Nevertheless, the Grenada operation was not a
complete success. As in the Falklands, so in Grenada, reporters complained that the
government had unfairly denied them access to the front. Press complaints over the
government’s decision to bar reporters from Grenada until after the completion of the
operation eclipsed any debate on the appropriateness of Reagan’s actions. Press
objections to their handling by the government and the military were so loud that the
Department of Defense authorized a review of the military’s policy regarding press access
to military operations. In the ensuing review of military/media relations, the Office of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of Defense adopted a policy of utilizing press
pools to cover the initial stages of future operations. But national unity overshadowed the
tensions between the government/military and the press during both the Falklands War and
the U.S. operation on Grenada. Although both the British and the American press were
critical of their level of access to the conflicts in the South Atlantic and the Caribbean, the
British and U.S. leaders managed to unite their countries during time of conflict even in
the shadow of Vietnam.

While the military successfully controlled and managed the press during the
Grenada operations, Department of Defense leaders agreed to review their policies
governing press access to combat zones. Between 1983 and 1989, the DOD and the press
worked out a system that was supposed to provide access to the initial phases of a military
operation through the use of media pools. During tests conducted in the mid-1980s, the
military and the media developed and refined this compromise measure. The pool system
was first used extensively during the U.S. intervention in Panama, six years after Grenada. Despite efforts of the military to use pools, glitches occurred that hampered reporters efforts to cover the operation. In Washington, civilian leaders decided to delay activating the DOD National Media Pool, believing that such action would seriously threaten operation security. And despite the presence of a large number of American journalists already located in Panama, the Secretary of Defense chose to use the National Media Pool — even though members were located hours away from the action in Washington, D.C. These decisions negated much of the potential benefits of the pool system. Again reporters were disappointed with the cooperation of the military and their level of access to the fighting, but few Americans questioned President George Bush’s decision to send U.S. forces in to combat to remove Manuel Noriega’s regime. Press complaints centered around procedural issues and public support for the president and his use of force remained high.

The action in Panama provided to be a dress rehearsal for the government, the military, the press, and the people. Less than twenty-four months after Operation Just Cause, U.S. forces again deployed overseas to fight a war. The experiences in Panama provided civilian, military, and media leaders an opportunity to test systems and develop experience handling international crises. The military made further revisions were made to the pool system just before beginning of what became known as the Persian Gulf War of 1991. These changes allowed an unprecedented number of reporters to cover the U.S. military build-up in Saudi Arabia and eventually the war to liberate Kuwait. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the U.S. military sought to provide as much
information as possible to the American people. However, military commanders did not feel compelled to use the media as the vehicle to transmit their information to the people. Using televised briefings, military commanders and political leaders spoke directly to the American public. The military limited reporters’ access to the front and imposed censorship of news reports to control reporting and to safeguard military security. Although some reporters managed to operate outside military control, either by broadcasting from within Iraq itself or by operating unilaterally without military escorts or censorship, most operated under a system that allowed the military to shape information for public consumption.

More important than the successes of the military in gaining for the most part the cooperation of the press, the American government was able to build and sustain broad domestic and international support for its policies toward Iraq. President Bush and Secretary of State Baker worked to build a Coalition of support. Following a clear strategy -- first appealing to the international community and only then approaching the American Congress and people -- Bush and Baker succeeded in constructing united front that stood opposed to Iraqi aggression and was determined to drive Saddam Hussein’s forces from Kuwait. Not since World War II had the world and the United States become so united during a time of war.

The American and British governments were successful in conducting military operations since the Vietnam War for several reasons. Perhaps most important, in each crisis the government clearly articulated a rationale for its actions and succeeded in accomplishing its goals in a quick and relatively bloodless manner. The government
provided the military with an attainable object and the people, a measure by which they could judge success or failure.

