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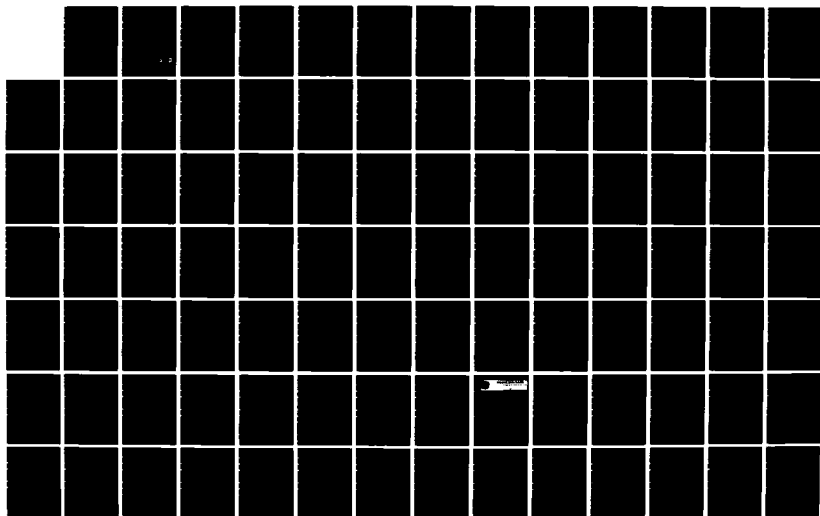
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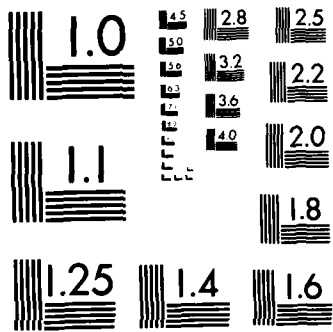
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A PILOT STUDY OF PRESS-MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS  
IN THE AFTERMATH OF GRENADA

by  
Peter Hitchcock Gabriel

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
1985

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The study reveals that both the press and the military see a need for increased understanding between the two groups. Some journalists view the relationship as adversarial in nature, while some officers stress the need for cooperation between the two groups. Both the press and the military question the practicality of press exclusion in future military operations. The limitations of this study are discussed, and recommendations are made for future research.

A Pilot Study of Press-Military Relationships in the Aftermath of Grenada

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## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: A Pilot Study of Press-Military  
Relationships in the Aftermath of Grenada

Peter Hitchcock Gabriel, Master of Arts, 1985

Thesis directed by: Dr. Ray E. Hiebert  
Professor  
College of Journalism

In October 1983 the United States invaded the island of Grenada. The American news media were not allowed access to the island until two days after the initial landings. As a result of Grenada, a panel (the Sidle Commission) was created in February 1984 to make recommendations for media-military relations in future military operations.

This descriptive study reviews press-military relationships historically and analyzes the relationship following Grenada. Personal interviews were conducted with civilian news correspondents currently assigned to the Pentagon. Interviews were also conducted with military officers. The Sidle Commission Report formed the basis for the interviews and analysis.


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## CHAPTER I

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In October 1983, United States soldiers invaded the island of Grenada. No members of the American news media were present to record the invasion until two days after the initial landings on the island. This event highlights a very important relationship that exists between the media and the military in the United States. The relationship has gone through several changes in the past two decades. Grenada has demonstrated that the relationship between the media and the military has deteriorated to a point that is less than satisfactory and does not serve our democratic society as well as it should. Cutlip and Center summarize some of the difficulties that occur between the two groups:

Relationships with the mass media constitute an important and sometimes difficult phase of military public relations. . . . Clashes occur between the press's insistence on the public's right to know and the military's obligation . . . to prevent release of security information which would be of value to the nation's enemies.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this study is to investigate current press-military relationships as a result of the exclusion of the press from Grenada, and to analyze the findings of the Sidle Commission. The Sidle Commission, a media-military relations panel created at the request of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John W. Vessey, Jr., met

in February 1984. The panel's task was to make recommendations concerning various problems facing the news media and the military in the future. The fact that there was perceived to be a need for such a panel shows that relationships between the press and the military have grown to be accusatory, distrustful, and at times, unworkable.

Bok argues that the need for secrecy is often valid concerning national security issues, but that it can be misused. American citizens must be informed to maintain democratic checks on the military.<sup>2</sup> Emery describes a lesson from the earliest beginnings of the American press, "the more secure a government is, the less it fears undermining, and the more freedom it accords its press."<sup>3</sup> Glick argues that a realistic balance must be found between what must be withheld for national interests and what should be reported for national interests.<sup>4</sup> Fryklund further expands on the point:

There are many real secrets -- details of new weapons, war plans -- that the public doesn't really want to know, shouldn't know, and that potential enemies shouldn't know. But while there are many things that cannot be told to the enemy, there are many things that must be told to the public, causing a built-in conflict between the public's right to know and the official's legal duty to keep some things secret.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship between the military and the media can be analyzed as one between the media and a "source."<sup>6</sup> Gans gives a clear definition:

By 'sources,' I mean the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in magazine articles, and those who only supply background information or story suggestions. For my purpose,

however, the most salient characteristic of sources is that they provide information as members or representatives of organized and unorganized interest<sup>7</sup> groups, and yet larger sectors of nation and society.

Gans suggests that the choice of sources is probably the most significant factor in trying to explain the news and how it is shaped.

Some other terms should be clarified at this point to eliminate any misunderstanding. I use the terms "news media" and the "press" interchangeably. What I am specifically referring to is all, or any part of, newspapers, magazines, and that part of the broadcasting media devoted to dissemination of news information. I am regarding the news media as a smaller segment of the "mass media."<sup>8</sup>

Minor points out that the definition of "news" probably varies from person to person, but a majority would agree that it consists of one or more of the following:

- 1) That which has importance for the public business.
- 2) That which is new (and unusual and unexpected).
- 3) That which sells papers or boosts ratings.

For purposes of this paper this is how I define "news."

Attitudes and opinions of Army officers on the reporting of military news have been found to differ from those of a comparable group of civilians.<sup>10</sup> Almond refers to an "attentive public" concerning foreign policy. Basically, it is a group that is informed and interested in matters concerning foreign policy problems and discussions.<sup>11</sup> A group that is informed and interested in matters concerning the military and the reporting of military news and affairs can be called another type of attentive public.

Almond points out the need to create an attentive public competent to handle the issues of national security policy. Competence in handling military and security affairs in relation to foreign policy is critical for strong policy-making.<sup>12</sup> In international relations, political and social factors are intertwined with military considerations.<sup>13</sup> Most information concerning the military originates within the defense establishment, with the media serving merely as vehicles of transmission. This raises concern for how well civilian society can monitor the military.<sup>14</sup> All concerned citizens have the need to know how the military services function and operate in order to properly monitor their actions.

Middleton further elaborates on the importance of understanding the media-military relationship:

The increasing number of global flashpoints, such as Lebanon, the Persian Gulf, South Korea and Central America, seems to insure that other American military operations will soon provide new testing grounds. How both sides meet the challenges to come will have a profound effect on a relationship of great importance not just to the parties involved but to the American public as a whole.<sup>15</sup>

It has been argued that military credibility was badly damaged by the total exclusion of the news media from Grenada. What caused the military to exclude the press? According to Middleton, the reason can be partially traced back to the Vietnam War:

. . . there is deep, abiding resentment in the officer corps against the manner in which, by and large, the war was reported by the American printed and electronic press.<sup>16</sup>

Army commanders first made an effort to brief the press and the public during the Spanish-American War. This could be said to be the earliest beginnings of the military's information program.<sup>38</sup>

### World War I

After the Spanish-American War, the Army began to formulate the beginnings of its public relations program. In 1904 the first formal press release was given to newspaper correspondents. In 1916 Douglas MacArthur was appointed "press release officer" of the War Department. His function was to interface with reporters and help provide answers to their inquiries. In 1917 a press section was created in AEF (Allied Expeditionary Force) Headquarters in France. Finally, in 1918, public relations was formally recognized as an Army staff function.<sup>39</sup>

One week after the United States entered World War I, President Wilson appointed a Committee on Public Information, headed by the newspaperman, George Creel. Its duties were to disseminate facts about the war, coordinate government propaganda efforts and serve as the liaison between the government and newspapers. It also drew up a voluntary censorship code.<sup>40</sup>

During the war the atmosphere in the country was favorable to the restriction of civil liberties. Various laws, such as the Espionage Act of June 1917, the Trading-with-the-Enemy Act of October 1917, and the Sedition Act, were passed to authorize censorship. In October 1917 a

retaliated and had a reporter arrested to be held as a spy. From 1864 to the end of the war, the press "cooperated" and General Sherman never again had his military plans disclosed by the press. He was also able to accomplish 1) the accreditation or recognition of reporters and 2) the understanding that reporters must be "acceptable" to military commanders.<sup>34</sup>

### Spanish-American War

Censorship also occurred during the Spanish-American War. Brown delineates some of the unique aspects of this war:

One of the things that set the Spanish-American War censorship apart from censorship in other wars was the use of ocean cables in transmitting military orders. This was largely a naval war, and for the first time in history fleet commanders could get orders or changes in orders while at sea if near a cable terminus. Hence, there was an urgent need for keeping naval movements a secret.<sup>35</sup>

Censorship was often not very effective during the Spanish-American War. American correspondents sometimes printed information that would aid the enemy. This was partially due to the "bitter competition" that occurred between journalists.<sup>36</sup> It was also due to the fact that many correspondents did not understand what their roles were in the war effort:

Correspondents were equally mixed up in their roles. Was it their job to report what went on or to direct or fight the war? . . .

Correspondents thus played very extraordinary roles in the war -- their war. Never, before or after, were correspondents so conspicuous for audacity and daring -- and interference in matters not their business.<sup>37</sup>

## Historical Review

### Civil War

The Civil War marked the emergence of the American war correspondent. Censorship had occurred in the American Revolution and the War of 1812, when the opposition press was suppressed and often attacked by mobs.<sup>30</sup> However the Civil War is generally considered the first war in which military censorship was implemented. There is no record in Department of Defense files of military censorship prior to this time. A censorship system was developed by trial and error. Many lessons were learned in the Civil War that set the tone for wartime controls for the rest of the century.<sup>31</sup>

Havilah Babcock describes the impact the war had on news practices:

The Civil War accustomed newspaper publishers to gigantic expenditures for the gathering, transmission and presentation of news, and led to the establishment of journalistic precedents which the press generally found awkward to disregard later.<sup>32</sup>

Emery describes the freedom of the press vs. censorship dilemma which emerged at this time and has continued to the present:

One of the serious problems of the war was how to keep the public properly informed without giving aid and comfort to the enemy.<sup>33</sup>

Much of the reporting during the Civil War was irresponsible. General Sherman had many problems with reporters and he blamed a great deal of his military failure on information leaks. Some of the press counterattacked and tried to circulate stories that he was insane. Sherman

He argues that the adversarial stance is the proper one and should be used more often. He suggests "the news media can be less concerned with preserving the status quo and more concerned with raising hell."<sup>25</sup>

Minor would agree with Ladd. He uses the phrase "information war" to describe the seldom physical, but frequently bitter, conflict between reporters and government officials that came into use during the Vietnam War.<sup>26</sup> David Halberstam further elaborates on this point:

No one becomes a reporter to make friends, but neither is it pleasant in a situation like the war in Vietnam to find yourself completely at odds with the views of the highest officials of your country.<sup>27</sup>

Hooper, a career military officer, points out that soldiers have an allegiance with other soldiers; reporters feel loyalty toward their editors and editors to their public.<sup>28</sup>

Gans argues that the adversarial view is not totally accurate in a war zone. Reporters need to get close to sources and often they begin to identify with them. In these situations it is often hard to be objective.<sup>29</sup>

These studies illustrate the complexity of journalist-source relationships. Press-military relationships have not been analyzed as thoroughly as some of these other associations. Press-military relationships have changed over time and it is important to review the connection between the news media and the military from a historical perspective.

Sigal finds in his study that organizational routines affect the way news is gathered. Reporters rely mainly on "official sources" and "routine channels" to get information.<sup>19</sup> Rothchild has also found that those newsmen who cover a regular "beat" are dependent on their sources to a greater extent than those who cover many areas. "Beat" reporters will sometimes withhold stories to preserve reporter-source relationships.<sup>20</sup> Paletz and Entman point out the similarity of news stories presented in the media and also emphasize the reliance on official sources.<sup>21</sup>

Polsby, in his study of the Presidential selection process, finds that the media often must get as close to news sources as possible:

Competitiveness thus entails snuggling up to news sources, and works at cross-purposes with the imperative of professionalism to maintain independence.<sup>22</sup>

This implies more of an exchange relationship.

Clarke and Evans found that often reporters seek to "simplify" and "regularize" their workloads. The most accessible source is often used to gather the news and complex information is avoided.<sup>23</sup> This finding is similar to what Tuchman has found.

Ladd's study grew out of a concern for the people's right to know about national government. He discusses the "credibility problem" that exists and illustrates the Pentagon's "power" to control information. He points out that "the responsibility of military leaders to inform the public fully and accurately is of paramount importance."<sup>24</sup>

Blumler and Gurevitch have also studied journalist-source relationships and they conclude that the system in which the production of political messages occurs favors those already in power. However, political sources must use a system that is directed by journalists and controlled by journalists.<sup>15</sup>

Tuchman and Gans have noticed similar trends in the news. Tuchman argues that the public is not well served by the routinization of the news process nor the attitude that is held by many reporters that "by knowing enough sources, reporters can maximize their ability to file a story every day and thus demonstrate their competence."<sup>16</sup> Gans makes a similar observation with that of Blumler and Gurevitch and argues that the more powerful sources, economically and politically, have easy access to and are sought out by journalists. Powerful sources also have the ability to saturate the news media with enough information to overwhelm the media. This, Gans argues, does not serve the best interests of the audience as a whole.<sup>17</sup>

Hess makes an interesting observation concerning journalists and their sources. Because reporters thirst for excitement and "the dramatic," there appears to be a preponderance of generalist reporters who bounce from assignment to assignment to avoid boredom. These reporters place the emphasis on interviewing and people, as sources, instead of doing research. Hess argues that this creates biases and often a simplistic view of the news.<sup>18</sup>

this exchange but that reporters often try to alter the relationship by developing other sources who will be more open in presenting information. The President usually has the power to dominate this relationship.<sup>11</sup>

How does he control the relationship? Probably the most significant power the President utilizes, and other important sources like the military utilize, is that of simply withholding information. As Herbert Gans states, "At the national level, power is generally exercised by refusing access and is the primary form of censorship."<sup>12</sup>

Douglass Cater analyzes the power of the press. He calls the Washington press "the fourth branch of government." He says "their strength stems from their ability to select -- to define what is news and what isn't."<sup>13</sup> He argues that the press is neither fully independent of nor totally "in the pocket of" the government. This philosophy is really neither adversarial nor exchange in outlook and would have to be considered somewhere in between these two viewpoints.

Ithiel de Sola Pool has a similar outlook as Cater and he takes a strong stance against Rivers and the adversarial perspective:

It (the press) must identify and seek to establish such a social structure as will enable a free press to be a nation-building, consensus-forming institution that rallies the people behind shared national goals.<sup>14</sup>

Cater and de Sola Pool see the adversarial perspective as being one-sided, inaccurate and destructive.

arm of the government, and 3) an assessor of public opinion. He categorizes sources as "informers," "educators," or "promoters." Finally, journalists and sources interact together in three ways: 1) they cooperate, 2) they are compatible with each other, and 3) they compete.<sup>8</sup> The "watchdog" function of the press would clearly fit the adversarial perspective.

