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MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN PEACE OPERATIONS

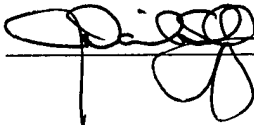
JOINT DOCTRINE AND THE EVOLVING MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

by

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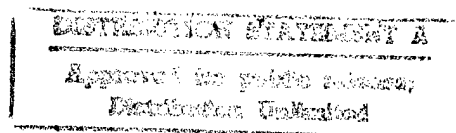
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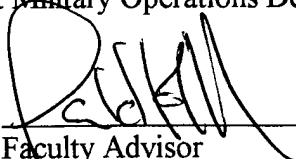
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ABSTRACT

Because of the public and political nature of peace operations, it has become essential for the commander to make effective operational use of the mass media in order to achieve his objectives. To do so, the operational commander and his staff must have a thorough understanding of the media's historical and potential role in military operations, an appreciation for the operational value of media reporting and, most important of all, sufficient focused guidance to permit them to integrate media management into operational plans.

Although significant progress has been made in developing a good working relationship between the media and the military, much work remains to be done. Legal precedent and joint doctrine compel the military to provide access to the media, but the existing joint doctrine hierarchy does not adequately address the means by which the commander manages the media to best operational effect in peace operations. Available doctrine largely treats the media as an entity the military must "survive".

Joint doctrine for media management must answer the operational commander's concerns regarding operational security, bad press, and mission interference due to the media's presence in theater. Furthermore, it must outline the operational contribution of the media to satisfaction of the six principles of Military Operations Other Than War as they apply to peace operations. Finally, joint guidance for media management must provide sufficient practical guidance to permit the commander and his staff to integrate the media challenge into operational plans.

The commander in peace operations cannot afford to rely upon ingenuity and upon selective applications of lessons learned in an effort to minimize his public affairs losses and limit damage to his mission. He needs thoughtful, comprehensive doctrine which recognizes the media's presence as an operational asset and articulates the means to employ that asset to best advantage.

Public affairs, including media reporting, influences public opinion and may ultimately be a principle [sic] factor in the success or failure of the operation.

- Joint Pub 3-07 (Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War)¹

Peace operations are "carried out...under the full glare of public scrutiny."² Because of the very public nature of these proceedings, it has become essential for the commander to make effective operational use of the most powerful of public weapons: the mass media. In order to effectively manage this aspect of the peace operation, the operational commander and his staff must have a thorough understanding of the media's historical and potential role in military operations, an appreciation for the operational value of media reporting and, most important of all, sufficient focused guidance to permit them to integrate media management into operational plans. This paper will examine the evolving relationship between the media and the military, discussing in turn the legal precedent for media access to military operations and legal objections to such access. That discussion will provide the requisite background for an examination of the shortfalls in the joint doctrine hierarchy in support of media management in peace operations. Finally, the paper will offer recommendations regarding the organization and content of an improved joint guide to media management.

The Evolving Military-Media Relationship

Never had an enemy a better corps of spies than our army carries along, paid, transported, and fed by the United States.

- General William T. Sherman, Union Army, on the Civil War press.³

I was honest with [the press] and they never violated my trust.

- BGEN R. F. Rokosz, U.S. Army, discussing the media personnel who accompanied his Desert Storm brigade⁴

The media and the military have been working together since the earliest days of the Republic; whether it be Matthew Brady photographing Civil War battlefields, Ernie Pyle

describing World War II Europe, or Peter Arnett of CNN reporting "live from Baghdad" during the Persian Gulf War, each journalist, for better or worse, has brought his own perspective to the story of U.S. military operations.

The media remain anathema to a segment of U.S. military officers who grew up professionally during the Vietnam era and formed their estimation of the media's integrity based on press reports and television news from that war. In similar fashion, numerous media personnel grew to distrust the military and the government during Vietnam, largely as a result of what the media considered an outright deception of the American people regarding the war's progress and aims. A culture of mistrust, fueled by occasions of military incompetence and deceit and magnified by incidents of media bias and activism, poisoned the relationship between the media and the military to the extent that it became antagonistic.