The military had also learned from the past and developed a highly sophisticated policy for dealing with the press. Through a trial and error process, military commanders understood that they had to find some way to provide information to the public. However, they also realized that the media was not the only vehicle to transmit that information. Military and political leaders took advantage of the country's thirst for information about the war and improved technology to speak directly to the public through televised appearances. Experiments during the Falklands War and operations in Grenada and Panama, proved that the military could control what reporters saw during a conflict. Understanding that in a democracy the public would not tolerate a complete ban on the press, the military developed a system that allowed commanders to manage and shape the flow of information to the public. The media unintentionally assisted the military's success with policies for handling the press. Unlike the military that possessed an institutional cohesion and memory, the press was a constantly changing amalgam of competing parts. Reporters clung to vague and often inaccurate memories of their perceived success in Vietnam without ever planning as a profession who was best suited to cover the next war. The press did not possess a recognized organization that had the authority to force cooperation for a unified goal. The several legal cases news organizations brought against the military proved this lack of unity. The instigator of each case was a marginalized member of the media. No major news organization joined the other plaintiffs trying to force the military and government to relax their controls on the
press. Without an understanding of the past or a unified opposition to the military and government’s policies, reporters failed to improve the way they acted on the battlefield.

As a whole, the experiences of the United States during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, the Grenada and Panama interventions, and the Persian Gulf War, as well as Britain’s experience during the Falklands War, demonstrated the complex and multidirectional interactions among the government, the military, the media, and the people of a democracy during wartime. In general, historians and journalists have focused almost exclusively on the conflict between the military and the media during times of war. While important to understanding how a democracy deals with conflicting views of information during wartime, the focus on technical disagreements between officers and journalists often distorts the level of conflict during a war. Many commentators have been unable to distinguish between meaningful and petty conflicts. By examining the subject within the broader context of national unity during wartime, we are able to see these distinctions more clearly. Also, the history of a half century of conflict shows that many of the problems between the military and the media have recurred in each of the conflicts examined here. Reporters covering World War II, the Korean War, the Falklands War, the U.S. interventions in Grenada and Panama, and the Persian Gulf War all criticized to some degree military and government decisions regarding access to the front and information, use of communications equipment, and the number of reporters allowed to accompany forces in the field. However, it was only during the Vietnam War — with all of its strategic problems — that the media openly and repeatedly attacked the validity of the government’s war aims and policies. Perhaps not as surprisingly, this was also the only
conflict in which press complaints about technical matters were few. The larger issue of whether the U.S. could achieve its aims overshadowed the less important matters. As a result of looking at the major conflicts between 1941 and 1991, it has become clear that the louder the press has complained about ancillary issues the more successful the government has been at unifying the country behind a clearly articulated set of war aims.

Perhaps even more important than the relationship between the military and the media, this study has shown that government leadership plays the crucial role in determining a country’s success in wartime. In democracies, where the government is also ultimately answerable to the public, presidents and prime ministers must find some way to convince congresses, parliaments, and their electorate that war is necessary and just. The government leaders who appeared most successful in building and sustaining public support were those who clearly articulated their war aims. In all the wars studied in this work, the president or the prime minister appealed to a combination of democratic values and realpolitik justifications when formulating war aims. From the Atlantic Charter of World War II to President Bush’s statement that the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait would not stand, the heads of government have appealed to the hearts and minds of their public.