William Rivers is probably the main proponent of the adversarial perspective. He wrote an entire book arguing that the press and government should maintain an adversarial viewpoint and that this is the best relationship to sustain.<sup>9</sup> Blumler and Gurevitch point out the major weaknesses to the adversarial perspective, the primary one being that if the production process of the news is a "joint" effort, some interaction must take place.<sup>10</sup>

The "exchange" perspective has also been influential in analyzing journalist-source relationships. In simplest terms, the exchange perspective can be viewed as one of mutual dependence between journalist and source: journalists have something the sources need and want, i.e., "publicity power." Sources have something the journalists want, i.e., "information power." The exchange perspective introduces the element of "power" into the journalist-source relationship.

Grossman and Rourke, in an interesting analysis, look at the media and the Presidency from an exchange perspective. They found that the President generally can control

tine news but that more "revealing information" was obtained from "private news sources." Rosten describes, rather superficially, the give and take relationship between journalists and sources.<sup>5</sup>

Probably as an outgrowth of the libertarian theory, or in conjunction with it, the adversarial perspective has been very influential in analyzing journalist-source relationships. If for no other reason, it is important because many journalists believe the adversarial relationship is "the way it is" and "the way it should be" in dealing with government sources. Blumler and Gurevitch clearly describe the adversary model:

The adversarial viewpoint is primarily ideological, prescribing how journalists should regard leading politicians and government figures. The relationship should pivot on an assumed-to-be-abiding conflict of interest between themselves and politicians. Journalists should never be 'in the pockets' of the latter. They should warily scrutinize their conduct and rhetoric, supposing that the 'real story' could lie hidden below the source-constructed surface.<sup>6</sup>

Nimmo, in his book on news gathering in Washington, studies government-press relations and looks at the consequences of the relationship in American democracy. He points out a widely held view of the press (prior to 1964):

the role of . . . the newsman is not as a political communicator primarily, but as virtually a nonpolitical public servant -- objective, noncontroversial and oblivious to the political environment in which he acts.<sup>7</sup>

Nimmo saw this ideal as being rather naive and simplistic. He states that newsmen have three tasks to perform in the communication process: 1) "watchdog," 2) being an informal

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Journalist-Source Relationships

Fred Siebert notes that in the early 1900's the press was primarily guided by the "libertarian theory." The press was viewed as a "partner in the search for truth."<sup>1</sup> The press must be free from governmental control so that it can keep a "check" on government. This philosophy has later implications for journalist-source relationships (i.e., the "watchdog" press). Near the end of World War II a shift seems to have taken place toward that of a socially responsible press.<sup>2</sup> This philosophy, also, has implications for journalist-source relationships.

Walter Lippmann was probably one of the first people who attempted to analyze press-source relationships and to see some of the problems involved with them.<sup>3</sup> McQuail also points out that Lippmann noticed "routinization" of news gathering and began to think about some of the consequences of the phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> Tuchman and others expanded on this notion in later research.

Rosten, a few years later, specifically studied Washington correspondents in one of the first systematic studies of news gathering practices. He noticed that reporters depended upon press releases and press conferences for rou-

<sup>14</sup>David R. Segal, "Communication about the Military: People and Media in the Flow of Information," Communication Research 2 (January 1975): 77.

<sup>15</sup>Drew Middleton, "Barring Reporters from the Battlefield," The New York Times Magazine, February 5, 1984, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup>Drew Middleton, "Vietnam and the Military Mind," The New York Times Magazine, January 10, 1982, p. 34.

<sup>17</sup>Fryklund, "Defense Establishment," pp. 166-181.

<sup>18</sup>James R. Mock, Censorship 1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 3.

## CHAPTER I

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 628.

<sup>2</sup>Sissela Bok, Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Edward M. Glick, "Press and Government Relationships: State and HEW Departments," Journalism Quarterly (Spring 1966): 49-56, 66.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Fryklund, "Covering the Defense Establishment," in The Press in Washington, ed. Ray Hiebert (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1966), p. 168.

<sup>6</sup>J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch, "Politicians and the Press: An Essay on Role Relationships," in Handbook of Political Communication, eds. D. Nimmo and K. Sanders (London: Sage, 1971), p. 467.

<sup>7</sup>Herbert J. Gans, Deciding What's News (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 80.

<sup>8</sup>Dale Minor, The Information War (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1970), p. vii.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 184-185.

<sup>10</sup>J. E. Orwant and J. Ullman, "Pentagon Officers' Attitudes on Reporting of Military News," Journalism Quarterly 51 (1974): 468-469.

<sup>11</sup>Gabriel A. Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), p. 138.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>13</sup>M. Janowitz, "Professional Models in Journalism: the Gatekeeper and the Advocate," Journalism Quarterly 52: 131.

Democracy faces a dilemma in wartime. Founded upon the belief of citizen participation in government and of freedom of speech, press and assembly for all citizens, when war comes those freedoms must be subordinated to the winning of the struggle, if the very government that guarantees civil rights is to continue to function, and thus assure to the citizens their constitutional privileges.<sup>18</sup>

Mock was referring to World War I and preparations for World War II when he wrote these words. Limited wars, such as Vietnam and the British war in the Falklands, are not as clear-cut.

This study analyzes what press-military relationships have been in the past and how they are functioning in the present. Some recommendations are made for how they might better function in the future.

Military correspondents also have complaints directed toward the military. The biggest complaint is that news is managed by "classification." Often times information is not released for "national security" reasons. Many reporters feel that this classification system has been misused.<sup>17</sup>

This study will increase the understanding of press-military relationships. It will review what the historic role of the American news media has been on the battlefield. What differences exist today, in the areas of media-military relations, that did not exist in earlier conflicts? What is the background of the news media's concern over coverage of the Grenada rescue operation? How do Pentagon correspondents view the relationship and what do they envision for the future? Are the recommendations of the Sidle Commission feasible and what are the ramifications for the future?

This study will be useful to both the military and the news media. Soldiers, public affairs officers and commanders should gain a better understanding of the press and its role in our society. The study examines the attitudes that some current Pentagon correspondents hold toward the military and attitudes of the military toward the news media in the wake of Grenada. Media interest in the military is necessary and healthy. A free press is fundamental to the survival of our democracy and is necessary to help keep all Americans adequately informed on the status of the military.

During wartime, democracy faces challenges not as apparent during peacetime. Mock elaborates on the point:

Censorship Board was set up to control communication facilities.<sup>41</sup>

Military censorship during the war was handled by the press section of the Military Intelligence Service. Everything written by the five hundred or so American correspondents was routed through this section.<sup>42</sup>

Many censorship measures that had been implemented during World War I continued long after the conflict had ended and grew to be misused. Mock says that these measures were used to "stamp out evils that, in too many instances, were evils only in the opinion of groups applying the restrictions."<sup>43</sup>

#### Between Wars

From 1918 until the mid-1930's there was not much interest in the military, and support for the military by the general public declined. Between 1935 and 1940 General MacArthur, then Army Chief of Staff, assigned more personnel to the public relations branch in the Army in an effort to regain support for the military. In 1941 the public relations branch was changed to the War Department Bureau of Public Relations. During World War II this bureau handled the public relations operation for the military services. Public relations work consisted mainly of publicity, censorship, and providing assistance to correspondents covering the war.<sup>44</sup>

## World War II

World War II was probably the best covered war up to that point in history. During the war, 1,646 journalists were accredited by the United States Armed Forces to cover the war.

Military censorship continued in World War II as it had in World War I. Controlling radio broadcasts was a major new responsibility. An Office of Censorship was formed to censor mail, cable and radio communications between the United States and other countries. A new agency, the Office of War Information, was formed to originate news and coordinate the government's propaganda effort.<sup>45</sup>

General Eisenhower had a very positive view of the press during World War II:

I believed that the proper attitude of the commander toward representatives of the press was to regard them as quasi-staff officers: to recognize their mission in war and to assist them in carrying it out.<sup>46</sup>

Eisenhower disliked using censorship. He felt the press' responsibility was to "write fairly and with a sense of perspective."<sup>47</sup>

After World War II, new technology, especially the television, began to change the way wars were reported. Public relations was handled in the Office of Public Information in the Department of Defense, which was established in 1949. The mission of the office was to unify and coordinate the public relations programs of all the military services. After the United States entered the Korean War each separate service, once again, became responsible for providing public

information.<sup>48</sup>

### Korea

In Korea, General MacArthur initially did not impose field censorship, but he ultimately did. The Defense Department transferred censorship responsibilities from military intelligence officers to public relations officers. Censorship was only to be imposed for "security" reasons, but newsmen and censors greatly disagreed over the definition of security.<sup>49</sup>

Complete censorship was ordered on December 23, 1950. All correspondents were placed under military surveillance. For six months prior to that time, there had been "voluntary censorship" -- competitive pressures, however, caused this system to fail and reporters had released information that helped the enemy and endangered American lives. When censorship was imposed, the Eighth Army lacked any definitive guidance on how to enforce it and problems occurred.<sup>50</sup>

Many correspondents, according to Voorhees (an Army Lieutenant Colonel), acted irresponsibly and made many factual reporting errors:

Eighth Army on several occasions would have been routed and defeated had published forecasts emanating from its corps of war correspondents turned out to be accurate. As a group, they were subject to extreme pessimism.<sup>51</sup>

His biggest criticism was that correspondents were "distinctly fair-weather friends. They were far more interested in their personal careers and incomes than the Army's welfare."<sup>52</sup> This attitude that began to develop in the Korean

War, by both the press and the military, would come to a head during the Vietnam War.

### Vietnam

Vietnam has already been recorded as one of the United States' most controversial wars:

It became a war like no other, a war with no front line, no easily identifiable enemy, no simply explained cause, no clearly designated villain on whom to focus the nation's hate, no menace to the homeland, no need for general sacrifice, and, therefore, no nation-wide fervor of patriotism.<sup>53</sup>

It was also a very difficult war for the press to cover. It was an extremely complex war with numerous political ramifications. American involvement in Indochina -- Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos -- was also the most thoroughly covered war in history.<sup>54</sup>

To the surprise of some, no formal censorship was imposed on the press corps in Vietnam. Two exceptions to this were the military newspaper Stars and Stripes and the Armed Forces Vietnam Radio Network.<sup>55</sup>

Although formal censorship did not occur, the military did have other means to control the flow of information out of Vietnam. Reporters often had to censor themselves or else they were forced to leave the country.<sup>56</sup> The military also, at times, withheld "political" news for security reasons. Reporters found this extremely difficult to justify. News "blackouts" were another problem for reporters. These occurred prior to some of the larger military movements in Vietnam, i.e., the Cambodian and Laos invasion in 1970-71.

Finally, press access to certain areas could be denied to reporters simply by refusing to provide ground or air transportation.<sup>57</sup>

Malcolm Browne of AP, Neil Sheehan of UPI, and David Halberstam of the New York Times were three of the journalistic frontrunners who pointed out the dangers of American involvement from the earliest stages of the war. These correspondents often had "bad" news to report about the war's progress. The U.S. command reported "good" news. These three correspondents became activists in writing against the attacks on the press that occurred prior to 1968, and they also wrote about the dangers facing U.S. interests in Vietnam.<sup>58</sup> Malcolm Browne's book, The New Face of War, was published in 1965 and in it he foresaw many of the problems that would later face the United States. In the second sentence of the preface he states:

There is a distinct possibility that this war may be lost, for one reason or another.<sup>59</sup>

The Communist TET offensive in January-February 1968 is considered by many historians to be the turning point in Vietnam. Gallup poll data showed that between February 1968 and the middle of March 1968 nearly twenty percent of the survey population switched from being a "hawk" to being a "dove."<sup>60</sup> The press initially reported the TET offensive as a severe military setback for the United States:

Daily press reports filed from all parts of Vietnam also contributed to the sense of disaster, as they concentrated on reporting the destruction caused by the initial Communist attacks throughout Vietnam.<sup>61</sup>

Ironically, most military scholars now believe that the offensive was a resounding military victory for the United States and South Vietnam, but at the same time, a political defeat. Peter Braestrup wrote an entire book on the TET offensive. He feels "crisis journalism" caused the misreporting that occurred. Braestrup also feels that the TET reporting was an extreme case and that it was not the norm in Vietnam. Several factors contributed to the misreporting, according to Braestrup:

- 1) Lack of preparation by journalists and their lack of knowledge about Vietnam and the military.
- 2) The inability of most journalists to speak the language.
- 3) The military view of the press, held by many in Vietnam, that it was a necessary evil.
- 4) The failure by much of the news media to stay in the field and experience combat conditions first hand.
- 5) Editorial, time, and competitive pressures on the press.
- 6) Television gave a microscopic view of the war and missed much of the whole story.<sup>62</sup>

Not surprisingly, Halberstam and some other reporters have a very different view of the TET reporting:

Each day the battle went on television -- showing the battlefield valor of the enemy -- reduced the credibility of the Washington leadership. The first casualty of the battle was the Washington propaganda machinery.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to TET, the press was becoming increasingly skeptical of government information and reports on how the war was progressing. After TET some media observers argue that the national news media had been persuaded that the Vietnam War

could not be won. Some even suggested that it should not be won.<sup>64</sup>

Vietnam is considered the first television war. Television brought into American homes highly dramatic and violent pictures. Television, as it always has, tends to focus on action and drama. Fighting, battles, and "search and destroy" patrols, all make "good TV." Elegant argues that the television coverage tended to be very simplistic and that many stories were not covered. It was an extremely complex war and television was not able to convey all the ramifications to the American public. Television looked for simple answers and they weren't to be found.<sup>65</sup> Peter Braestrup summarizes what he saw to be one of the reporting problems in Vietnam, "We tended to be suckers for drama -- real and press-created."<sup>66</sup>

The military also had its problems. From the very beginning of the American involvement in Vietnam, Washington and Saigon saturated the news media with information on various "successes" and "victories." General Westmoreland was used by the White House to stress the positive side of the war.<sup>67</sup> The daily war briefing in Saigon got to be known as the "five-o'clock follies" because reporters were often fed only very general information, and often it was misleading. Reporters became very skeptical of the military because of the frequent use of "newspeak" to evade telling the whole story. Because there was no censorship, many military personnel became wary of talking to reporters.<sup>68</sup>

Many in the military felt that the reporting in Vietnam was less than accurate and often didn't tell the whole story. Writing in 1969, Blanchard, a Navy Lieutenant Commander at the time, summarizes this view:

Military officers who have served in Southeast Asia seem to agree that newsmen in Vietnam have written distorted accounts of military activities in that war-torn nation.<sup>69</sup>

Blanchard felt that the military, by and large, misunderstood the role and values of the press and that this caused much of the tension between the two groups. Halberstam describes what he saw as the role of the press:

The job of the reporters in Vietnam was to report the news, whether or not the news was good for America. To the ambassadors and generals, on the other hand, it was crucial that the news be good, and they regarded any other interpretation as defeatist and irresponsible.<sup>70</sup>

Harry Summers has tried to put the Vietnam situation in perspective. He is an Army strategist (Colonel), whose book is used at the Army War College. Writing in 1982 he states:

There is a tendency in the military to blame our problems with public support on the media. This is too easy an answer . . . the majority of on-the-scene reporting from Vietnam was factual -- that is the reporters honestly reported what they had seen firsthand. Much of what they saw was horrible, for that is the true nature of war. It was this horror, not the reporting, that so influenced the American people.<sup>71</sup>

Vietnam was a difficult war for both the military and the press to understand. It was frustrating because it did not lend itself to simple and easily drawn conclusions: "In the end, the Vietnam War was better reported than any of the other wars examined here. But this is not saying a lot."<sup>72</sup>

### More Recent Examples

Both Great Britain and Israel have had recent military confrontations that bear mention at this time. Some observers have felt that the British and Israeli experiences ultimately contributed to the total exclusion of the press by the United States in Grenada.