Further evidence of the relationship's deterioration came when media access was purposefully curtailed during operations in Grenada. In the wake of the resulting media outcry, General John Vessey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appointed retired Army Major General Winant Sidle to chair a panel for discussion of military-media issues and provide recommendations to improve the means by which the military affords the media access to remote military operations while preserving the military's requirement for operational security. This panel led to the creation of the national media pool in 1985, a program under which the military provides transportation and logistics support for a limited number of correspondents from the major U.S. television networks, wire services, and news magazines. Correspondents share information under this program; following security reviews by military personnel, journalists release their stories using military communications channels. The press pool, first activated for operations in Panama, has been activated since for OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/STORM and for a host of lesser operations; military and media personnel credit the pool with improving their understanding of one another.⁵ Even

so, media allegations of inadequate pool logistics planning, forced delays in releasing of reports, denial of media access to operations, overzealous security reviews, and refusal of military personnel to cooperate with the press have created an atmosphere in which the media's treatment during a military operation has become a news story in itself.⁶

Recent operations in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia have highlighted the essential media role in peacekeeping operations. Commanders in these operations, through their own resourcefulness, developed and implemented successful approaches to the media management challenge, permitting an atmosphere in which the media and military were able to work, if not together, at least side by side. This paper will examine whether the lessons learned in these recent operations have been faithfully recorded and codified in joint doctrine.

The Legal Precedent for Media Access

...Military people think newsmen are all out to undermine the values of democracy.

- Ed Fouhy, director, PEW Center for
Civic Journalism⁷

The precedent for media access to military operations is grounded in interpretations of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart took the specific mention of press freedoms in the first amendment as evidence that the framers of the Constitution acknowledged the "critical role played by the press as an additional check on the three branches of government."⁸ Justice Hugo Black expanded upon Stewart's notion of the media's role, arguing forcefully that the constitutional preservation of press freedoms in effect creates a media *responsibility* to the public at large: that of serving as a watchdog to "prevent any part of government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers, and foreign shot and shell."⁹

Despite considerable legal precedent in favor of media access, varying degrees of restriction of media access and censorship of press reporting have been practiced by the U.S.

military throughout the last two centuries. For example, the U.S. government created a World War II Office of Censorship; General Douglas MacArthur imposed censorship on Korean War correspondents; and Vietnam reporters were subjected to extensive reporting guidelines, violation of which would lead to the revocation of their media credentials.¹⁰ More recently, the Reagan administration curtailed the media's access to military operations conducted in Panama despite activation of the media pool; military leaders in DESERT STORM executed a media pool reporting policy that some correspondents say went far beyond mere security screening of media products.¹¹

Such efforts to preserve national and operational security have legal basis in the Constitution and in legislation such as the Espionage Act of 1917. Despite this, members of the media have challenged the legality not only of security-based censorship but also of denial of media access to military operations. To further confound the issue, judges, justices and legal scholars have come down firmly on both sides of the argument, the result being that those arguing for and against media freedoms can often cite dissenting opinions from the same legal decisions as precedents from which to argue their individual cases.¹² The general consensus, so far as one can be obtained: the military may not bar the media from operations, but the media is not free to report whatever they please, whenever they desire.

From a purely military point of view, although public affairs and media reporting are discussed only briefly in Joint Pub 3-07 (Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War), the publication asserts that "an effective [public affairs] plan...fulfills the US military's obligation to keep the American public informed."¹³ Since media support is a necessary element of public affairs operations as defined by Joint Pub 3-01 (Doctrine for Joint Operations),¹⁴ it is clear by extension that the Joint Staff recognizes media reporting as at least one way of informing the American people. This recognition of the military's responsibility to the media places media management in the realm of joint doctrine.

Joint Doctrine and Guidance for Media Management

At one point, we all got told we couldn't deal with [the] press anymore.