An additional trend that this dissertation shows has been the correlation between the successful building of domestic support for war and the government’s prior acquisition of the international community’s support for its actions. President Roosevelt harnessed the power of international unity when he met with British Prime Minister Churchill and issued the Atlantic Charter -- forging an alliance of the free world opposed the fascism of
the Axis powers. Beginning with President Truman's appeal to the United Nations Security Council for authorization to defend South Korea, successive governments have used the formalized structures of the international community as a way to justify their war policies and to convince their domestic constituencies to support their actions. Margaret Thatcher during the Falklands crisis and George Bush after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait both went to the United Nations first before taking their plans to use military force before their people. In three cases, a U.S. president chose not to seek broad international sanction before taking action. Ronald Reagan sought only regional support before intervening in Grenada and George Bush acted unilaterally when dispatching U.S. force to Panama. Both operations ended quickly, with relatively few costs, leaving both presidents with a victory to use as a counter to any domestic opposition and allowing both to downplay international criticism of their actions. In the third example, no U.S. president appealed to the United Nations for approval of American policy in Vietnam, although several nations did assist the American effort. Successive presidential administrations recognized that they could not build the broad international support for the war in Vietnam that had been so decisive in previous wars. While such international support would not have led necessarily to an American victory, the debate it might have caused could have altered the course of future U.S. policy. This reliance on securing international support for military action before appealing to the public -- what Secretary of State James Baker called the "blueprint for all future uses of military force" after the Gulf War -- appears to have been successful. Few within the public or the legislature could find the strength or the justification to question a leaders' policy once the international community
had approved of it.

These findings, taken together, suggest that the relationships among the government, the military, the press, and the public have been very nuanced and complex during times of war between 1941 and 1991. The struggles on the homefront and within international communities to win support for military action have mirrored the intensity of combat on the battlefield. While not always victorious, democratic nations have constantly fought and re-fought battles to build and sustain support for their wars. The tensions between the military and the media, the need for governments to articulate clear war aims and win public and international support, and the public’s power to hold a government accountable in a democracy for its actions during wartime — are all essential parts of the information wars.
Histioriographic Essay

In my dissertation, “Information Wars: The Government, the Military, the Media, & the People, 1941-1991,” I have examined the interaction among four separate groups of society in times of conflict during a fifty-year period. The combination of the four parts and the long view of the subject has allowed me to synthesize findings from many different fields to produce new understandings of the complex relationships among the government, the military, the media, and the press during times of war. This extensive view of the past helps to distinguish my work from that of other scholars.

Many writers have examined portions of the complex relationships that I describe in my dissertation, especially the relationship between the military and the media. Most early scholars of the topic, like Frederick L. Bullard,¹ who published his study of war correspondents during the early months of the First World War, described war correspondents as heroic figures who traveled with armies seeking adventure and a story. War correspondents themselves produced memoirs and articles that described how they and their colleagues covered the wars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A few military officers also commented on the relationship between them military and the media. First Lieutenant Frank Geere, of the U.S. Coast Artillery Corps, wrote a multipart article that outlined how the young officer felt the military should manage the press at

¹Frederick L. Bullard, Famous War Correspondents (Boston: Little, Brown, 1914).
the turn of the twentieth century. Although Lt. Geere’s views were published in the influential *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States*, it does not appear that his subject was of much interest to the military community at large. Geere’s piece was most remarkable not for its content, but for its uniqueness.

The early attempts at understanding and describing the complex interactions of the press and the military during wartime provided much description but little analysis. Not until after the Vietnam War did military historians and other scholars truly begin to analyze the press and the military during wartime. The United States’ defeat in Vietnam led many writers to suggest that the press played a key role in the war’s outcome. General William C. Westmoreland’s accusations that the media lost the Vietnam War in the living rooms of America while his forces were winning on the battlefields of Southeast Asia, inspired many to examine the history and impact of media coverage during wartime. Military commentators, either those in uniform or writers sympathetic to the military’s efforts and goals in Vietnam, took up Westmoreland’s mantra of blaming the press for the U.S. military’s failure to win the war in Vietnam. By blaming the press, writers such as retired U.S. Army Colonel Harry G. Summers attempted to show that the U.S. military effort in Southeast Asia was justified and failed only because the American people and government did not have the stomach to take the steps necessary to win the war. In the immediate

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post-Vietnam period, few writers accepted that the loss in Vietnam had more to do with a flawed strategy than with the failure to control the press. Only after the bitter taste of the U.S. defeat faded in the 1980s did scholars broaden their approach. ⁵