The Falklands War in April 1982, which involved Great Britain and Argentina, was unique in that it is probably the last "colonial" war Great Britain will ever fight. It was also a very frustrating war for the news media to cover:

The Falklands war was the most controversially reported of Britain's conflicts since 1945. From the beginning -- because the only means of reaching the islands lay with the task force -- coverage of the British side of the war was entirely at the mercy of the Ministry of Defense. Uniquely, there was no scope whatsoever for independent enterprise.<sup>73</sup>

During the Falklands crisis, the British government almost totally managed the news media. The government 1) controlled the access to the fighting, 2) excluded neutral correspondents from the task force, 3) censored the news media, and 4) attempted to gain support for the war by invoking patriotism. Knightley calls it a "model" for the control of news.<sup>74</sup>

This conflict demonstrated that there was a basic mistrust of the press by the British military. Prior to the war, no planning had occurred to include the news media and this later caused severe problems for the press. It also became evident that few correspondents possessed any knowledge of military affairs and that a great deal of

reporting was inaccurate.

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Israel has been involved for years with conflict in the Middle East. The country has attempted to maintain direct military censorship since its establishment. This is not usually associated with a democracy and its success depends primarily on voluntary censorship by both local and foreign correspondents. New technology, such as satellite transmissions, telexes, and wire-photos, have made censorship much more difficult to accomplish.<sup>75</sup>

During the Six-Day War in 1967, a complete news blackout was imposed during the first day of fighting by the Israeli military command.<sup>76</sup> This also occurred in 1973 during the Yom-Kippur War, but it became virtually impossible to enforce. An estimated one thousand journalists were on hand to cover the war. Most recently in Lebanon, Israel has had to deal with terrorists that have tried to exploit the media to their own advantage. Press critics have argued that coverage has been distorted and that journalists have omitted important information from being reported from the region.<sup>77</sup> Other scholars disagree with this argument and conclude that, by and large, coverage has been fair, accurate and balanced.<sup>78</sup>

Following the invasion of Grenada, the news media reacted bitterly to their two-day exclusion by the military. The Washington Post and many other newspapers published numerous editorials, columns, and stories condemning the handling of this event. The lead editorial in the Post on

October 28, 1983 is a good example. It 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 governors and governed is affected.<sup>79</sup>

Public opinion polls initially showed support for how Grenada was handled by the government.<sup>80</sup> Several months later, however, polls began to show support for the press.<sup>81</sup>

### Research Questions

What is clear from these examples is that modern war will most likely be covered by the news media in a different fashion than was done in World War II and earlier wars. Based on these studies of journalist-source relationships and the historical review, the following research questions will be investigated: Has the Sidle Commission affected current press-military relationships? Is a press exclusion from future military operations a strong possibility? Has the Sidle Commission provided any new insight as to what can be done to better press-military relationships? What is the proper relationship between the press and the military in our democratic society?

## CHAPTER II

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>F. Siebert, T. Peterson, and W. Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1956), pp. 3, 39-71.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>3</sup>Walter Lippman, Public Opinion (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922), pp. 320, 338-357.
- <sup>4</sup>Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory (London: Sage, 1983), p. 114.
- <sup>5</sup>Leo C. Rosten, The Washington Correspondents (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1937), p. 78.
- <sup>6</sup>J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch, "Politicians and the Press: An Essay on Role Relationships" Handbook of Political Communication, eds. D. Nimmo and K. Sanders (London: Sage, 1971), p. 470.
- <sup>7</sup>D. Nimmo, Newsgathering in Washington (New York: 1964), p. 18.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-106.
- <sup>9</sup>W. Rivers, The Adversaries: Politics and the Press (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 246.
- <sup>10</sup>Blumler and Gurevitch, "Politicians and Press," p. 472.
- <sup>11</sup>M. B. Grossman and F. E. Rourke, "The Media and the Presidency: An Exchange Analysis," Political Science Quarterly 91 (Fall 1976): 456-461.
- <sup>12</sup>Herbert J. Gans, Deciding What's News (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 120.
- <sup>13</sup>Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 14.
- <sup>14</sup>Ithiel de Sola Pool, "Newsmen and Statesmen: Adversaries or Cronies," in Aspen Notebook of Government and the Media, eds. W. Rivers and M. Nyham (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 16.

- <sup>15</sup>Blumler and Gurevitch, "Politicians and Press," pp. 490-491.
- <sup>16</sup>Gaye Tuchman, Making News (New York: Free Press, 1978), p. 68.
- <sup>17</sup>Gans, Deciding What's News, pp. 81, 121.
- <sup>18</sup>Stephen Hess, The Washington Reporters (Washington: The Brookings Institution), 1981), p. 122.
- <sup>19</sup>Leon V. Sigal, Reporters and Officials (Lexington: D. C. Heath, 1973), p. 125.
- <sup>20</sup>John Rothchild, "The Stories Reporters Don't Write," Washington Monthly (June 1971): 1-8.
- <sup>21</sup>D. L. Paletz and R. M. Entman, Media, Power, Politics (New York: Free Press, 1981).
- <sup>22</sup>Nelson Polsby, "The News Media as an Alternative to Party in the Presidential Selection Process," in Political Parties in the Eighties, ed. R. A. Goldwin (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1981), p. 58.
- <sup>23</sup>P. Clarke and S. H. Evans, Covering Campaigns (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), p. 5.
- <sup>24</sup>Bruce Ladd, Crisis in Credibility (New York: New American Library, 1968), pp. v, 135.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 226.
- <sup>26</sup>Dale Minor, The Information War (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1970), p. vii.
- <sup>27</sup>David Halberstam, "Getting the Story in Vietnam," Commentary (January 1965): 30-34.
- <sup>28</sup>Alan Hooper, The Military and the Media (Aldershot, Great Britain: Gower, 1982), p. 7.
- <sup>29</sup>Gans, Deciding What's News, p. 135.
- <sup>30</sup>Paul Blanshard, The Right to Read: The Battle Against Censorship (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 113.
- <sup>31</sup>Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 168.
- <sup>32</sup>Havilah Babcock, "The Press and the Civil War," Journalism Quarterly 6 (1929): 2.

- <sup>33</sup>Emery and Emery, Press and America, p. 165.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 169.
- <sup>35</sup>Charles H. Brown, "Press Censorship in the Spanish-American War," Journalism Quarterly 42 (Autumn 1965): 589.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 581-590.
- <sup>37</sup>Charles H. Brown, The Correspondent's War: Journalists in the Spanish-American War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. vii.
- <sup>38</sup>Lowndes F. Stephens, "Professionalism of Army Public Affairs Personnel," Public Relations Quarterly 23 (Winter 1978): 19.
- <sup>39</sup>Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 612.
- <sup>40</sup>Emery and Emery, Press and America, p. 329.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 330-332.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 334.
- <sup>43</sup>James R. Mock, Censorship 1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 230.
- <sup>44</sup>Cutlip and Center, Effective Public Relations, pp. 612-613.
- <sup>45</sup>Emery and Emery, Press and America, pp. 338-339. See also Theodore F. Koop, Weapon of Silence (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).
- <sup>46</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1948), p. 300.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 301.
- <sup>48</sup>Cutlip and Center, Effective Public Relations, pp. 615-616.
- <sup>49</sup>Emery and Emery, Press and America, p. 345.
- <sup>50</sup>Melvin B. Voorhees, Korean Tales (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), pp. 101-111.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 80.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

I have directed the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) to take the necessary steps to implement those portions of the final report which meet the Panel's criteria of providing maximum news media coverage of U.S. military operations 'consistent with military security and the safety of U.S. forces.'<sup>4</sup>

This does appear to leave such an option open to the Department of Defense. Corddry sums up much of the feelings of the correspondents, "The statement by the Secretary of Defense leaves the door wide open to do nothing . . . I do know they've even said they'd do it again."<sup>5</sup>

Martin felt that the initial exclusion occurred because of the "inevitable result of the residue of Vietnam where senior commanders had bitter memories of what they felt was a hostile press in Vietnam."<sup>6</sup> Martin feels that a future press exclusion is a definite possibility, "I think that's clear - Burch (Assistant Secretary of Defense/Public Affairs) has made no promises. It is a definite possibility."<sup>7</sup>

Trautman and Gross both feel that the press exclusion occurred due to a lack of trust on the part of the military toward the news media. Willenson agrees with them, but also feels that too much emphasis has been placed on Grenada. He points out that the circumstances for the press to be totally excluded in future conflicts are very slim, "There's never going to be another one like it . . . I gnash my teeth to see rules being written for the future on something that is a one-time aberration."<sup>8</sup>

Most of the military officers interviewed felt that the press exclusion occurred because the news media were not

current position at the Pentagon since 1978. He was in the Army for three years in the late 1950's. Mr. Hunt was interviewed because he was one of the members of the Sidle Commission.

Lieutenant Colonel Craig MacNab has been in the U.S. Army for twenty-two years. He has worked in field artillery and public affairs for most of that time. He spent a tour in Vietnam in the 1960's and he has been in his current Pentagon job since 1984.

### Findings

The Sidle Panel Report formed the basis for my interviews. Although the report was a starting point for the interviews, answers were wide-ranging and included extensive discussions of Grenada, censorship and media-military relationships in general. The panel did not attempt to address why the media was excluded from Grenada. The introductory letter, signed by General Sidle, states,

. . .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.<sup>3</sup>

Maybe. I think the problems that caused the press exclusion from Grenada run deeper than this.

Unquestionably, the biggest concern expressed by all the correspondents I interviewed is the fear that the Department of Defense might try to again exclude the press on future military operations. The statement by the Secretary of Defense that accompanied the final Sidle report states:

Washington, D.C. and Afghanistan. He was in the Marines for three years during the 1950's.

Kim Willenson has worked for Newsweek for eleven years. He has been Newsweek's Pentagon correspondent for almost two years. Prior to that time he worked for several small newspapers, the Washington Post and United Press International for nine years. He was in the Army for three years in the late 1950's. He covered the Vietnam War for UPI periodically between 1966 and 1974, both in Thailand and Saigon.

Captain Brent Baker has been in the U.S. Navy for twenty-six years. He has worked in his present job at the Pentagon for two years. He spent three years in Vietnam and has worked in Naval public affairs since 1967.

Captain Michelle Boyd has been in the U.S. Air Force for almost eight years and her entire career has been in the public affairs field. Before entering the military she was a reporter for a small newspaper. She has been in her present job at the Pentagon for six months.

Brigadier General Louis Helm is in the U.S. Army Reserve and has been in his current job for eighteen months. He also has five years newspaper experience. The majority of his time in the military has been involved with the fields of infantry and public affairs. He does not have any combat experience.

Billy Hunt has held government service positions for the majority of his professional career. He has been in his

All the interviewees have been either journalists or career military officers since leaving college.

Charles Corddry has been a reporter for forty-four years. He has been a defense correspondent at the Pentagon since 1953. Corddry worked with United Press until 1967, at which time he joined The Baltimore Sun. He was never in the military, but he has covered military stories during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Corddry has the most experience of all the correspondents I interviewed in dealing with the military.

Richard Gross has worked almost his entire career at United Press International. He has been a Pentagon correspondent for four years. Prior to that time he was a foreign correspondent in Israel and Yugoslavia. He was never in the military, but he covered the Yom-Kippur War in 1973 and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

David Martin has been the Pentagon correspondent for CBS News for two years. After graduating from Yale University he was a Naval officer from 1966-1969. He was stationed in Vietnam for part of that period. After leaving the Navy he worked for CBS, the Associated Press, and Newsweek, before rejoining CBS in 1983.

Robert Trautman has been a correspondent for Reuters New Service since 1968. He has worked at the Pentagon for four years. Prior to joining Reuters, he worked for a variety of different newspapers and, for a short period of time, he worked for the United States Information Agency in

and comments (Appendix A). On August 23, 1984, the final report was released to the public by the Secretary of Defense.

Highlights of the panel recommendations, made to General Vessey, include the following:

- 1) Public affairs planning for military operations should be conducted concurrently with operational planning.
- 2) When operational necessity dictates, a news media pool, of the largest possible size, will be utilized to provide early access for the press.
- 3) Study whether to implement pre-established accreditation and notification lists of correspondents for use in case of a military operation.
- 4) Media access should depend on voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military.
- 5) Public affairs planning should include enough equipment and qualified personnel to assist journalists in covering military operations sufficiently.
- 6) News media communications requirements should be carefully planned for to assure the earliest availability.
- 7) Planning should include intra- and inter-theatre transportation support for the news media.
- 8) A program should be undertaken by military public affairs representatives and news organizations to meet regularly to discuss mutual problems and discuss media-military relationships during military exercises.<sup>2</sup>

### Results of Interviews: Findings and Discussion

#### Professional Background

Before I discuss the specific results of my interviews, I thought it would be helpful to provide an idea of the professional backgrounds of the people I interviewed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SIDLE COMMISSION AND BEYOND

#### CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel

In November 1983, following the military invasion of Grenada by the United States, General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, created a Media-Military Relations Panel to study the question:

How do we 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?<sup>1</sup>

Major General Winant Sidle, USA, Retired, was selected as chairman of the panel. The panel was designed to include media representatives, public affairs personnel from all military services and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), and operations personnel from the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Major news organizations, however, declined to have any media representatives serve on the panel because it was felt to be inappropriate. The panel membership was then revised to include experienced retired media personnel and representatives of schools of journalism (see Enclosure 1 - Appendix A). News organizations did provide oral presentations to the panel.

The panel met from February 6, 1984, through February 10, 1984. The panel provided a report with recommendations

## CHAPTER III

### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Alan Hooper, The Military and the Media (Aldershot, Great Britain: Gower, 1982), pp. 1-222.

<sup>2</sup>D. N. Goren, A. A. Cohen and D. Caspi, "Reporting of the Yom-Kippur War from Israel," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Summer 1975): 199-206.

<sup>3</sup>Anthony A. Adams, "A Study of Veteran Viewpoints on TV Coverage of the Vietnam War," Journalism Quarterly 54 (Summer 1977): 252-253.

<sup>4</sup>Engle W. Scott and Thomas Taylor, "Trust and Confidence in Wartime between Commanders and the Media," Study at U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1982.

<sup>5</sup>Oscar Patterson, III, "An Analysis of Coverage of the Vietnam Veteran," Journalism Quarterly (Summer 1982): 308-310.

<sup>6</sup>Oscar Patterson, III, "Television's Living Room War in Print: Vietnam in the News Magazines," Journalism Quarterly 61 (Spring 1984): 35-39, 136.

<sup>7</sup>James E. Fletcher and P. E. Soucy, "Army Public Affairs Officer as Perceived by Press and by Military Colleagues," Journalism Quarterly (Spring 1983): 93-97, 204.

interview Mr. Michael I. Burch, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), and Commodore Jack Garrow, Chief of Information for the Department of the Navy, but they were unavailable. Mr. Hunt and Captain Baker were interviewed because they were members of the Sidle Commission. Major General Bussey was not personally interviewed, but did answer a series of questions left with his secretary.

Pentagon correspondents and military public affairs officers were selected to be interviewed because I felt it was critical to first analyze the press-military relationship at the interpersonal level. The press and the military associate with each other on a daily basis and this is where an understanding of press-military relationships should begin.

I used secondary, historical sources to gain background information on military censorship and to determine what press-military relationships have been in the past (see Literature Review). My primary sources of information have been the interviews and the Report by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Media-Military Relations Panel (Sidle Panel - see Appendix A). This report formed the basis for my interviews with the Pentagon correspondents and the military personnel.

because of the in-depth nature of the interviews. Each interview was between one and three hours in length. I requested that all the interviews be conducted on a face-to-face basis, but two interviews had to be conducted over the telephone due to time constraints. Pentagon correspondents were selected because they deal with the military services on a firsthand and daily basis. This method of interviewing was selected because it guaranteed a one hundred percent response rate. If I had been unsuccessful in interviewing any of these journalists, I would have contacted other Pentagon correspondents.