- General Norman Schwarzkopf on media guidance during Desert Storm¹⁵

Joint Pub 1-07 (Public Affairs) and Joint Pub 3-16 (Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations) are currently under development and so are not considered in our discussion. Formal joint guidance provided for managing the media in peace operations can be found in the following selections from the joint publication hierarchy:

- Joint Pub 3-0 (Doctrine for Joint Operations)
- Joint Pub 3-07 (Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War)
- Joint Pub 3-08 (Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations)
- Joint Pub 3-07.3 (Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peacekeeping Operations)
- Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations (Not Doctrinal)

The first of these documents, Joint Pub 3-0, establishes the elements of public affairs operations as "command information programs, media support, and international information campaigns."¹⁶ Little else is provided in the way of media support guidance, except in discussions of media access to multinational operations: here the Joint Staff enjoins the Joint Force Commander (JFC) in multinational operations to "facilitate the activities of national and international press organizations, consistent with requirements for operational security," stressing that coalition or alliance leaders must coordinate to provide media ground rules at the earliest opportunity.¹⁷ Since Joint Pub 3-0 is the capstone doctrine publication for joint warfare, such general treatment of media management is expected. Commanders seeking more focused media management guidance must examine publications at lower levels in the joint publication hierarchy.

Joint Pub 3-07 (Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War) discusses public affairs and media management at the appropriate level of detail for a publication

which addresses such a wide range of operations, providing some important guiding principles for the formulation of public affairs plans. Significantly, Joint Pub 3-07 recognizes the challenges imposed by real-time media reporting of military operations and urges the JFC to plan responses to potential misinformation and disinformation activities by media sources. Additionally, the publication reinforces the possibly negative impact of media reporting on the security and legitimacy of forces engaged in peace operations. However, rather than treating any of these topics in sufficient detail to permit planning, the publication refers the reader to Joint Pub 1-07 (Public Affairs), under development.

Since peace operations are typically executed in a multi-agency environment, an examination of media guidance provided by Joint Pub 3-08 (Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations) is in order. Like Joint Pub 3-07, this publication holds discussion of media management at a reasonable distance, but clearly articulates the difficulties implicit in multi-agency media management: "...the United States must speak with one voice -- both politically and militarily -- and at the same time, see that partners' voices are heard."¹⁸ Despite the fact that public affairs issues are scattered throughout the document, Joint Pub 3-08 provides an extremely important proactive bit of guidance: "The desired end state, essential tasks leading up to the end state, and exit criteria must be clearly expressed to the media in order to gain and maintain public support."¹⁹ Where Joint Pub 3-07 advises media management in order to "minimize adverse effect on the operation"²⁰, Joint Pub 3-08 chooses to treat the media as a significant operational asset, not merely as a potential adversary.

The final two documents on the above list provide more detailed guidance in media management which is focused more closely on peace operations. In Joint Pub 3-07.3 (Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Peacekeeping Operations), media management guidance is written specifically for *peacekeeping*, only one element of peace operations. Despite this narrow focus, one would expect the publication to provide useful guidance for forces in any

peace operation. Public affairs guidance in this publication is provided “primarily from the viewpoint of the UN,”²¹ and its target audience is the task force public affairs (PA) officer. After providing several media management aphorisms (among them: “the hallmarks of PA activity must be impartiality and truth”²²), Joint Pub 3-07.3 then sets out to establish the PA officer’s responsibilities in the peacekeeping operation. Disappointingly, the guidance provided often reflects a lack of appreciation for the complexity of today’s media management challenge. Some examples:

- PAOs in UN-sponsored peacekeeping are admonished to “ensure that the Secretary-General is informed of incidents before hearing or reading about them in the media.”²³ By contrast, Joint Pub 3-07 acknowledges the fact that the speed at which the media can gain information and disseminate it to the world makes this a difficult proposition. Every effort must be made to beat the media to the reporting punch, but the commander cannot neglect responsive action, not just to correct the media record, but to recreate the appropriate perception of operations.
- A later provision permits the media to interview peacekeepers only when “military personnel have consented to be interviewed and the contingent or unit PA officer is present;” furthermore, all interviews are to be considered “for the record.” Such impractical guidance can be applied only to planned media access events. In Somalia and Bosnia, for example, independent reportage occurred far from the scrutiny of public affairs personnel. Furthermore, journalists assigned to cover peace operations may not always be thoroughly enough informed about events leading up to these operations to place breaking news in the proper perspective. In such cases, providing information to reporters *on background* may be useful to bring them up to date.²⁴