Journalists also accepted Westmoreland's thesis that press accounts were fundamental in changing American popular opinion toward the war. This view of the press as the decisive force that altered public perceptions of the war suited the media as well as the military. For the media, the idea that journalists and their stories could dramatically influence public opinion bolstered claims of the media's power in American society. Followed quickly by the journalistic successes in the uncovering the Watergate scandal, the media's own view of their role in the Vietnam War reinforced a belief that the press and the government/military were at odds. Journalists came to believe that they were struggling to uncover the truth from an inherently dishonest government/military establishment. The vast majority of press memoirs describing the coverage of the Vietnam War reflected these beliefs. ⁶ Many scholars and journalists accepted that the press had acted as the watchdog for the public during the war. In Philip Knightley's, popular history of war reporting from the days of William Russell through the American experience in


Vietnam, this theme was clear. While poorly documented and at times factually inaccurate, Knightley's book attempted to place the relationship of the military and the media during the Vietnam War into a historical context but failed to overcome his own internal biases as a journalist opposed to the military.\(^7\)

More recent work in this field has corrected many of Knightley's mistakes. Studies of individual wars, like William M. Hammond's work on Vietnam, Valerie Adams's study of the British experience in the Falklands War, and Tony Shaw's recent account of the British government's handling of the media during the Suez Crisis all provide well researched and documented histories.\(^8\) Journalists like Peter Braestrup and Jacqueline Sharkey have examined multiple conflicts. Braestrup, in his study for the Twentieth Century Fund, chronicled the American military's restrictions of the media from World War II through Grenada.\(^9\) Sharkey moves Braestrup's work forward, examining American actions in Panama and the Persian Gulf War.\(^10\) Each study has found tension existed between the military and the media, especially during times of conflict. Nevertheless, these studies failed to place the tensions between the military and the media into the larger

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context of support for each conflict. In most wars between 1941 and 1991, the struggles between the military and the media have been over rights of access, use of communications equipment, and the number of reporters allowed to cover a conflict. With the exception of the Vietnam war, journalists and broadcasters have been largely supportive of the U.S. war aims and military operations while at the same time highly critical of the government and military's handling of press relations.

This dissertation builds on the efforts of these and other scholars. Yet it is significantly different from earlier analyses. Most other studies have focused almost exclusively on the interaction of the military and the media on the battlefield. Although this work describes the tensions that have traditionally developed between the military and the media during war time, it places those tensions into the larger framework of political decision making and public support for the war. Relying on the records of government and military leaders as well as journalistic accounts and individual journalists' memoirs, this dissertation has examined the decision-making process that led to the use of force in times of crises and the formation of policy regarding the handling of the press during wartime. These records also assist in determining the role that public opinion and the content of news coverage had on military and political decision-making during times of crisis and conflict. While portions of the government and military documents relating to this study are still unavailable to scholars, important collections have recently been opened to the public, including newly accessible collections at the George Bush Presidential Library and the records of the U.S. Central Command at the National Archives. These records and oral history interviews provided new material and insights into the impact of
public opinion on political and military leaders. By placing the relationships of the
government, the military, the media, and the people into a fifty-year historical context, the
study shows that the interactions of these four groups has been complex and multi-
directional.

I have also built upon earlier historical understanding by broadening my
methodological approach to the subject. Social scientists, like historians, have been
examining of the military, the press, the government, and the public intensely since the end
of the Vietnam War, if not the interaction among them. Since the early 1970s, political
scientists like John Mueller have examined what effect public opinion has during wartime
and how opinion has influenced the decisions of policy makers.¹¹ Mueller's examination of
rally events, where dramatic international events like wars cause an increase in support for
a president, and the relationship between casualty figures and public support demonstrated
the relevance of public opinion polling data on the question of how public opinion has
reacted to military conflicts. The Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor was perhaps the
most dramatic rally event and succeeded in uniting a previously fragmented American
public. Mueller also popularized the notion that casualties and public support for a war
are directly linking. Examining the limited wars of Korea and Vietnam, he quantitatively
showed that as casualties rose by a factor of ten American public support for the conflict
decreased by roughly 10 percent.