Five military officers and one civilian, who is employed in the Office of the Secretary of the Army, were selected to be interviewed:

- 1) Brigadier General Louis M. Helm; Deputy Chief of Public Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Army (Reserve)
- 2) Mr. Billy F. Hunt; Chief, Plans - Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Army
- 3) Captain Brent Baker; Assistant Chief of Information for Operations, Department of the Navy
- 4) Lieutenant Colonel Craig MacNab; Action Officer, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Media Relations, Department of the Army
- 5) Captain Michelle Boyd; Action Officer, Office of Air Force Public Affairs, Media Relations Branch, Department of the Air Force
- 6) Major General Charles D. Bussey; Chief, Public Affairs, Department of the Army

These individuals were selected because of their experience in military public affairs. I originally attempted to

Fletcher and Soucy surveyed various members of the news media, military commanders, public affairs officers, and non-public affairs officers, to determine how public affairs officers were perceived by the press and the other groups. The study found that expectations of public affairs officers by the press and the military differed. Commanders expected public affairs officers to act primarily on the basis of "candor with the press." The working press expected the public affairs officer to be primarily concerned with "protecting the Army."<sup>7</sup>

Five Pentagon correspondents were selected to be interviewed for this study:

- 1) Charles W. Corddry, Baltimore Sun
- 2) Richard C. Gross, United Press International
- 3) David C. Martin, CBS News
- 4) Robert Trautman, Reuters News Service
- 5) Kim Willenson, Newsweek

These correspondents were selected from a total of thirty-three journalists that are permanently assigned to cover the Pentagon. I originally attempted to interview correspondents from two newspapers and only one wire service; however, George Wilson of the Washington Post declined to be interviewed. All the other journalists I contacted were willing to talk to me. After Mr. Wilson declined to be interviewed, I selected Mr. Trautman, from Reuters News Service, because Reuters serves primarily Europe and Asia. I decided to limit the number of correspondents to five

Kippur War in Israel in late 1973. Attitudes toward the use of censorship by the Israelis was measured and seventy-four percent of all personnel surveyed said they felt Israel was justified in using censorship. The study also analyzed the use of new technology, such as satellite communications, in the coverage of the war. Not surprisingly, the war received high priority news coverage throughout the region and the world.<sup>2</sup>

Adams surveyed combat veterans of the Vietnam War and found that they were more dissatisfied with television coverage of the war, and more sensitive to its impact on the general public, than were non-combat veterans.<sup>3</sup> Scott and Taylor surveyed Army officers, both on active duty and retired, in the ranks of Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, and General. They found that General officers appeared to be more trusting of the press than the more junior officers. Experience in dealing with the news media was found to be a significant factor.<sup>4</sup>

Patterson's content analysis of newspapers found that the press gave a great deal of favorable coverage to the Vietnam veteran and the Vietnam War prior to 1968. After 1968, the amount of anti-war coverage increased and that coverage was perceived as unfavorable to the war and the veterans.<sup>5</sup> Patterson conducted a later study that found coverage of Vietnam did not dominate news magazine coverage from 1968-1973. He found that magazine coverage did not become more pictorially "bloody" between this period.<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

Hooper's study of the British military and the media found that considerable misunderstanding and mutual ignorance exists between British military officers and journalists. Hooper primarily utilized firsthand research consisting of personal observation and interviews in conducting his study. He also utilized case studies and historical research.<sup>1</sup>

This study is also qualitative and descriptive in nature. It does not attempt to be an authoritative study, but rather an exploratory analysis of the relationship that exists between Pentagon correspondents and their military sources. The study utilizes face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews similar to those Hooper used in his research. This method was used because of the length of the interviews and the open-ended nature of the questions. Although time-consuming, this method allowed for personal observation and considerable feedback from the interviewees.

Previous studies have often utilized other methods, such as survey research, to observe behavioral characteristics, attitudes, values, and beliefs. Goren, Cohen, and Caspi used surveys and personal interviews to study the large number of news media personnel who covered the Yom-

<sup>73</sup>Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1983), p. 331.

<sup>74</sup>Knightley, First Casualty, pp. 51-53.

<sup>75</sup>W. J. Drummond and A. Zycher, "Arafat's Press Agents," Harper's (March 1976): 26.

<sup>76</sup>D. N. Goren, A. A. Cohen and D. Caspi, "Reporting of the Yom-Kippur War from Israel," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Summer 1975): 200.

<sup>77</sup>Drummond and Zycher, "Arafat's Press Agents," pp. 24-30.

<sup>78</sup>Roger Morris, "Beirut - and the Press - Under Siege," Columbia Journalism Review 21 (November/December 1982): 23-33.

<sup>79</sup>The Washington Post, October 28, 1983, p. A22.

<sup>80</sup>The Washington Post, October 30, 1983, p. A18.

<sup>81</sup>Carl Stepp, "Grenada Skirmish Over Access Goes On," Freedom of Information 1984-1985, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup>Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 381.

<sup>54</sup>Emery and Emery, Press and America, p. 348.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 356.

<sup>56</sup>Halberstam, "Getting the Story," p. 31.

<sup>57</sup>Emery and Emery, Press and America, p. 356.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>59</sup>Malcolm W. Browne, The New Face of War (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. xi.

<sup>60</sup>Guenter Lewy, America in Vietnam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 434.

<sup>61</sup>Herbert Y. Schandler, The Unmaking of a President: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 80.

<sup>62</sup>Peter Braestrup, The Big Story: How the American Press and TV Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of TET 1968 in Vietnam and Washington (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>63</sup>David Halberstam, The Powers That Be (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 511.

<sup>64</sup>Gans, Deciding What's News, p. 135.

<sup>65</sup>Robert Elegant, "How to Lose a War: Reflections of a Foreign Correspondent," Encounter 57 (August 1981): 83.

<sup>66</sup>Peter Braestrup, "Covering the Vietnam War," Nieman Reports 23 (December 1969): 11.

<sup>67</sup>Braestrup, The Big Story, p. 16.

<sup>68</sup>Knightley, First Casualty, pp. 408-421.

<sup>69</sup>Ralph Blanchard, (Lt. Cdr.), "The Newsmen in Vietnam," US Naval Institute Proceedings 95 (February 1969): 51.

<sup>70</sup>Halberstam, "Getting the Story," p. 30.

<sup>71</sup>Harry G. Summers, On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 39.

<sup>72</sup>Knightley, First Casualty, p. 423.

viewed as being essential to the operation. General Helm felt that the military planners only wanted to address "tactical" military problems and that it was a mistake not to include plans for press coverage. He agrees with Willenson that too much emphasis has been placed on Grenada, "Grenada is unique . . . any operation that occurs anywhere but on an isolated island will include press coverage."<sup>9</sup>

However, another officer, who requested anonymity, believes that future press exclusions are a possibility. He feels that future operations will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The military will no longer have the excuse that press coverage is not planned for. This officer stated that guidelines for future press coverage are being written at this time. The statement by the Secretary of Defense, released with the Sidle Commission report, seems to verify this possibility for future press exclusions.

The Sidle Commission was viewed by both the Pentagon correspondents and the military officers as a positive step in planning for future operations involving the press and the military. Everyone interviewed seemed to agree that the recommendations of the Commission were, with some exceptions, realistic in scope and could be implemented. The correspondents, however, questioned whether the recommendations would ever actually be put into practice by the military.

Recommendation 1 suggests that public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently

with operational planning. This obviously did not occur during the planning phases for the Grenada operations. All those interviewed feel that this is a critical step in insuring that the press gains access to future military operations. The military public affairs officers I interviewed stated that this planning is now being done and that there won't be any "excuses" for not having public affairs plans in the future.

Recommendations 2 and 3 concern the use of news media pooling. The Pentagon correspondents and the officers agreed that pooling would be necessary under certain conditions. The correspondents were very concerned over the mechanics of how a pool would be organized and run. All the journalists felt that pooling was a necessary evil that should be eliminated at the earliest possible opportunity. General Helm and Lieutenant Colonel MacNab felt quite strongly that for most future military operations pooling of the news media would become largely irrelevant. MacNab illustrates his argument:

A pool will only work on a monopoly to access, like what occurred during the Falklands War or Grenada. The pool goes out the window when you have a situation like the Israelis have in Lebanon. That kind of situation is what will most likely occur in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Recommendation 4 concerns voluntary compliance by the news media with security guidelines or ground rules established by the military. In discussing this recommendation I was surprised when all of the Pentagon correspondents stated that, under certain conditions, field censorship by

the military was appropriate. Willenson pointed out that there were times in Vietnam that he personally witnessed information being released prematurely by journalists that endangered American lives. "Tactical" censorship, which helps to save lives, was felt to be appropriate. Willenson felt that the ground rules used in Vietnam, in lieu of censorship, worked marginally well, but that a great deal of planning would have to be done in this area for future operations. General Helm was skeptical that voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines could be achieved in the future. With the exception of another situation like Grenada, he felt that during future military operations voluntary compliance by the news media would also become irrelevant.

Recommendations 5, 6, and 7 discuss some of the mechanics for transporting journalists and their equipment to military theaters of operation. Both the correspondents and the officers agreed that this has become a monumental task considering the large numbers of journalists that presently cover military operations throughout the world. Further consideration is required to make these recommendations more realistic. Expecting the military to provide escorts for all journalists could become an almost impossible task to accomplish.

Recommendation 8 suggests that programs be undertaken to institutionalize meetings between the news media and the military to discuss mutual problems. Both the Pentagon

correspondents and the military officers felt that meetings could be helpful, but that they should not be expected to eliminate negative feelings and attitudes that exist on both sides. Martin felt that, for the most part, the best attitude you could hope for between the news media and the military was to "agree to disagree." He felt that meetings can provide a forum to discuss problems away from the daily pressures experienced in both the news business and the military. Captain Baker, and all the officers, felt that these meetings would be a good idea, but that they are not a cure-all for all problems between the news media and the military.

After reviewing the Sidle Commission recommendations at length, the interviewees voiced concern in regard to several other important issues concerning press-military relationships. Television was discussed as a medium which has forever changed the face of war. Shimon Peres describes the part television has played in the Middle East:

War in our day is war that is photographed. In the battlefield are not only tanks, but television cameras, the eyes of the world, and pictures are stronger than words.<sup>11</sup>

Television has the strengths of immediacy and the ability to show the true horror of war. Television also has some weaknesses in that it stresses imagery and dramatic scenes.

Martin puts this point into perspective:

Television condenses reality drastically . . . not just with war coverage . . . it covers the action, the day to day stuff that most people do is not news, and won't ever be televised.<sup>12</sup>

Television brings the reality of war into people's homes and this fact cannot be reversed.

Along with television, the concept of censorship was also discussed. Other than tactical censorship, the type of censorship used during World War II is not likely to be imposed again. During World War II total censorship prevailed. Censorship was intended to cover only military situations and its imposition allowed commanders to talk more freely than they would have been able to without it. In Vietnam, where no formal censorship existed, information was either withheld or released to show only the "positive" side of the war. This greatly increased the distrust felt between the news media and the military. The military dislikes using the term "censorship," according to Captain Baker. Numerous problems would arise, especially in regard to television, if total censorship is ever imposed again. The military is especially worried about satellite transmission capabilities. Summers points out the dilemma of censorship.

Imposition of total censorship would not only jeopardize the very basis of American society but would also sever the link between the American people and their military.<sup>13</sup>

It is evident from my interviews with both the Pentagon correspondents and the military officers that the news media are viewed as filling a crucial role in keeping all Americans informed about the military. Grenada, however, has highlighted the hostility that exists between the press and the military. When asked to characterize the

relationship that exists between the press and the military, Trautman and Martin both stated that the relationship is an adversarial one, with an "us" versus "them" mentality. All the correspondents felt that military public affairs officers were honest in their dealings with the news media, but they also were concerned that sometimes information was withheld from reporters because it might embarrass the military. It was unanimously felt by all the reporters that some negative information was over-classified under the guise of national security, with the intent of preventing its release. Trautman characterized the feelings that are felt by many in the press and the military, "I don't know you, and I don't trust you."<sup>14</sup>

Gross and Willenson both characterize the press-military relationship as one that is "critical" toward the other. Both Gross and Willenson feel that it is important for the press to be critical of the military, but at the same time, the relationship must be "professional." They stressed the importance of dealing with each other with mutual respect.

Corddry doesn't feel that the relationship between the press and the military should be anything different than what exists between the press and other news sources:

The news media should cover the military the way we cover everything else . . . approach it (the military) with some degree of skepticism and effort to learn what the facts are, no matter what it is you are covering . . . we are not under any obligation to be more sympathetic toward the military.<sup>15</sup>

Corddry also characterized the relationship between the

press and the military as one that is adversarial in nature, but not one of enmity.

The definition of "adversary" in the American Heritage Dictionary is "an opponent or enemy."<sup>16</sup> Many in the military view the relationship between the press and the military in this light. The military officers I interviewed had similar responses to those of the Pentagon correspondents. They saw the need for professionalism on both sides within an adversarial context. Captain Baker summarized this view:

You'll always be in a somewhat adversary position . . .  
. but you must still discuss the facts and must  
attempt to be objective.<sup>17</sup>

The biggest criticism lodged against the news media by the military is that too many reporters do a superficial job of reporting very complex issues. The officers did not feel that reporters had to become military "experts," but it was felt that to cover the military adequately and fairly a certain degree of technical expertise had to be obtained. The officers indicated that the Department of Defense could do a better job of assistance in this area.

From all of the above, it appears that both the press and the military continue to be wary of each other. The idea of a totally adversarial relationship between the press and the military is not realistic in that it does not take into consideration the daily cooperation that does occur between the two groups. The military must accept the fact that the press does not simply exist to serve as messengers

to relay positive stories about the military. Negative and critical stories about the military are not unpatriotic and should not be viewed as such by the military. The news media, on the other hand, should not attempt to cover complex military issues without first compiling the necessary research to do a full and fair story.

## CHAPTER IV

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel Report (Sidle Panel).
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup>Interview with Charles W. Corddry.
- <sup>6</sup>Interview with David C. Martin.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup>Interview with Kim Willenson.
- <sup>9</sup>Interview with Brigadier General Louis M. Helm.
- <sup>10</sup>Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Craig MacNab.
- <sup>11</sup>"Notes and Comments," New Yorker, July 19, 1982, p. 23.
- <sup>12</sup>Interview with David C. Martin.
- <sup>13</sup>Harry G. Summers, On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 191.
- <sup>14</sup>Interview with Robert Trautman.
- <sup>15</sup>Interview with Charles W. Corddry.
- <sup>16</sup>The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, William Morris, ed. (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1970), p. 19.
- <sup>17</sup>Interview with Captain Brent Baker.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The armed forces and the press are both vital institutions needed to guarantee the survival of our free and democratic society. Members of both the military and the press take their responsibilities seriously. The relationship between the two is very important to our society, and yet I feel it is not what it should be. Grenada and the Sidle Commission have highlighted a need for serious examination of this relationship on the part of both the press and the military. This study has indicated to me that a considerable amount of distrust exists between the press and the military.

The relationship between the press and military has undergone radical change since World War II. During that war total censorship was exercised over the press. Some critics have argued that the press collaborated with the military and reported only what the military felt should be reported. Although it did not get to the point where the news media were totally "in the pocket" of the military, undoubtedly some collaboration did occur. Many in the military did not find anything wrong with this.

During Vietnam, drastic changes began to occur between the press and the media. Prior to the TET offensive the

news media, with some exceptions, were not very skeptical about the course of the war. A great deal was reported to the American public almost exactly as it had been briefed to the press by military public affairs officers. In short, there was a good deal of favorable news reported by the United States government and the military, and not much bad news. After TET, a transformation occurred:

We (the military) had concealed from the American people the true nature of war at precisely the time that television brought its realities into their living rooms in living color.<sup>1</sup>

From that point on, the news media was much less willing to trust the information the military was releasing to reporters.