In general, Joint Pub 3-07.3 provides a short list of “do’s and don’ts” for the PAO and a general exhortation to keep the UN, the force commander, and the world informed, but provides little more in the way of concrete planning guidance. The publication neglects discussion of a Joint or Coalition Information Bureau and ignores treatment of the logistics difficulties inherent in managing a media pool, other than to say the PAO will “assist the media in providing prompt and accurate coverage of the force’s activities.”²⁵

In stark contrast to Joint Pub 3-07.3 stands the Joint Task Force Commander’s Handbook for Peace Operations, published in 1995 by the Joint Staff. This publication contains the most useful and insightful media management advice of any of the above joint publications, particularly in the section covering “Procedures in Working with the Media”. The target audience is appropriate and the language informal but authoritative; the handbook clearly represents a valuable distillation of lessons learned. Despite its positive qualities, the handbook offers its public affairs wisdom piecemeal, and the inclusion of a “Media Survival Guide”, although valuable, further reinforces the notion that the media are something merely to be “survived”. Logistics concerns are inadequately discussed. Finally, the handbook is not doctrinal, but intended to serve as an additional resource for the commander.

In sum, despite some useful information, joint publications individually and collectively fall short of the mark in providing comprehensive media management guidance to the JFC. Rarely are the imperatives for proper media management combined with reasonably detailed guidance on getting the job done at the operational level. Most important, the media is too often treated as an element of the mission to which the commander must react, not a characteristic of the peace operations “battlefield” he can use to benefit his mission. The commander and his staff need better media management doctrine. The remainder of this paper will focus on recommendations for organizing and presenting such doctrine.

Media Access: Addressing the Commander's Concerns

My Marines are winning this war and you people are losing it for us in your papers.

- Marine officer, Vietnam²⁶

Effective guidance for media management in peace operations must address historical objections to the presence of the media. Neglecting some commanders' distaste for media coverage of any sort, military considerations for excluding the media from coverage of military operations probably fall into three broad categories: operational security, bad press, and mission interference. Joint guidance must provide tested solutions to these problems.

Operational Security (OPSEC). Granting access to the media could compromise operational security. Joint Pub 3-07 calls specifically for "security at the source,"²⁷ but the media's perception has been that military censors of the recent past have pushed beyond mere security-based censorship. Journalists assert instead that recent censorship efforts have been centered upon the political implications of the stories they submit.²⁸ While numerous correspondents agree that the military's concern for operational security is valid, military leaders naturally fear the loss of control that media access brings, especially since the media have no governing body, and no means of imposing sanctions upon those who violate any agreed-upon ground rules. This situation makes it unrealistic for the military to expect anything but *voluntary* restraint from reporters afforded access to sensitive material. Even so, some military and civilian leaders believe that the media can be safely taken into the military's confidence, then enjoined to remain silent about upcoming operations.²⁹ JCS Chairman General John Shalikashvili offers an example from planned military operations in Haiti which illustrates the challenges implicit in today's live television coverage: "We knew that [Haitian General Raoul] Cedras watched CNN. So it was important that CNN understood what kind of a real-life problem that could pose because, watching the airdrop [of

the 82nd Airborne], he could redirect whatever little reinforcements he had for that situation.”³⁰ According to General Shalikashvili, CNN and other U.S. news outlets agreed to an embargo on details of the planned airdrop discussed above. Although the airdrop never became necessary, the fact that an embargo agreement was reached was significant; said General Shalikashvili: “The press agreed to, I think, almost everything we asked for...”³¹

Bad Press. Former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney has said, “It is the nature of the press to deliver bad news.”³² Even so, bad press in peace operations distracts the commander and his troops from the mission by straining relations with seniors and allies, by affecting perceptions of the mission at home and in-theater, and by harming the morale of forces assigned to peace operations. In discussions on press coverage of the insurgency in El Salvador, Army Colonel John Waghelstein draws a useful distinction between bad *press* and bad *journalism*: bad *press*, although undesirable, is frequently unavoidable, while bad *journalism* is something upon which the commander can make a significant impact.³³