More recent scholarship by Timothy Russett and Bruce Graham and by Benjamin

¹¹ John E. Mueller, War, Presidents, and Public Opinion, (New York: Wiley,
1973).
Page and Robert Shapiro discussed the relatively stable responses found at the aggregate level of public opinion with regard to foreign policy.\footnote{Bruce Russett and Timothy Graham, “Public Opinion and National Security Policy,” *Handbook of War Studies*, Maus I. Mildarksy, ed. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).} These quantitative approaches provided a methodology to gauge the effect of military conflict on the public. By using polling data within a more traditional historical approach, this dissertation offers a cross-disciplinary methodology that can more accurately evaluate the relationship between the military, the media, the government, and the people during times of crisis and conflict.

I believe that my work has offered a refinement to the theses of both Mueller and Page and Shapiro. While Mueller convincingly showed that public support for both the Korean and Vietnam wars decreased as casualties rose, the data from the Second World War does not follow this trend. Although public support for American involvement in the war did not remain constantly high, it nevertheless did not decrease dramatically as U.S. casualties rose. While this was not the primary focus of my research, I believe that the evidence I examined showed that American public support remained highly supportive of the war even in its last, and most costly phases, during late 1944 and 1945. The conclusions of Page and Shapiro support my findings, showing that American public opinion, once attuned to an issue, remains relatively stable unless dramatic events occur. During the Korean War, the entrance of the Chinese into the conflict in December 1950 was just such a shock and also coincided with an increase in casualty levels, causing the American public to reevaluate their position regarding the war. These findings add to our
knowledge of how the public reacts to events during wartime.

History for the fifty-year period from the beginning of the Second World War through the end of the Persian Gulf War is perhaps the best- and worst-documented period of military history. Many of the key leaders of the wars I examined -- both civilian and military -- have left extensive records describing their efforts to build and maintain public support during times of conflict. Several presses and organizations have gathered, edited, and published large collections of official and private correspondence that describe individual actions and thoughts. The public papers of Franklin Roosevelt, George C. Marshall, Dwight David Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush contain important insights into their conduct and thought process during their respective wars.\(^\text{13}\) In addition to those collections, many of the military and political leaders have written autobiographies. Especially valuable were the memoirs of Harry Truman, Colin Powell, H. Norman Schwarzkopf, James A. Baker III, and George Bush and Brent Scowcroft.\(^\text{14}\) These works expanded upon the information available in the official records and provided some insight into what decision makers were thinking at key moments.


Secondary sources further clarified and placed into context the actions of wartime leaders. For the Second World War, the global history of Gerhard Weinberg and Forrest Pogue’s biography of George C. Marshall highlighted the complex nature of a world war.\textsuperscript{15} David McCullough’s biography of Harry Truman and David Rees’ comprehensive study of the Korean War likewise provided the context for information from other sources.\textsuperscript{16} For the Vietnam War, George C. Herring’s history of the U.S. involvement in the war was invaluable to understanding that conflict.\textsuperscript{17} Similarly, Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins’ work on the Falklands War explains the military and political aspects of Britain’s efforts to regain control of the islands.\textsuperscript{18} The best analysis of the U.S. decision making process during the interventions in Grenada and Panama were Ron Cole’s studies of the operations published by the History Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.\textsuperscript{19} Finally, \textit{U.S. News \& World Report}’s history of the Persian Gulf War provided a comprehensive view of the military,


\textsuperscript{18} Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, \textit{The Battle for the Falklands} (London: W. W. Norton, 1983).