After Vietnam, no significant changes occurred in press-military relationships. Many in the press continued to be skeptical about what the military was "feeding" them; many in the military continued to blame the press for the United States' loss in Vietnam.

The British experience during the battle for the Falklands was watched with great interest by the press and the military. The British correspondents were allowed to travel with the task force and almost total censorship prevailed.

Many have argued that the British experience in the Falklands helped precipitate what happened in Grenada. Without a doubt, there are similarities. The biggest difference, however, is that during Grenada reporters were denied any access for two days. This did not occur during

the Falklands war.

During the Falklands war and Grenada, both Great Britain and the United States were able to control the news media more than they ever again will be likely to. Access was easily controlled due to the remote locations and the relative smallness of the islands. Although it is possible that similar situations could arise again, I think it is more likely that future military operations will not occur where total news blackouts will be so easy to achieve. The recent Israeli experience in Lebanon has demonstrated how difficult it can be to control press access, and how difficult it can be to censor the media.

Future military operations, unless they are similar to Grenada, will be difficult to censor on a large scale. It is very possible to anticipate live pictures being transmitted from a combat zone. The technology exists to do this, and it is getting less expensive to obtain. Live satellite transmissions do pose a threat to American lives under certain situations, such as the exposing of defensive positions, and these transmissions would be very difficult to control. Journalists now have the technology and the capability to quickly and efficiently report from most locations throughout the world. As reporting time has decreased, censorship has become much more difficult to achieve. I think it is debatable whether total censorship, on a large scale, could ever be achieved in future military operations.

However, a total press exclusion, similar to the exclusion in Grenada, remains a possibility for the future. As outlined above, the conditions that would have to exist for this to occur are specialized. I feel that these conditions are less likely to occur than are conflicts in large and easily accessible areas. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the military to exclude the news media from areas such as Western Europe, Central America, or the Middle East.

#### Recommendations

This study has stimulated a great deal of thought on my part concerning the relationship between the news media and the military. As I have researched it, some recommendations for the future have come to mind.

First, the armed forces must learn to better understand the role of the American news media in our society. The military should not be afraid of journalists. Part of the job of the news media in our society is to hold the military accountable to Congress, the President and the American people. This is the way it should be. The news media are the primary link between the military and the citizens of the United States. Scott-Barrett puts the role of the news media in perspective:

Governments, service officers and those in positions of responsibility must understand the ethics, susceptibilities and weaknesses of the profession of journalism, resist taking offense at criticism, and study the possibilities of new developments of communications as they occur. They must remember that the free society of democracy today depends largely on

the existence of an informed public which is in possession of the facts and makes considered and reasoned judgments, particularly on issues of national importance.<sup>2</sup>

The military should expand the training given to military personnel concerning the news media. Some seminars now occur at the senior service school level for a few high ranking military officers, but very little education in these matters, if any, occurs at the lower ranks. Junior officers, other than those who attend graduate school in journalism or the Defense Information School, are not given any formal training concerning the role of the press in American society.

All members of the armed services should also be briefed on the Department of Defense Principles of Information (see Enclosure at Appendix A). This document serves as a good starting point for the education process, but it should be expanded on to help enlighten all military personnel about the role of the news media in American society. The military should also closely evaluate the training given to public affairs specialists and officers at the Defense Information School to ensure that these objectives are being achieved.

Second, the armed services must make certain that accurate information is released to the news media in a timely fashion. Two-way communication should be exercised between the military and the press. If this is practiced, the military must be willing to admit when mistakes are made or problems occur.

## REPORT

by

CCCS MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONS PANEL (SIDE PANEL)

## SECTION I: Recommendations

Statement of Principle

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

This principle extends the major "Principle of Information" promulgated by the Secretary of Defense on 1 December 1983, which said:

"It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and members representing the press, radio and television may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered responsively and as rapidly as possible. . ." (Copy at Enclosure 4)

It should be noted that the above statement is in consonance with similar policies publicly stated by most former secretaries of defense.

The panel's statement of principle is also generally consistent with the first two paragraphs contained in "A Statement of Principle on Press Access to Military Operations" issued on 10 January 1984 by 10 major news organizations (copy at Enclosure 5). These were:

"First, the highest civilian and military officers of the government should reaffirm the historic principle that American journalists, print and broadcast, with their professional equipment, should be present at U.S. military operations. And the news media should reaffirm their recognition of the importance of U.S. military mission security and troop safety. When essential, both groups can agree on coverage conditions which satisfy safety and security imperatives while, in keeping with the spirit of the First Amendment, permitting independent reporting to the citizens of our free and open society to whom our government is ultimately accountable.

Although the news organizations involved did not agree to provide panel members, they all agreed to provide qualified personnel to make oral presentations to the panel. The only exception was an individual news organization which felt that its umbrella group should represent it.

The panel met from 6 February through 10 February 1984 at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. The meetings included three days for media and military presentations in open session and two days for panel study and deliberation in closed session. The presentations included those by 25 senior media representatives speaking for 19 news organizations, including umbrella organizations. The chiefs/directors of Public Affairs for the Army, Navy, and Air Force also made major presentations during the open sessions with the USMC, OJCS, and ASD(PA) panel members making informal comments during the closed sessions. The open sessions were covered by about 70 reporters representing nearly 30 news organizations. The schedule of presentations is at Enclosure 3.

The attached panel report is composed of two sections.

1. The Recommendations section, concurred and signed by all panel members.

2. The Comment section, explaining the recommendations and including comments, when appropriate, made by all concerned, to include both written and oral inputs to the committee and by the panel itself. This section is signed by the chairman but was approved unless otherwise indicated by the members of the panel. It is made available to explain the recommendations and to assist, via suggestions, in their implementation.

The panel recommends approval and implementation both in fact and in spirit of the recommendations made in Section I of this report.



Winant Sidle  
Major General, USA, Retired  
Chairman

Enclosure  
Report

## INTRODUCTION

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Media - Military Relations Panel (known as the Sidle Panel) was created at the request of the Chairman, General John W. Vessey, Jr., who asked that I convene a panel of experts to make recommendations to him on, "How do we 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?"

Major General Winant Sidle, USA, Retired, was selected as chairman of this project and asked to assemble a panel composed of media representatives, public affairs elements of the four Military Services, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (OASD(PA)), and operations spokesmen from the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS).

The initial plan, concurred in by CJCS and ASD(PA), was to invite major umbrella media organizations and the Department of Defense organizations to provide members of this panel. The umbrella organizations, such as the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), and the Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA), and their individual member news organizations decided that they would cooperate fully with the panel but would not provide members. The general reason given was that it was inappropriate for media members to serve on a government panel.

This decision, unanimous among the major news media organizations, resulted in a revised plan calling for the non-military membership of the panel to be composed of experienced retired media personnel and representatives of schools of journalism who were experts in military-media relations. The Department of Defense organizations involved agreed to provide members from the outset. Final panel membership is at Enclosure 1.

To provide initial input to the panel for use as a basis for discussion when the panel met, a questionnaire was devised with the concurrence of CJCS and ASD(PA) and mailed to all participants. It was also sent to a number of additional organizations and individuals who had expressed interest and to some who had not but were considered to be experts in the matter. As the result of these mailings, the panel had available 24 written inputs to study prior to meeting. Of these, 16 were from major news organizations or umbrella groups. All inputs are at Enclosure 2. The panel regretted that all who indicated interest could not appear before it, but time did not permit.

Second, Grenada. We realize that Grenada had shown the need to review media-military relations in connection with military operations, but you did not request our assessment of media handling at Grenada and we will not provide it. However, 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.

Finally, the matter of responsibility of the media. Although this is touched on in the report, and there is no doubt that the news organization representatives who appeared before us fully recognized their responsibilities, we feel we should state emphatically that reporters and editors alike must exercise responsibility in covering military operations. As one of the senior editors who appeared before us said, "The media must cover military operations comprehensively, intelligently, and objectively." The American people deserve news coverage of this quality and nothing less. It goes without saying, of course, that the military also has a concurrent responsibility, that of making it possible for the media to provide such coverage.

The members of the panel have also asked me to express their appreciation for being asked to participate in this important study and their hope that our work will be of value to the military, the media, and to the American people.

Finally, the panel considers this covering letter an integral part of our report.

Sincerely,



Winant Sidle  
Major General, USA, Retired  
Chairman

Enclosure  
Report

General John W. Vessey, Jr.  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Pentagon, Room 2E872  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear General Vessey:

As you requested, enclosed are the final report and recommendations of the Sidle Panel, together with pertinent enclosures. The panel is unanimous in its strong belief that implementation of the recommendations, both in fact and in spirit, by the appropriate military authorities will set the stage for arriving at workable solutions for media-military relations in future military operations. We also believe that these solutions will be satisfactory to reasonable members of both the media and the military.

The report has three sections: an introduction, a recommendations section, and a comment section. We adopted this format because, while we were unanimous on the recommendations, there were some differences of opinion on some points in the comments. However, we all agreed that the comments were necessary to help explain the recommendations and that even the points on which we were not unanimous were worthy of consideration as suggestions and background for those who will implement the recommendations, should they be implemented. In any case, the entire panel has formally endorsed the recommendations, while I signed the comments. I should add that, where appropriate, I have mentioned the panel's degree of support in the comments.

The panel asked that I put three points in this letter that were not exactly germane to the report but required some comment on our part.

First, the matter of so-called First Amendment rights. This is an extremely gray area and the panel felt that it was a matter for the legal profession and the courts and that we were not qualified to provide a judgment. We felt justified in setting aside the issue, as we unanimously agreed at the outset 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.



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 23, 1984

NO. 450-84

## STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I am today releasing the final report of the CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel (Sidle Panel).

I have directed the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) to take the necessary steps to implement those portions of the final report which meet the Panel's criteria of providing maximum news media coverage of U.S. military operations "consistent with military security and the safety of U.S. forces."

As an added step, I will form a panel of eminent journalists and former war correspondents to advise me on the best ways to meet these objectives. This group will become a permanent Secretary of Defense Media Advisory Committee. By forming such a committee, I wish to ensure that the media's viewpoint can be expressed in our highest councils on a continuing basis.

I firmly believe that relations between members of the armed forces and members of the press will be greatly enhanced by continued, strengthened, and informed dialogue. As part of instilling a better understanding on our part of the problems and responsibilities of the press in connection with our armed forces in times of crisis or conflict, as well as in peacetime, I have already directed a review of the adequacy of instruction on relations between the press and armed services at all levels of our military educational system.

I greatly appreciate the work done by General Sidle and the members of his panel. It is a necessary first step toward improved understanding by all parties. I believe our News Media Advisory Committee will help us move further and further along that path.

END

APPENDIX

## CHAPTER V

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harry G. Summers, On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>D. W. Scott-Barrett, "The Media and the Armed Services," Military Review 52 (April 1972): 64.

<sup>3</sup>William Kennedy, (Col.), "It Take More Than Talent to Cover a War," Army, July 1978, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Ray E. Hiebert and Carlton E. Spitzer, eds., The Voice of Government (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968), pp. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Captain Brent Baker.

<sup>6</sup>See Army Regulation 380-200, "Armed Forces Censorship" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 13 June 1969) and Department of Defense Directive 5230.70 (with changes 1-3), "Wartime Information Security Program" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1965).

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Captain Brent Baker.

<sup>8</sup>Phil G. Goulding, Confirm or Deny: Informing the People on National Security (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 360.

<sup>9</sup>James Deakin, Straight Stuff: The Reporters, the White House, and the Truth. (New York: Morrow, 1984), p. 93.

<sup>10</sup>Barry Bingham Sr., quoted in "Journalism Under Fire," by William A. Henry III, Time, December 12, 1983, p. 93.

<sup>11</sup>Zechariah Chafee, Jr., Free Speech in the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), p. 566.

analysis of press-military relationships, at the policy-making level, is needed to further increase our knowledge in this area.

Another area that requires further study involves the use of television in reporting conflict. Does the American public want live photographs of future conflicts to be broadcast? What effect will this have, if any, on American foreign policy?

#### Summary

All Americans have a right and an obligation to be kept informed about their military services. The military has an obligation to uphold and protect that right. Although the press and the news media sometimes disagree, lines of communication must be kept open. The military must not fall into the potential trap outlined by Zechariah Chafee:

Let us not in our anxiety to protect ourselves from foreign tyrants initiate some of their worst acts, and sacrifice in the process of national defense the very liberties which we are defending.<sup>11</sup>

Although written in 1941, I think these words are still applicable today.

You cannot hold on to a free press if it behaves irresponsibly. The idea that our mission is so high that no one should question our performance is illogical. The higher the mission, the more responsibly we should carry it out.<sup>10</sup>

#### Shortcomings of the Study

The major weakness of this study is that a relatively small number of correspondents and military officers were interviewed. Due to time constraints, length of interviews, and monetary factors, the study was limited to people assigned to the Pentagon. Editors were not interviewed, and this would have possibly added an interesting dimension to the study. I would recommend that future researchers expand the study to include a larger population from the military and from the news media throughout the United States. I would also include military officers and enlisted soldiers not related to the public affairs specialty.

#### Areas for Future Study

Most research concerning journalist-relationships has involved the political arena. Politicians are good examples of sources and much of what has been studied has focused on this area. I think that more research is needed in other areas of journalist-source relationships. Some possible areas of study would be: 1) the relationships between the news media and police departments, 2) the relationships between the American news media and foreign governments, and 3) the relationships between the press and the American public. This study suggests that further systematic

a newspaperman, he felt stories about him and the Department of Defense were

biased, inaccurate and saturated with controversy and conflict. . . . I had begun to view all reporters as irresponsible enemies . . . the first draft of this book was violently antipress - and was petty and unfair.<sup>8</sup>

I don't think that a condition of enmity is in the best interest of the American public. I view the relationship between the press and the military from the same perspective as James Deakin - it should be critical in nature. He puts this concept into focus.

So for reasons ancient and modern, the critical concept is the most accurate description of the relationship between the news media and the government. Not adversary. Not wrecker. Critic.<sup>9</sup>

The military must understand that the relationship between the press and the military is what it is because of modern technology, news values, structural reasons, and ideological causes. No amount of education or understanding will change this.

On the other hand, I feel that the news media should act responsibly and objectively, and should also exercise good editorial control. If this is not done, and the American public ultimately concludes that the press is not serving our democracy satisfactorily, some of the freedom accorded the press could be taken away. This should not be allowed to happen. Barry Bingham Sr., chief executive officer of the Louisville newspaper, puts this idea into perspective:

would recommend that they be allowed to leave the Pentagon more often, so that they can report on the military more effectively. All of them stated that they didn't get out to military bases and exercises as much as they would like to. I feel that by leaving the Pentagon more often reporters would be able to get another perspective concerning the military that cannot be obtained in the Pentagon. Reporters would have a greater opportunity to interact with soldiers and view military activities on a firsthand and daily basis.

Finally, I think that both the military and the press should take a close look at the relationship that exists between them. I don't believe that it should be an adversarial relationship in the sense of each side viewing the other as the "enemy." Captain Baker recently was involved in a seminar at the Naval War College that included the news media and the press. He stated that it was "the most hostile one (seminar) I've been to since Vietnam . . . and the hostility between the press and the military is increasing."<sup>7</sup> The press and the military must examine why this "hostility" is increasing and whether it best serves the American public.

Phil Goulding also emphasizes this problem from an interesting perspective. He wrote a book about his experience as both Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) and Assistant Secretary from 1965-1969. He delineated some of the problems of dealing with the press and his feelings that, even though he had eighteen years as

a tough look at historical censorship practices to determine their practicality for future military operations. Adjustments must be made. I don't think what is now written can realistically be expected to be implemented in the future.<sup>6</sup> Tactical censorship in combat zones, to prevent the release of information that could jeopardize military operations or threaten American lives, may be required. The military and the news media must decide beforehand how this can reasonably be accomplished. Whether this will be done voluntarily, or enforced by the military, should be decided now. Most important of all, the news media must be given the opportunity to provide input and the military must be willing to listen and adapt.