Bad press can be the product of bad journalism, but can just as easily be the result of honest reporting; military leaders and personnel can and do make mistakes and often compound these errors by denying them or delaying their report. Neglecting media bias, bad journalism can be attributed to several factors: poor journalistic preparation, deadline-driven reporting, and reporting which takes events out of context (such as live television images accompanied by speculative narration). Although it is not the function of the military to build good journalists, cooperating with the media -- educating journalists in the mission, providing resources to help them reach their deadlines -- may be the best way for the military to ensure that bad press is not exclusively the product of bad journalism.³⁴

Mission Interference. The mere presence of the press can cause unnecessary difficulties in the mission and change the view forces take of the situation on the ground. Perhaps the most memorable instance of such interference occurred in December 1992 when dozens of journalists with camera crews and floodlights greeted Marine forces upon their arrival on the beaches of Mogadishu; any hostile activity by local clan members would have been impossible for the Marines to counter without endangering the media. A variation on this theme is illustrated by a scenario from operations in Haiti, during which an armed patrol clears one side of a street in Port Au Prince while a television camera crew follows their actions from the other side: "...those soldiers feel like asses, crouching from door to door...so they will be less attentive...they will just nonchalantly walk along, and some sniper is going to get them..."³⁵

A perceived "requirement" to protect media members in harm's way may interfere with the operation. Although many experienced journalists understand the risks involved in military reporting and are willing to undertake them, a retired Army officer points out: "News media demands for assistance when reporters were trapped in hotels in Panama City (1989) and Mogadishu (1993)...clearly indicate that the security of journalists will remain a persistent, high visibility issue confronting commanders."³⁶ Having the press in the theater of operations can be unsettling to combat troops, but it is a situation the military must train to deal with. A 1984 Statement of Principle by the American Newspaper Publishers Association said: "Safety is insufficient reason to prevent correspondents from covering an important military operation."³⁷ Journalist George Wilson, more bluntly, says of reporters, "...if a couple of them get killed, that's the price of doing business."³⁸ Correspondents who wished to remain in Mogadishu to cover the Somalia operation from "outside the wire" were permitted to leave the secure media pool area, but only after peacekeeping troops videotaped a record of their warning to the journalists that they were responsible for their own safety.³⁹

An Improved Guide to Media Management in Peace Operations

“Get out front, fill the vacuum with useful information, and the media will more than likely end up as an ally instead of an adversary.”

- Joint Task Force Commander’s Handbook for Peace Operations⁴⁰

Philosophical Guidance

Ideally, given the media’s capability to shape public perceptions of military operations, philosophical guidance provided to the commander must be organized to address the media’s impact on the principles of MOOTW: objective, unity of effort, security, restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy.⁴¹

Objective: Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective.

“The media should see an identifiable end state and progress in moving toward it.”⁴² Care must therefore be taken to communicate the *attainable* objective to the American people and those of the host nation, and the media is essential to this project. The operation must be presented warts and all, with political difficulties and organizational complexities attached, so that the media tell the true story. Public euphoria with rapid fulfillment of short-term goals can lead to exaggerated expectations by the host nation, as in Operation PROVIDE COMFORT, when an overabundance of Western medical care in northern Iraq became the publicly-expected norm.⁴³ Most important, the mission must be presented in unambiguous terms. As in Somalia, unwarranted “mission creep” can result from public or governmental reactions to media-generated operational misperceptions.

Unity of Effort: Seek unity of effort in every operation.

Peace operations require the close coordination of efforts of such disparate groups as the United Nations, coalition forces and governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

private volunteer organizations (PVOs), and most challenging of all, host nation military and civilian organizations and individuals. All of these agencies have public relations entities of their own; using a Coalition Information Bureau to provide centralized media support can be an effective means of ensuring that the media hear "one voice" in peace operations.

Security: Never permit hostile factions to acquire a military, political, or informational advantage.