political, and international aspects of the conflict.\textsuperscript{20}

In addition to these published works, scholars have benefitted from the extensive and relatively accessible official records available for the conflicts I have studied. Records for the U.S. military from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam exist although with varying degrees of completeness and usefulness. For the World War II period, the official records of the Supreme Headquarters American Forces Europe (SHAEF) and most subordinate European commands are available through the National Archives and Records Administration. Of particular use in understanding the relationship of the military and media during World War II were the extensive records of the SHAEF public information office that outlined the daily interaction of the military and the media as well as the extraordinary preparation the military made for the handling of the media during the cross-Channel invasion of 1944.\textsuperscript{21} In addition to official records, the U.S. government also produced several useful works immediately after the war traced the development of the official policy dealing with the release of information and the handling of journalists both in the United States and on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{22} These official accounts, combined with


\textsuperscript{21}See Record Group 331, Records of Allied Operational and Occupational Headquarters, World War II, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), Secretary General Staff (SGS). See also RG 331, SHAEF, Public Relations Division.

journalistic accounts and memoirs, provided the overall picture of cooperation that existed during the world war. However, the tensions that had always plagued the military and the press were often described, especially during the latter stages of the war, in media trade publications like *Editor & Publisher*.

The records from the Korean War, unlike those of World War II, were often sparse and difficult to locate. The best single source for the ever changing policy for dealing with the press on the battlefront was Billy Mossman's short study commissioned by the Center of Military History entitled "Command and Press Relationships in the Korean Conflict." Mossman's work described the trials and tribulations that the military and media went through during the war. Memoirs from several military commanders provided clarifications of Mossman's general overview and offered a more detailed description of how the press impacted military decisions. David McCullough's biography of President Harry Truman gave valuable evidence of the growing influence of public opinion polls on politicians. The several volumes dealing with the Korean War produced by the Center of Military History provided the military context that was essential for understanding why decisions regarding the handling of the press and information were made.

Sources for the Vietnam War were both scarce and overwhelming. Many of the official military records pertaining to the handling of press were either lost or destroyed.

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24McCullough, *Truman*. 
during the evacuation of Saigon in 1975. In addition to missing records, the movement of records from one archive to another has accounted for the loss of more documents. Nevertheless, many sources remain. The records of the United States Military Command Vietnam contained portions of records that deal with the handling of the press. The Office of MACV Historian records included some of the agency’s working papers, memoranda, press releases, and a few policy documents. The two volume history of the U.S. Army’s relationship with the press during the Vietnam War by William Hammond was the most comprehensive history of the period. Supplemented with press accounts and with memoirs, Hammond’s study provided the foundation for my research dealing with the Vietnam War.

The examination of the Falklands War and the U.S. operations in Grenada and Panama was made easier because of the publication of several official documents dealing with the handling of the press during each crisis. Following the end of hostilities in the South Atlantic, the British House of Commons formed a Select Committee to examine how the military had dealt with the press during the brief war. The records of the committee, published in two volumes, included testimony from reporters, military commanders, and government officials as well as documentary evidence.\footnote{House of Commons Defence Committee First Report 1982-3, \textit{The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict} 2 vols. (London: HMSO, 1983).} Likewise, the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed retired Major General Sidle Winant to examine the U.S. military’s relationship with the press after loud complaints from journalists following the U.S. invasion of Grenada. The Sidle Panel report contains the
recommendations of the panel on how future operations should be conducted but does not include any of the evidentiary material compiled during the panel's investigation. Efforts to locate that material proved fruitless.26 Similarly, the Hoffman Report, which critiqued the military's handling of the press during the U.S. intervention in Panama in 1989, provides a wealth of information but lacks much of the supporting materials used to produced the final report.27 These official government reports provided the basis for the investigation of the chapters dealing with the conflicts in the Falklands, on Grenada, and in Panama.