Fourth, the armed services should assist the news media in educating reporters about the military and military affairs. This is easier said than done. Time is money, and probably not many news organizations would be willing to release reporters for educational purposes for a long period of time. However, reporters who cover the military should be allowed on peacetime exercises as much as possible and should be given the opportunity to become familiar with the military services. Military officers and enlisted soldiers should not expect that as reporters become better informed, that they will stop writing critical stories about the military. This should not happen, and I'm sure it will not happen.

Specifically, concerning Pentagon correspondents, I

The more serious the situation, the greater the need for truth. In short, the American public did not hire a military establishment to tell them bedtime stories.<sup>3</sup>

In accomplishing this, public affairs officers must represent both the press and the military. Most Pentagon correspondents now feel that public affairs officers are most concerned with only telling the military's point of view. Public affairs officers must assist the press, but must not become press agents for the military:

Today we realize that in spite of increased mass communication facilities, it is economically impossible for the news media to do all the work caused by the information explosion - ferreting out all the facts on all fronts and communicating them effectively to all people. Even if there were enough well-trained and dedicated news reporters, researchers, and editors to do this, there would be an increasing need for government information officers.<sup>4</sup>

For public affairs officers to be effective and maintain their credibility with the press, they must be kept informed by their individual services and the Department of Defense. If they are left in the dark, as has been charged during Grenada, they cannot do a good job. This will only hurt the military in the long run.

Third, as the British experience in the Falklands and the United States experience in Grenada have demonstrated, the military and the news media must establish agreed upon guidelines for future conflicts now. The Sidle Commission was a starting point in this area, but more definitive planning must continue. The military cannot simply forget about public affairs planning in the future because of "a lack of time."<sup>5</sup> Planning factors and guidelines should take

"Second, the highest civilian and military officers of the U.S. government should reaffirm that military plans should include planning for press access, in keeping with past traditions. The expertise of government public affairs officers during the planning of recent Grenada military operations could have met the interests of both the military and the press, to everyone's benefit."

Application of the panel's principle should be adopted both in substance and in spirit. This will make it possible better to meet the needs of both the military and the media during future military operations. The following recommendations by the panel are designed to help make this happen. They are primarily general in nature in view of the almost endless number of variations in military operations that could occur. However, the panel believes that they provide the necessary flexibility and broad guidance to cover almost all situations.

#### RECOMMENDATION 1:

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

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

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

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

d. Complete the plan, currently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.

e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

#### RECOMMENDATION 2:

When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should provide for the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary before "full coverage" is feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

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

RECOMMENDATION 4:

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

RECOMMENDATION 5:

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

RECOMMENDATION 6:

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

RECOMMENDATION 7:

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

RECOMMENDATION 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

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

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

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

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

The Panel members fully support the statement of principle and the supporting recommendations listed above and so indicate by their signatures below:

Winant Sidle  
Winant Sidle, Major General, USA, Retired  
Chairman

Brent Baker  
Brent Baker, Captain, USN

Fred C. Lash  
Fred C. Lash, Major, USMC

Keyes Beech  
Keyes Beech

James Major  
James Major, Captain, USN

Scott M. Cutlip  
Scott M. Cutlip

Wendell S. Merick  
Wendell S. Merick

John T. Halbert  
John T. Halbert

Robert O'Brien  
Robert O'Brien, Colonel, USAF  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of  
Defense (Public Affairs)

Billy Hunt  
Billy Hunt

Richard S. Salant  
Richard S. Salant

George Kirschenbauer  
George Kirschenbauer, Colonel, USA

Barry Zorthian  
Barry Zorthian

A. J. Langguth  
A. J. Langguth

## SECTION II:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

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

- a. Review all joint planning documents to assure that JCS guidance in public affairs matters is adequate.
- b. When sending implementing orders to Commanders in Chief in the field, direct that the CINC planners include consideration of public information aspects.
- c. Inform the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) of an impending military operation at the earliest possible time. This information should appropriately come from the Secretary of Defense.
- d. Complete the plan, currently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.
- e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

Comments

1. Under the current system of planning for military operations, provisions exist to include public affairs planning but it is neither mandatory nor certain that current joint planning documents are adequate from a public affairs standpoint. The basic purpose of this recommendation is to help assure that public affairs aspects are considered as soon as possible in the planning cycle for any appropriate military operation and that the public affairs planning guidance is adequate.

2. The panel was unanimous in feeling that every step should be taken to ensure public affairs participation in planning and/or review at every appropriate level. Recommendations 1a, b, and d are designed to assist in implementing this consideration.

3. Panel discussions indicated that it is difficult to determine in advance in all cases when public affairs planning should be included. The panel felt that the best procedure would be to include such planning if there were even a remote chance it would be needed. For example, a strictly covert operation, such as the Son Tay raid in North Vietnam, still requires addressing public affairs considerations if only to be sure that after action coverage adequately fulfills the obligation to inform the American people. Very small, routine operations might be exceptions.

4. Recommendation 1c is self-explanatory. The ASD(PA), as the principal public affairs advisor to both the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, JCS, must be brought into the planning process as soon as possible. In view of the DOD organization, the panel felt that this should be the responsibility of the Secretary of Defense.

5. We received indications that some commanders take the position that telling something to his public affairs officer is tantamount to telling it to the media. All members of the panel, including its public affairs officers decried this tendency and pointed out that a public affairs specialist is the least likely to release material prematurely to the media. Although the panel did not consider the matter officially, there is no doubt that public affairs officers are just as dedicated to maintaining military security as are operations officers and must know what is going on in a command if they are to do their job!

#### RECOMMENDATION 2:

When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should support the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary.

#### Comments

1. Media representatives appearing before the panel were unanimous in being opposed to pools in general. However, they all also agreed that they would cooperate in pooling agreements if that were necessary for them to obtain early access to an operation.

2. The media representatives generally felt that DOD should select the organizations to participate in pools, and the organizations should select the individual reporters. (See Recommendation 3.)

3. The media were unanimous in requesting that pools be terminated as soon as possible and "full coverage" allowed. "Full coverage" appeared to be a relative term, and some agreed that even this might be limited in cases where security, logistics, and the size of the operation created limitations that would not permit any and all bona fide reporters to cover an event. The panel felt that any limitations would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis but agreed that maximum possible coverage should be permitted.

4. The media agreed that prior notification of a pooling organization should be as close to H-Hour as possible to minimize the possibility of a story breaking too soon, especially if speculative stories about the operation should appear in media not in the pool or be initiated by one of their reporters not privy to the pool. This would require a pool media decision as to whether to break the story early, despite the embargo on such a break that is inherent in early notification for pooling purposes. The media representatives were not in agreement on this matter but did agree generally that they should not release aspects of the story that they had been made aware of during DOD early notification and which did not appear in the stories already out or in preparation; nor should this privy information be used to confirm speculation concerning an operation.

5. In this connection, the media generally did not agree with a view voiced by some members of the panel that, absolutely to guarantee security, pool notification would not be made until the first military personnel had hit the beach or airhead even though advance military preparation could speed the poolers to the site in the least time possible. The panel did not take a position on this, but some felt that carefully planned pool transportation could meet the media's objections in many, possibly most, cases. For example, in remote areas the pool could be assembled in a location close to the operation using overseas correspondent who would not have to travel from the United States. This is a subject worthy of detailed discussion in the military-media meetings proposed in Recommendation 8a.

6. In this connection, the panel recognized that in many areas of the world an established press presence would be encountered by U.S. forces irrespective of a decision as to whether or not a pool would be used. This consideration would have to be included in initial public affairs planning.

7. There was no unanimity among the media representatives as to whether correspondents, pooled or otherwise, should be in the "first wave" or any other precise point in the operation. All did agree that media presence should be as soon as possible and feasible. The panel believes that such timing has to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

8. Neither the media nor the panel agreed on use in a pool of full-time media employees who are not U.S. citizens. The media tended to agree that, if the parent organization considered such employees reliable, they should be allowed to be pool members. Based on public affairs experience in Vietnam, there were many cases where such employees proved entirely reliable; however, some did not. The panel suggests that this has to be another case-by-case situation.

9. There was also a divergence of opinion among the media as to what news organizations should make up a pool, although all agreed that the most important criterion was probably which organizations cover the widest American audience. Several media representatives suggested specific media pools, but, unfortunately, they varied widely. The panel was not in full agreement on this subject either, but did agree that the following types of news organizations should have top priority. The panel further agreed that DoD should take the factors discussed in this paragraph into account when designating news organizations to participate in a pool.

a. Wire services. AP and UPI to have priority. A reporter from each and a photographer from either one should be adequate. In a crash situation where inadequate planning time has been available, a reporter from one wire service and a photographer from the other could provide a two-person pool.

b. Television. A two-person TV pool (one correspondent, one film/sound man) can do the job for a brief time although perhaps minimally. All TV representatives agreed that a three-person team is better and can do more. A panel suggestion that a six-person team (one cameraman, one sound man, and one reporter each from ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN) seemed agreeable to the four networks although the load on the two technicians would be difficult to handle. The panel has no suggestion on this except that TV pool representatives must have high priority with two representatives as the minimum and augmentation to depend on space available. This should be a matter of discussion at the meetings suggested in recommendation 8a. The question of radio participation in pools must also be resolved.

c. News Magazines. One reporter and one color photographer.

d. Daily newspapers. At least one reporter. The panel agreed with newspaper representatives that, although newspapers do use wire service copy and photos, at least one newspaper pooler is needed for the special aspects of newspaper coverage not provided by the wire services. Criteria suggested for use when deciding which newspaper(s) to include in a pool included: Circulation, whether the newspaper has a news service, does the newspaper specialize in military and foreign affairs, and does it cover the Pentagon regularly. There was some agreement among the media representatives that there are probably not more than 8-10 newspapers which should be considered for pooling under these criteria.

10. In addition to the type of embargo necessary when a pooling news agency is notified in advance about a military operation (i.e., nothing to be said about it until it begins) there is another type applicable to some military operations. This second type was used with great success in Vietnam and restricts media accompanying the forces from filing or releasing any information about the progress of the operation until the on-scene commander determines that such release will not impair his security by informing the opposing commander about his objectives. Normally, this is not a problem as general objectives quickly become apparent. In the case of a special objective, there might be some delay in authorizing stories until either the objective is attained or it is obvious the enemy commander knows what it is. In any case, this type of embargo is an option to planners that the media would almost certainly accept as opposed to not having correspondents with the forces from the outset or close to it. The panel did not have a consensus on this matter.

11. Media representatives emphasized the readiness of correspondents to accept, as in the past, the physical dangers inherent in military operations and agreed that the personal security of correspondents should not be a factor in planning media participation in military operations.

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

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

### Comments

1. The panel envisions that in either case the agency would select the individual(s) to be its representatives in the pool. In the case of the accreditation/notification list, there would presumably be several names from each news agency/organization to provide the necessary flexibility. The agency would have provided the names in advance to DoD. In the case of the news agency/organization list, DoD would decide which agencies would be in the pool and the agencies would pick the person(s) desired without reference to a list. There was no agreement as to whether DoD should have approval authority of the individuals named to be pool members. The media representatives were unanimously against such approval as were some members of the panel. However, other panel members believed that in the case of an extremely sensitive operation, DoD should have such authority.

2. There was no agreement among either those who appeared before the panel or among the panel itself on this matter. More in both groups seemed to favor simply establishing a news agency list including wire services, television, news magazines and newspapers, from which to pick when DOD establishes a pool.

3. This particular problem is one that should be resolved in advance of a military operation and should be a subject of discussion in connection with the military-media meetings suggested in Recommendation 8a.

4. This recommendation does not concern the accreditation that would have to be given each correspondent covering an operation, either at first or later, by the senior on-site commander. Traditionally, this accreditation is limited to establishing that the individual is a bona fide reporter (represents an actual media organization).

#### RECOMMENDATION 4:

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

#### Comments

1. The media were in support of this concept as opposed to formal censorship of any type, and all media representatives agreed that their organizations would abide by these ground rules. This arrangement would place a heavy responsibility on the news media to exercise care so as not to inadvertently jeopardize mission security or troop safety.

2. The guidelines/ground rules are envisioned to be similar to those used in Vietnam (a copy at Enclosure 6). Recognizing that each situation will be different, public affairs planners could use the Vietnam rules as a starting point, as they were worked out empirically during Vietnam by public affairs and security personnel and, for the most part, in cooperation with news media on the scene. All media representatives who addressed the issue agreed that the ground rules worked out satisfactorily in Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

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

Comments

1. The military personnel referred to in this recommendation are normally called escorts; however, this term has developed some unfortunate connotations as far as the media are concerned. In any case, the panel's recommendation is designed to provide personnel who, acting as agents of the on-scene commander, will perform such functions as keep the correspondents abreast of the situation; arrange for interviews and briefings; arrange for their transportation to appropriate locations; ensure they are fed and housed, if necessary; and be as helpful as possible consistent with security and troop safety.

2. Almost all of the media representatives agreed that such escorts are desirable, especially at the beginning of an operation, to assist in media coverage. As the operation progresses and the reporters become familiar with what is going on, the media representatives were generally less enthusiastic about this type of assistance.

3. All the media were against escorts if their goal was to try to direct, censor, or slant coverage. However, most agreed that pointing out possible ground rule violations and security problems would be part of the escort's responsibility.

4. The point was made to the panel and the media representatives that escorts were often required in Vietnam, especially after about mid-1968, without many problems arising. One of the major advantages of escorts was making sure the reporters had a full and accurate understanding of the operation being covered.

5. The senior on-scene commander will decide how long escorting should continue after an operation begins.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

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

### Comments

1. Media representatives were unanimous in preferring provision for use of their own communications or using local civilian communications when possible. They were also unanimous, however, in the need for access to military communications if nothing else were available, especially in the opening stages of an operation.

2. Permitting media coverage without providing some sort of filing capability does not make sense unless an embargo is in force.

3. Although not discussed in depth during the panel meetings, communications availability is an obvious factor in determining press pool size. Planners should consider the varying deadlines of the different types of media. For example, newsmagazine reporters usually have more time to file thus permitting courier service as a possible satisfactory solution from their standpoint.

4. There was considerable discussion of the possibility of media-provided satellite uplinks being a future threat to security if technology permits real-time or near real-time copy and film/tape processing. The media representatives felt that such a possibility was not imminent; however, the discussions resulted in Recommendation 3d being included in the report. One panel member made the point that such real-time or near real-time capability has long existed for radio news including the Murrow reporting during World War II.

#### RECOMMENDATION 7:

Planning factors should include provision for intra- and inter-theater transportation support of the media. There was no Panel comment on this matter.

#### RECOMMENDATION 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

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

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

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

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

### Comments

1. The panel became convinced during its meetings with both media and military representatives that any current actual or perceived lack of mutual understanding and cooperation could be largely eliminated through the time-tested vehicle of having reasonable people sit down with reasonable people and discuss their problems. Although some of this has occurred from time to time through the years, there has not been enough, especially in recent years. The panel envisages that these meetings would be between ASD(PA) and/or his representatives and the senior leadership of both media umbrella organizations and individual major news organizations. A number of media representatives appearing before the panel said that they thought the media would be happy to participate in such a program. The program should include use of the Chiefs/Directors of Public Affairs of the Services, some of whom are already doing this.

2. Such meetings would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss problems or potential problems involving future military operations/exercises such as pooling, security and troop safety, accreditation, logistic support, and, most importantly, improving mutual respect, trust, understanding, and cooperation in general.

3. The panel does not exclude any news organizations in this recommendation, but practicality will lead to emphasis on meetings with major organizations. It would be equally useful for commanders in the field and their public affairs officers to conduct similar meetings with local and regional media in their areas, some of which are also underway at this time.