Safety and security of the force is paramount; the American people will not stand long for casualties in peace operations. Operational security measures (discussed earlier) are an essential element of the media plan, but well-focused media coverage can be an effective deterrent to hostilities, allowing the military to tell a potential adversary that forces are on the way and well-equipped to defend themselves, despite their peaceful intentions.

Peace operations face stiff political opposition in the opinion-driven media, and commanders cannot afford to underestimate the sophistication of those who would undermine their efforts. As one observer said of Zapatista insurgency leader Marcos: "This poor, simple, backward peasant is computer literate -- he's got his own Web page!"⁴⁴ Similarly, browsing the Internet leads one to World Wide Web pages sponsored by the Serbian Unity Congress, by the Croatian Government, and even by Peru's "Sendero Luminoso" insurgency group. In addition to reinforcement of the mission through more conventional media outlets, the commander must be prepared to pre-empt the opposition's political message in kind; U.S. military Web sites such as "BosniaLINK" can help him achieve this goal.

Restraint: Apply appropriate military capability prudently.

As pointed out in the JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations, perceptions of restraint in use of force are linked to legitimacy;⁴⁵ limits in the size of forces and restrictions upon their potential employment are important concepts to get across to the

media. Local media outlets may be the best means of helping the local populace understand that peace forces are not an occupying army. Ensuring the media are well-educated regarding rules of engagement and use of deadly force will help them place events in context in the unfortunate occasion of exchange of fire involving peacekeeping forces.

Perseverance: Prepare for the measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims.

Peace operations can last for months and years. Clearly articulating the objective of the operation will have a significant impact on the willingness of the American people and the U.S. legislature to allow the operation run its proper course, and the media is the primary means by which this can be done. Similarly, enhancement of morale among the force is necessary to prepare the way for months of work without immediate payoff. Force information programs can help the commander with internal publicity of the good works of the troops, but using a public media outlet with force readership may be an even more effective means of doing so, especially when boots on the ground are skeptical of the party line. Finally, through diligent efforts to help the media gain a balanced and thorough picture of the operating theater, commanders can retain freedom of action at the operational level by ensuring media reports and operational reports to senior commanders, the UN, and the National Command Authority remain substantively identical.

Legitimacy: Sustain the willing acceptance by the people of the right of the government to govern, or a group or agency to make and carry out decisions.

Successful peace operations depend on earning the trust and consent of the host nation, and upon winning the confidence and approval of the American people, foreign governments, NGOs, and PVOs. The media can be useful at home, abroad, and in-theater to help solidify perceptions of fidelity with publicly-stated objective(s). As peace operations are frequently sponsored by the UN, it is important to reinforce the fact that military forces play

a role *within* the multi-agency arrangement, thus preserving the UN's authority. Even in unilateral U.S. peace operations, the media must be made to recognize that peace forces serve as the means to a greater end sponsored by the State Department, NGOs and PVOs. Agencies working in a peace operation must strive for impartiality, ensuring that no political faction is seen as preferred over another. The media can change the perceived nature of an operation through the use of a single objectionable word. Somali clan members loyal to Mohammed Farah Aideded reacted strongly to the media's use of the term "warlord" when referring to their clan leader;⁴⁶ hostilities in response to UN efforts to capture Aideded cost dozens of peacekeepers their lives.

Practical Guidance

As a practical matter, the ideal guide for media management should provide the necessary information to permit detailed planning for the media support effort. The following recommendations to the commander focus on five general areas which should be covered in practical guidance; they comprise some highlights drawn from lessons learned, existing publications, and original ideas. These areas are not intended to be all-inclusive, but to illustrate the breadth of potentially applicable guidance and provide a stepping-off point for further development. For clarity, ideas are addressed *to the commander* in bullet format.

Media ground rules.

- Apply moral restraint to the media by making it clear that they will lose their credentials and access if they violate security rules. Document and publicize security violations.⁴⁷
- If media bias appears to be a problem, quietly select a few objective correspondents and deal in depth with them. It will become apparent to other less professional journalists that the extent of their access depends on their demonstrated objectivity.⁴⁸

- Recognize that you will be unable to sequester your forces. Even so, let the media know that you will not tolerate invasions of the troops' privacy.