For material pertaining to the Persian Gulf War, the two best sources of records were the George Bush Presidential Library and the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. At the Bush Library, the Records of the Press Office included many documents that recorded official statements to the press, daily compilations of news stories, and official reactions to journalists and their stories. The Daily Guidance Files of the Press Office and the Alphabet Files contained valuable documents for the crisis in the Gulf.28 In the National Archives, the Records of the United States Central


28Daily Guidance Files, Press Office, Bush Press Records, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
Command (RG 518) contained one series devoted entirely to public affairs matters.\textsuperscript{29} Declassified as part of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in the Summer of 1998, the Central Command records included all 1352 combat press pool pieces and many policy documents regarding the handling of the press during Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM. In addition to the archival records, many of the key participants in the conflict have written memoirs describing the war. Military commanders like Colin Powell and H. Norman Schwarzkopf, as well as political leaders like George Bush and James Baker, have published accounts that supplement the official records with their own recollections of events. Fortunately, several of the figures also consented to oral history interviews that supplemented the written records. Although neither former Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Pete Williams nor his boss at the Pentagon, former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, had left a formal account of their experiences during the Gulf War, both agreed to interviews. The sheer volume of press coverage of the war guaranteed that ample material existed for seeing the war from the perspective of the media. Despite the wealth of sources dealing with the Gulf War, certain records remained unavailable to the author. As time goes by, more of these records will become available through routine declassification and FOIA requests.

In each of the conflicts, from World War II through the Gulf War, I supplemented the official records, memoirs, and press accounts with public opinion polls. Although the number of useful poll questions remained small for World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, \textsuperscript{29}USCINCENT, McDill AFB, Media Briefing File, Public Affairs Guidance, Box 2, Records of the U.S. Central Command, Record Group 518, National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.
certain questions were useful in gauging public opinion during these wars. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, public opinion polls became the standard by which pundits and government leaders attempted to gauge public support for military operations. Although operations in Grenada and Panama ended quickly, the length of the British campaign to regain the Falkland Islands provided pollsters with ample opportunity to question the public on their views toward the conflict. The pattern of extensive polling was continued during the Persian Gulf War. The Gulf War has been described as the Mother of All Polling Events. The sheer number of polls reflected the growing reliance of public officials and media personnel on polls as an easy measure of public opinion. Polling data has been collected into several easily accessible sources. For the World War II period, *Public Opinion, 1935-1946* provides the comprehensive source for data on the war.\(^{30}\) John Mueller’s *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* offers a ready source for polling data dealing with the Korean and Vietnam Wars.\(^{31}\) Data from the Falklands War comes from the International Index of Public Opinion, a compendium of polling data from throughout the world.\(^{32}\) For the Persian Gulf War, Mueller again was the best source of information. His book, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, contains a listing of over two

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hundred polls taken during the crisis and conflict.\textsuperscript{33}

This work would not have been possible without the collections of news accounts available from several presses and produced by the government. For the World War II period, the two volume set \textit{Reporting World War II} contains examples of journalistic accounts of the war.\textsuperscript{34} During and immediately after the Persian Gulf War, several collections of press accounts were produced. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) compiled a collection of print and broadcast products from across the country that dealt with military/media issues. Likewise, the U.S. Marine Corps produced a volume that dealt not only with the Corps' experiences during the war, but also contained an entire section on tensions between the military and the media.\textsuperscript{35} Additional news sources were found using the electronic resources of LEXIS/NEXIS. For the other conflicts, media sources were found the old fashion way. The author also made extensive use of the \textit{New York Times}, the \textit{Washington Post}, \textit{Time}, \textit{Newsweek}, \textit{The Economist}, and \textit{U.S. News & World Report}.

As a whole, I have attempted to use these sources and the works of earlier scholars to expand our historical understanding of the relationships among the government, the military, the media, and the people of a democracy during wartime.


Other scholars continue to examine many of the issues that I have investigated here. Recently, a collection of scholars -- comprised of military historians, political scientists, and policy analysts -- have joined together to study the current state of civil-military relations. Their findings have recently attracted interest from policy makers and news organizations alike, offering the hope that the study of the complex relationships among the government, the military, the media, and the people will continue and expand.\footnote{Add footnote on the UNC/Duke study from the Washington Post article 7 Nov. 1999.}