4. Both the panel and the media representatives lauded the efforts underway today to reinsert meaningful public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges. Many officers are sheltered from becoming involved with the news media until they are promoted to certain assignments where they suddenly come face-to-face with the media. If they have not been adequately informed in advance of the mutual

with each other, they sometimes tend to make inadequate decisions concerning media matters. In this connection, several media representatives told the panel they would be, and in some cases have already been, delighted to cooperate in this process by talking to classes and seminars.

5. Several media representatives also were enthusiastic about undertaking an effort to inform their employees about the military, primarily through visits of commanders and other appropriate personnel to their headquarters or elsewhere in their organizations. It was also apparent that some media are concerned with this problem to the point that they are taking an introspective look at their relations not only with the military but other institutions.

#### General Comments:

1. The panel agreed that public affairs planning for military operations involving allied forces should also consider making plans flexible enough to cover allied media participation, even in pools in some cases.

2. It was pointed out to the panel and should be noted that planners may also have to consider the desires of U.S. Ambassadors and their country teams when operations take place in friendly foreign countries. Some of these problems can, of course, be handled by the commanders and senior public affairs personnel on the scene, but they should be alerted to them in advance.

3. The media representatives all agreed that U.S. media should have first priority in covering U.S. military operations. The panel generally agreed that this must be handled on a case-by-case basis, especially when allied forces are involved.

#### Final Comment:

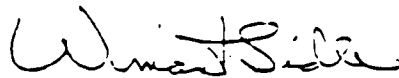
An adversarial -- perhaps politely critical would be a better term -- relationship between the media and the government, including the military, is healthy and helps guarantee that both institutions do a good job. However, this relationship must not become antagonistic -- an "us versus them" relationship. The appropriate media role in relation to the government has been summarized aptly as being neither that of a lap dog nor an attack dog but, rather, a watch dog. Mutual antagonism and distrust are not in the best interests of the media, the military, or the American people.

In the final analysis, no statement of principles, policies, or procedures, no matter how carefully crafted, can guarantee the desired results because they have to be carried out by people -- the people in the military and the people

in the media. So, it is the good will of the people involved, their spirit, their genuine efforts to do the job for the benefit of the United States, on which a civil and fruitful relationship hinges.

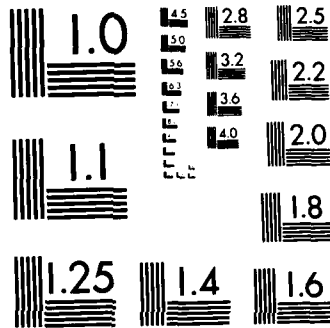
The panel believes that, if its recommendations are adopted, and the people involved are infused with the proper spirit, the twin imperatives of genuine mission security/troop safety on the one hand and a free flow of information to the American public on the other will be achieved.

In other words, the optimum solution to ensure proper media coverage of military operations will be to have the military -- represented by competent, professional public affairs personnel and commanders who understand media problems -- working with the media -- represented by competent, professional reporters and editors who understand military problems -- in a nonantagonistic atmosphere. The panel urges both institutions to adopt this philosophy and make it work.



Winant Sidle  
Major General, USA, Retired  
Chairman





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NBS-1963-A

Membership of CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel (Sidle Panel)

Winant Sidle, Major General, USA-Ret. and Director, Public Relations  
Martin Marietta Orlando Aerospace, Chairman

Captain Brent Baker, USN, Assistant Chief of Information (Operations),  
Department of the Navy

Keyes Beech, retired war correspondent, bureau chief, and Pulitzer  
Prize winner

Scott M. Cutlip, former Dean, Henry W. Grady School of Journalism  
and Mass Communication, University of Georgia

John T. Halbert, Assistant Director of Public Affairs, Department  
of the Air Force

Billy Hunt, Chief Plans Officer, Office, Chief of Public Affairs,  
Department of Army

Colonel George Kirschenbauer, USA, J-3 Office, Organization of the  
JCS

A. J. (Jack) Langguth, Professor of Journalism and Chairman of Print  
Classes, University of Southern California  
School of Journalism; retired war correspondent  
and bureau chief

Major Fred C. Lash, USMC, Chief, Media Branch, Office, Director of  
Public Affairs, United States Marine Corps

Captain James Major, USN, J-3 Office, Organization of the JCS

Wendell S. (Bud) Merick, retired war correspondent and bureau chief

Colonel Robert O'Brien, USAF, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(Public Affairs)

Richard S. Salant, President and CEO, National News Council; former  
Vice President, News, Columbia Broadcasting  
System

Barry Zorthian, Senior Vice President, Gray and Co.; former Vice  
President, TIME Inc., and Chief, Joint US  
Public Affairs Office, Saigon

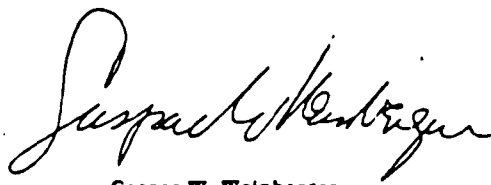
# PRINCIPLES

## OF INFORMATION

**I**t is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and members representing the press, radio and television may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered responsively and as rapidly as possible. In carrying out this policy, the following Principles of Information will apply:

- Information will be made fully and readily available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.
- A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents.
- Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.
- Information will only be withheld when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.
- The Department's obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination within the Department and with other government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public: propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public affairs programs.

*The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) has the primary responsibility for carrying out this commitment.*



Caspar W. Weinberger  
Secretary of Defense



News Briefing by  
Mr. Michael I. Burch, ASD/PA  
Thursday, August 23, 1984 - 12:30 PM

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Mr. Burch: The Secretary of Defense is today releasing the final report of the Sidle Commission, which had the formal title of Military Media Relations Panel. And he has directed me to take the necessary steps to implement those portions of the final report which meet the panel's criteria of providing maximum news coverage of U.S. military operations consistent with military security and the safety of U.S. forces. The Secretary firmly believes that relations between members of the Armed Forces and members of the press would be greatly enhanced by continued, strengthened and informed dialogue.

As part of instilling better understanding on our part of problems and responsibilities of the press in connection with our Armed Forces in times of crisis or conflict, as well as in peacetime, he directed a review of the adequacy of instruction on relations between the press and armed services at all levels of our military educational system.

The Secretary wanted me to express his appreciation for the work done by General Sidle and the members of his panel and by General Vessey. He feels it is a necessary first step towards improved understanding by all parties. And he further believes that a news advisory committee which he will establish will help us move further and further along this path of mutual understanding.

I'm available for your questions.

Q: (Inaudible)

A: Not formally. He has had discussion with several former war correspondents and he would like their participation as private citizens to draw on their experience in covering military conflicts around the world, but he doesn't want them to represent the past or present news organizations.

Q: The wording in that second graph of the statement is kind of curious. "Those portions of the final report which meet the panel's criteria of providing", are there other portions of the final report...

A: What that means is the panel went into a great deal of detail on the type of equipment that my public relations or public affairs offices in the field would need such as radio gear and transportation. Those things are not mine to implement. I've got to work with the specified, unified commanders to see if I can get that type of equipment for our forces.

Q: Are there any of the recommendations then which the Secretary has specifically said he does not agree with and will not implement?

A: We agree with all.

Q: Can you tick off exactly what you're doing as to what this report recommends? What are you doing?

A: I guess this would sort of be a summary of what we have already done and what we plan to do to implement this report and the list would go like this:

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As Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, I have begun planning for the establishment of a national media pool which would be in existence at all times and could be called upon on short notice. We're developing a contingency accreditation system which will go into effect during military operations. I've discussed this with the public affairs officers of the various commanders-in-chiefs of the unified and specified commands during a recent meeting here in the Pentagon. There are some peculiarities for their specific region, but we hope to come up with some sort of workable accreditation system.

Further, we are establishing general ground rules for use in covering military operations, that's an item we're still working on. I have written to the Commandants of all of the service schools urging greater emphasis on public affairs awareness training in their various school curriculum. I have met, as I said earlier, with the unified and specified command public affairs officers to discuss all aspects of contingency public affairs planning with particular emphasis on facility needs of media during operations. In other words, do you have a way to file your material, do we just even have the basics for you in order for you to do your job and to provide for your needs.

I am now coordinating a directive which will formalize many of the planning initiatives outlined in the Sidle report. I'm working with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and his staff to plan for realistic media participation in upcoming major exercises to ensure better understanding between journalists and operational commanders. In other words, we shouldn't have to wait for an actual operation to know how to work with each other and to understand what our needs are. I actually want to exercise that.

Further, the joint operations planning manual has been changed to require the supported commanders-in-chiefs public affairs offices to provide proposed public affairs guidance for specific operations, contingencies, upon receipt of the JCS warning order message. Prior to this we had to ask for that type of planning to take place. Now it will be done automatically.

Q: Could you translate that last one into English?

A: What that means is there is a joint operations planning manual that's used by the JCS and the CINCs. It says that public affairs planning will start at the time of the warning order issued by the JCS.

Q: So you're getting your oar in earlier in the process?

A: That is correct.

Q: If I want to go to Central America, can I go there?

A: Sure. The next airplane leaves -- just tell me where you want to go in Central America.

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A: Let me continue. I've got three other items. You asked for it.

Provided in the new warning order message will be a public affairs planning checklist that requires consideration of the following factors: overall public affairs policy, a statement or response to query with supporting questions and answers, plans for troop and family information, security review, daily unclassified operation summaries -- this is for press briefing purposes both here and on the scene -- and audio-visual coverage. Also included are media support factors such as theater access, pool composition if pools are necessary, ground rules, transportation, accreditation and other support requirements.

Additionally, the Joint Chiefs of Staffs crisis management documents have been changed to provide for the activation by the Director of the Joint Staff of a public affairs response cell within the JCS during exercises and contingencies. The cell will consist of representatives from my staff, the services, the supported commanders and chiefs, public affairs staff if that's necessary, and the joint staff. And last, the same documents that were changed to include a public affairs response cell were drafted to include the Sidle panel recommendations as part of the cell's functions and responsibilities. For example: the cell will be responsible for informing me of the contingency and insuring that there is parallel public affairs and operational planning. The public affairs cell will also assist the supported commanders-in-chiefs public affairs staffs, to insure that support is provided for a joint information bureau establishment. Also if necessary, intra- and inter-theater transportation. And also such things as field communication support.

To make sure that this all works we plan to exercise this public affairs response cell during appropriate JCS exercises.

Those are the items that we have been working on to implement the panel's recommendations and I think we're well on our way.

Q: Sounds as though prior to this panel's recommendations and prior to Grenada, there was virtually no public affairs participation in the way the military was operating and very little forethought to how they were going to deal with the press.

A: Let me put it this way. There was not sufficient public affairs awareness on the part of commanders and the planning staffs. There was always consideration of public affairs, but it was not formalized and at times I think public affairs was not brought in very early in the problem.

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Q: I'd like to ask you to define security review. Is that a nice word for censorship, or what is this?

A: What it means is the commander and the spokesman must be aware of the material that they put out and it must go through a security review process. Nowhere in this report, nor do we contemplate on our own, return to censorship.

Q: Mike, it seems to me that you could implement all of the things that you've ticked off and still have another Grenada operation in which people went through all of their checklists and still decided that there would be no media allowed on the island.

A: How the press is to operate must be decided on a case by case basis. If there is an operation, and let's even work outside of Grenada, such as Son Tay, Entebbe, Desert 1, operations of that type, the press would have to be handled differently than in let's say a real world Team Spirit type of contingency. So you still have to make a decision on a case by case basis. But at least now we start public affairs planning earlier and once the decision is made to include the media we can meet your needs better.

Q: Could you rehash for us exactly in Grenada why the decision to exclude reporters was made and who made it?

A: I think that there's enough on the record of that. The Sidle Commission, as he says in his report, did not consider Grenada. What we're talking about here is how we handle the press in future military operations to ensure the security of the mission and provide for the safety of our forces. I think General Sidle stated it very well in his letter to General Vessey. He says that "We realize that Grenada had shown the need to review military media relations in connection with military operations. But that you did not request an assessment of media handling in Grenada and we will not provide it. However, we do feel that had our recommendation been in place and fully considered at the time of Grenada, there might have been no need to create our panel."

Q: At the time of Grenada, Secretary Weinberger standing there said, "I wouldn't dream of overruling our operational commanders." Is that still his view, that if an operational commander says no press, he wouldn't dream of overruling him?

A: The Secretary of Defense has no problem with overruling an operational commander depending on what that commander's recommendation is. I have known many instances where he has overruled operational commanders.

Q: Is the Secretary satisfied with how the press was handled in Grenada?

A: The Secretary and I have discussed this at length, and given the same circumstances and the short amount of planning time and given that these mechanisms were not in place, he felt that he had no other choice but then to support the recommendations of his commanders.

Q: To exclude?

A: In the context which I've given it, given the same set of circumstances, and given that we didn't have these mechanisms in place, he would have to once again accept the recommendation. This weighs very heavily on him. Keep in mind that the first phases of that operation, the first hour, even through the first day were essentially a rescue mission. And given that same set of circumstances, I don't believe the press could be taken along during that first phase. We may be able to alert you in the future, -- the pool -- get you prepositioned so that you can cover the story earlier, but no commander is ever going to want you to take the seat of a soldier or to take up the space of a box of ammo.

Q: Are you indicating that if Grenada were to happen tomorrow that it might not happen very differently than it did last October?

A: One, we don't foresee exactly this type of operation occurring again. You have to make your decision on a case-by-case basis.

Q: You're saying under these mechanisms you'd get under Grenada earlier but not immediately, is that right?

A: More or less. What I'm saying is we tend to, and I'll restate it perhaps slightly differently, that the first phases of that operation was a rescue mission to protect the lives of 1,000 American students and Grenadan officials who had been imprisoned. In that regard it was little different than other rescue missions that we have participated in. Had these mechanisms been in place, we may have been able to have alerted a select pool to assist you in moving into position to cover the story sooner. But I must emphasize that the decisions have to be made on a case by case basis. The most important thing is the security of the mission and the safety of the lives of our force.

Q: This pool will be what, a standby pool, ready to go in and cover stories?

A: Yes, we're still trying to work out a good mechanism and a fair mechanism for establishing that but we think with your cooperation we'll be able to do it.

Q: As far as this Administration is concerned in the building, there is no apology, no need to look back at Grenada and say we didn't exactly do that the way we're terribly proud of. You're putting that behind you, what's done is done --

A: I think that's the best way to look at it.

Q: Will the press itself decide as to who's in this pool? Will this be selected by the Pentagon?

A: It will more or less be selected by us. There will be some consultation, but the final decisions are ours. Again, I must emphasize the need for security of the mission and the safety of our forces. We must be able to work with people and news organizations who respect those two very important criteria.

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Q: How will this mechanism be set up?

A: I don't know at this point. We're working on it.

Q: How large do you expect this pool would be?

A: A lot would depend on the actual mission and the number of seats or the amount of transport that's available. I don't know at this point. I think what you may have for any particular operation, it could be something as small as a three or four man pool or perhaps it could be enlarged to 12 to 15 men. Transportation becomes a problem. Obviously, if it's a small operation and seats are a problem, it has to be smaller.

Q: I meant the readiness pool as opposed to people who would actually --

A: We're working on that. We're trying to take into consideration the needs of the wire services, the needs of dailies, the needs of weekly magazines and the needs of electronic media -- radio and television.

Q: Would you also try not to do the elitest type thing that Catto did. There are some of us who don't have great circulations and great names like the Post or the Times or anything like that. But we're equally interested in what goes on over here. It would be nice to be considered for something like this.

A: Well, I agree with you, Hugh. We can discuss what your individual needs are, but I take your role as essentially being one of a freelancer. I realize you're on a retainer for several different publications.

Q: No, I'm --

A: Well you work at night for the Post and you work for the Economist and you --

Q: Doesn't everybody?

A: Well, Jerry Seib doesn't. No, I want to hear your concerns, but obviously you can't all go. But if you're a pool, and I hope everybody would abide by the pool rules and we not have some of the experiences that we had in Grenada, people wouldn't share their notebooks, that you'd still have access to material on a timely basis in order so that you can also earn a living.

Q: The question of going on exercises. Is it the Pentagon's position that the Pentagon has say over who goes and who doesn't?

A: We would still have regular exercise coverage like we do for Reforger.

Q: The reason I ask that is because I recently was turned down to go on a trip like that by a foreign government, not by the Pentagon, so I'm told. I just wondered what kind of control you mean to exercise on that kind of selection.

A: Well we already exercise some control over transportation to an exercise like Reforger. There are a limited number of seats. However, if you make your own way, let's say to Europe, for Reforger or Crested Cap or some of the other exercises, you could be accredited there on the scene. You can still cover the operation. But I only have a limited number of seats. So obviously not everybody can go.

Q: The host government in effect can dictate what reporters go and not go?

A: I can't speak for other governments, but I in effect accept recommendations of field commanders, of people who they say are interested in covering a certain exercise. Because certainly a reporter in Fayetteville, North Carolina, wants to cover the story of his airlift unit or his airborne unit moving out. That's a good local story. I have to weigh that against the needs of the national media. And let's say I only have 20-25 seats on an airplane, I then issue invitations to go. That doesn't prevent you in most instances from going on your own and being accredited over there.

Q: To follow that up. On a combined exercise, is the Department's position that if a host government says no to press coverage that the Department will accede to that?

A: If that's a sovereign nation and that's one of the problems that may confront us in future operations. We also have to worry about the sovereignty of a nation and what their rules are concerning press.

Q: Have members of the advisory group accepted appointment to it? Have any?

A: Not all. The Secretary of Defense had consultations with a small group of former war correspondents that he has been in contact with. He's even had them to the Pentagon for a meeting.

Q: Can you tell us who they are?

A: At this point, I would rather not because he hasn't been back in touch with all of them. He's been trying to reach them. Many of them are on vacation this time of year. Some of them are covering the convention or have other assignments. I'll be prepared to discuss them later. But anyway, he has met informally with a group of former war correspondents, again acting as private individuals and not representing their former or current news organizations and they provided him some good insight on the needs of the media in future military operations.

Q: One other question if I may is how can you advise the Secretary of Defense on his handling of the media and divorce yourself from your own organization?

A: Obviously, the final decision rests with the Secretary of Defense.

Q: It rests with the organization, doesn't it?

A: Well, yes, but the Secretary can dictate a national policy on how an operation is covered because he --

Q: No, I'm talking about, I'm trying to get to the point of whether you're involved in a dicey thing. I think Kennedy tried this in 1962, and I'm not sure it worked.

A: Some of these individuals are retired.

Q: We're getting somewhere now.

A: Some of them are still on the payroll of their news organization, but less active than they were when they were war correspondents. Others are working journalists -- some of them are your colleagues. At this point, I just don't want to say who they are. It has to be an individual decision for them to accept and once they accept then I'll make an announcement.

Q: Can we return to the issue and recommendation for again, of the voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military. What are we talking about there? That's the censorship issue.

A: Not necessarily. What we're talking about: If, as a member of the national pool, we alert you that an operation is about to get under way we would expect that you would not file a story until the embargo is lifted and you would keep our confidence. In other words, not blow it or jeopardize the life of someone. That would be one of the ground rules. Second, some of the ground rules that we may establish on covering the military exercise are an actual contingency, would be those items that would give aid and comfort to the enemy. We wouldn't impose censorship, but we would ask you not to report on certain things that would give intelligence to the other side.

Q: (inaudible)

A: Well, we could go back to some of the ground rules that were laid out in Vietnam where there was not censorship. Small unit troop strength, advance notice of a move or an operation, types of equipment that the unit might have that the enemy may not have knowledge of. These things can be worked out fairly simply. There have been books and books written on war correspondents, war coverage.

Q: Is it conceivable that this pool would cover an operation such as Grenada currently?

A: No, no, even membership in the pool would rotate. Obviously, you can't be ready at all times. Any particular set of news people might have to make themselves available for a month or perhaps two months and then it would go to another organization, other individuals. In accepting membership on this pool you have to give us certain assurance that you're available should there be a contingency during that time period. You can't have your vacation at the same time.

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Q: But I mean once that pool covered an operation, would that be then considered as policy that that would be it, that would be the coverage of that operation? No other reporters would subsequently be moved in?

A: No, no. Of course not. The pool is only for the very early phases of the operation when we must maintain mission security and the safety of our forces. Once the commanders can determine that they can handle increased numbers of reporters, it can be wide open. What we're talking about here is giving you better access to the early phases of the operation.

Q: You said, I thought that you, the Defense Department, would more or less have final say in the makeup of this national contingency pool or whatever it's called. Does that mean final say in which organizations will be included or which individuals from those organizations will participate?

A: I would say which organizations. But I could also say we might be able to reject an individual if he's not physically capable.

Q: What about morally objectionable, some reporters fall into that category. (laughter)

A: That has not entered into our thought process at all -- and I don't want to name names, that --

Q: I can envision reporters from David Martin's organization you wouldn't want to take.

A: If somebody shows up in my office ready to be blindfolded and he's got a broken leg and just can't stand the rigors of it, he can't go. He can't in any way jeopardize the operation.

Q: I didn't understand the question before. But do you have a guess yet about when the pool of accredited people might be formed?

A: No, I don't, but we're working on it very quickly. I just don't want to be pinned to a date.

Q: Later this year?

Q: Before Nicaragua? (laughter)

A: Yes, later this year.

Q: People might be misled by this term "national contingency pool", you're talking generally about Washington correspondents as opposed to someone from Keokuk, Iowa, someone who's military oriented?

A: Generally a national pool, somebody that I can have more or less day to day contact with and somebody who is available to me so that I can supply you with transportation on a short notice. Most major news organizations are represented in some way or another here in Washington, D.C. This has gotten to be sort of the media capitol of the United States, if not the world. So you're all represented in one way or another here. I can assemble the pool here, the briefing on the operation could take place here, I might blindfold you, turn you around three times, take you to Andrews, and off you go. I also want to exercise that. I think that's necessary --

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Q: Contingency accreditation system for military operations, I don't know what that means.

A: What it means is in Grenada about 900 people showed up down there claiming to be newsmen -- showed up in Barbados. We did a rapid accreditation process and found that there were actually 400 card carrying journalist people who could legitimately claim to be news people. That's a time consuming process. It really is an unfair process to ask a public affairs officer to try to do that in the field when he doesn't have a telephone, he has no way of verifying credentials. If there is some sort of accreditation system which we could adopt, which all of our specified and unified commands can live with and recognize, then we would like to put it in place.

Q: You used to have that around here.

A: That's right.

Q: You're talking about going back to that then.

A: Maybe a better system.

Q: How is it better?

A: That accreditation system, we'd have to go back into the books, I think we finally did away with in the late years of Vietnam. But it was primarily set up so you could cover Southeast Asia. We're talking about being able to cover us world wide.

Q: On the contrary, there's been an accreditation system here from World War II until it was abolished whenever it was abolished. I don't remember that, but it wasn't set up for Vietnam. I remember Officer Charlie Hinkel sending me a letter in Korea telling me I had to be accredited to this place and I wrote back and said General McArthur has accredited me, I assume this disposes of the matter. I never heard from him again.

A: Would you like to hear where I was during the Korean War, Charlie?

Q: No, but that was not the purpose. The purpose was you had accreditation all, yeah, I know you were still in the womb, but --

A: There's been off and on various systems of accreditation, but it was refined so people could leave here and be recognized by MACV and the South Korean government so that you could cover Southeast Asia. I agree that there was an accreditation system following World War II up through Korea --

Q: Oh, no, no, no. There was always one. Martha Hollar did nothing else for years but file -- you had to be accredited to go cover Reforger, for gosh sakes. And suddenly it dawned on people that the Defense Department had no right to decide what reporter could go anywhere. And so they abolished it. Believe me.

A: Well, one, the panel recommended and we feel that it's something that's worth looking into and seeing if we can come up with a system to speed this process. The needs of the media have changed since even the Korean War and even since Vietnam. You

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last week. But there was no thought given to the timing of it. I imagine that there are some people in the White House who would just as soon it not come out today. I'm only imagining that.

Q: Will you take another question for the historical record? Did General Sidle come up with anything whatsoever that was not already in your own public affairs documents somewhere throughout this vast enterprise?

A: Yes. The idea of the national pool, I was not convinced would work. I have been in this building a long time. I participated in various phases of Vietnam and I have much the same memory as you did that an accreditation system got out of hand. But I think that we have to, given the speed with which the press can transport itself to various areas of the world and in fact maybe even be there before our own forces are, that it's something we have to work on and try to make work.

Q: I'm sorry Mike, what I'm asking you is -- I don't know what you call them -- but let's say operations annex, is there anything Sidle has recommended that wasn't already a matter of policy in this building but overlooked?

A: Yes, I think there were several things. One was the establishment of this public affairs response cell. We haven't done that in the past. Whenever I put people down in the tank or in the JCS area during an operation or a time of crisis it was always sort of done well, it's I'm not able to handle it all down here, I'm not getting enough information, I need to supply the JCS with some people to assist them. Then we would decide to establish such a team.

Q: But did he recommend that?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: Okay, I just wondered if --

A: That's one example. There are several others of just mechanisms that weren't formally in place.

Q: -- members of the pool, given their organizations -- upcoming operation. Just the fact that they're being alerted --

A: That's why we need to exercise it and you won't know whether it's real world or not. We'll see if the system can work and we can establish some trust between each other. It's for your benefit, it's for the public's benefit. And ours that we learn how to work together and that we do have some trust in each other. But I think after a couple of exercises, we'll have a better idea if this thing's going to work.

Q: Can I just ask you one more thing. I'm just a bit confused about the individuals of the -- news organizations. If you have an operation to announce, are you going to call Katharine Graham or call the head of UPI or whatever, and allow them to pick somebody, or are you going to go to the individuals within the organizations?

A: No, no. We'll work out this pool with the news organizations but then they predesignate a person and probably a backup. We don't have all the mechanics --

Q: Then you would involve the, you would advise the individuals.

A: Most likely.

Thank you.

END

12.

Q: Okay. And how would you know other than watching what appeared on the air or reading what appeared in the newspapers or on the wires, how would you know?

A: Specifically at this point I don't know, but it's something that we need to come to grips with. Television gives us a great deal of problem in this. Everybody talks about World War II and the D-Day invasion and how that was one of the best kept secrets. It was kept in many parts, one, because we had censorship, we can't return to that; and two, the military controlled all the transmission facilities. You had no way of filing material. Now you all have your own ham radios or you can take ham radio operators under contract to you to get your material out. You've got earth stations that can transmit by way of satellites. We have no control over those. So we've got to find some way of working together to handle this new medium.

Q: How can you do that without monitoring what they send back? You can't.

A: I don't know at this point. I can't answer that.

Q: Have you initiated, had discussions, with any news organization heads yet about forming this pool? Have you contacted...

A: I have talked informally to management representatives of various news organizations. I've been doing that on my own since I took this job. I've had regular meetings with bureau chiefs of the networks. I have talked to representatives of the major newspapers and wire services informally in my office, in their offices, and during even panel discussions. This is a topic that has taken an awful lot of my time since I came to this job.

Q: How about Friedheim, did you talk to him?

A: Yes, I get regular notes from Jerry. I talk to him on the phone and he and I spent some time discussing this in a panel that we participated in at the University of Missouri several months ago.

Q: Why did it take so long for this report to emerge when apparently it was done several months ago?

A: The panel met from 6-10 February. General Sidle finally transmitted his report and comments to General Vessey in late April. General Vessey reviewed it from April and sent it to the Secretary of Defense on the 6th of June. The Secretary has been going through the report, discussing it with me. He has also sought the advice and counsel of others who have experience in covering conflicts and here it is today.

Q: Why on the same day the President makes his acceptance speech?

A: There was nothing particularly magic about today and no thought really given to trying to make some other event overshadow it. That was not our intention at all. I get queries daily from news organizations, particularly the networks and organizations that represent the media collectively on when is the report coming out, why is it taking so long. It was ready to go and I've certainly spent more than enough time on this podium today. I would rather have gone into next week or even been released, had it been ready,

MORE

are now able to file material faster. You're able to get to various places in the world sometimes faster than our Armed Forces can get there. We need to be able to have some public affairs officer in the field be able to recognize you as a legitimate member of a news organization, and not some strap hanger or soldier of fortune or KGB agent, I guess.

Q: Are you going to accredit everybody who covers the Defense Department is what it's going to come down to?

A: And more probably.

Q: You said you'd like to exercise this group. In other words, you would call some members of the pool and say there's a contingency, be here at 8:00 o'clock tonight and they wouldn't know if this is --

A: That's right. You wouldn't know if it was real world or just a test.

Q: You mean they'd go fly somewhere?

A: Possibly. I may tie it to let's say an Army ERDE (Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise) exercise.

Q: One of the things in this panel they talked about was the immediate filing the TV can do, sending satellite pictures and that was a concern. In other words, how do you do a security review nowadays with this technology?

A: Right now about all I can do is establish a set of ground rules of the type of material that should be transmitted. That doesn't mean what is finally on the air, but there has to be some responsibility of the media if they're using a satellite system to ensure that that material that's moved to the satellite can't be intercepted either. In other words, we're putting a great deal of trust in your organizations to help us maintain security.

Q: Do you follow the compliance with the ground rules just by what appears on the air or what gets transmitted back?

A: No, we would have to go by what's transmitted back.

Q: So you in other words would monitor the reports from the field to make sure that all of your security ground rules were being complied with?

A: I don't know quite how we would do that. But obviously if you move something from an earth station up through a satellite that can be intercepted. It would be no different than you --

Q: What's the difference between that and censorship? Not using censorship necessarily in a purjorative term but it seems to me that you're basically talking about a system in which before, --

A: Let's put it this way. If your organization does anything that jeopardizes the security of the mission and endangers the lives of the American servicemen and women, your accreditation would be pulled and we would not give you any more access to our units and commanders.

MORE

Helm, Louis M. Brigadier General, United States Army Reserve. Deputy Chief of Public Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Army.

Hunt, Billy F. Chief, Plans. Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Army.

MacNab, Craig. Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army. Action Officer, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Media Relations Branch, Department of the Army.

Martin, David C. Pentagon Correspondent, CBS News. Interview, 27 March 1985.

Trautman, Robert. Defense Correspondent, Reuters News Service. Interview, 25 March 1985.

Willenson, Kim. National Security Correspondent, Newsweek. Interview, 23 March 1985.

## SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS

1. What is your full name and job title?
2. How long have you been in your present job?
3. What is your journalistic background and training? Where did you go to school and what did you major in?
4. What is your military experience, if any?
5. Have you ever been in a war zone?
6. What is your experience in dealing with journalists/public affairs officers?
- \*7. Do you believe public affairs officers try to mislead the news media?
- \*8. How useful are public affairs officers as news sources?
9. Should the government be allowed to use wartime censorship?
10. With the state of modern communications and technology, is censorship feasible in the future?
- \*11. What restrictions, if any, are acceptable to you when reporting on a military operation?
12. Should military correspondents be "specialists" or "generalists"?
13. What is your overall reaction to the Sidle Commission report?
14. Please respond to each of the specific recommendations of the Sidle Commission report (see Appendix A).
15. How would you characterize current press-military relationships?
16. Do you see any problems with the current relationship?
17. How should the press and the military interact in our society to best serve the American public?
18. What, in your view, caused the military to exclude press from Grenada?

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\*Directed only to Pentagon correspondents.

19. Is a press exclusion likely to occur during future military operations?
20. What effect has modern communications and technology had on press-military relationships?
21. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

**END**

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