Logistics of media support.

- Guidance should include a notional table of equipment and staff composition for the Joint Information Bureau (JIB). Include public affairs personnel in your mission assessment team to determine what in-theater facility support will be available to the media.⁴⁹
- Do not neglect the media in your logistics plans, but in your zeal to ensure appropriate logistic support for the press, ensure assets needed for the "real" mission -- a medevac helicopter, low-level light cameras -- are not diverted to support the media.⁵⁰
- Get language help from the country team and from PSYOP area specialists to translate your mission into local parlance for media consumption.
- Ensure you have a plan to accommodate outsiders, both logistically and informationally.

Force media training and information programs.

- Use alternative means of getting the word to the troops. In Somalia, much was made of the use of "Rules of Engagement" cards. Adopt a similar program which publishes the mission and intent of the operation in digestible, instantly available format. Compose mission statements for media consumption, then allow yourself to be quoted in a medium available to your troops. If possible, use video; if not, using Stars and Stripes (or the theater equivalent) as your mouthpiece is probably nearly as effective.
- Make sure that the troops understand their remarks may constitute the first U.S. position on an incident or policy and that their actions and remarks may even contribute to shaping the mission in the minds of decision-makers at home. Make sure they do not underestimate the media's desire to be first with the story; train them to resist the impulse to speculate.

Preplanned media responses.

- “Anticipate and pre-plan response to possibly inaccurate media analysis and promulgation of disinformation and misinformation by US, coalition and other media sources.”⁵¹

Ensure sufficient assets monitor CNN and local media outlets and that your watchstanders and staff are prepared to initiate appropriate controlling actions in a media crisis.

Wargame responses to media reports alleging disputes among combined forces, misconduct of U.S. or UN forces, incidents of friendly fire, and the like.

- Instantaneous battlefield reporting is by its very nature a collection of images taken out of context. Make sure your OPSEC plan includes restrictions on live media coverage.

The Commander's media skills.

- Get a media refresher course -- for yourself and for your staff.⁵²
- In interviews and statements, hammer the message. Since many television journalists operate in sound bites, ensure, to the extent that accuracy can be preserved, that your statements are thus constructed.⁵³ When dealing with an uninformed press, help them ask the right questions.⁵⁴
- Give the reporters you trust the opportunity to spend time with troops in the field. The truth is that reporters can and must “feel a lot of the same thing the soldiers...are feeling”⁵⁵ if they are to gain a balanced point of view in reportage.
- When you cannot brief the media yourself, let operational personnel do as much of the talking as possible. Journalists innately mistrust spokesmen; operational planners will have a better appreciation for the commander's mission and intent, and will be aware of operational branches and sequels which can result from a media flap or political crisis.
- Pick your best writers (or get some!) and assign them to public affairs efforts. Many journalists will rely heavily upon the product of your own information efforts.⁵⁶

- Remain in command. If a reporter asks a question which you are not permitted to answer, just refuse to do so.⁵⁷

Conclusions

“..The foundation of any healthy relationship [with the media] is one that needs to be based upon, as much as security will permit, a hands-off policy by the government and the military.”

- GEN John Shalikashvili, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff⁶⁸

Although the military-media relationship has improved dramatically since Vietnam, the future of military-media relations is a story that is written at the operational level each day these reluctant comrades share the field of peace operations. Legal precedent and joint doctrine compel the military to provide access to the media, but the existing joint doctrine hierarchy does not adequately address the means by which the commander manages the media to best operational effect in peace operations.

Joint doctrine must answer the operational commander's concerns regarding operational security, bad press, and mission interference due to the media's presence in theater. It must outline the media's potential impact on the six principles of MOOTW as applied to peace operations. Finally, joint doctrine must provide sufficient practical guidance to permit the commander and his staff to integrate media management into operational plans.

Given the political complexities of the environment and the instantaneous nature of contemporary media coverage, the commander in peace operations simply cannot afford to rely upon his own ingenuity and upon selective applications of lessons learned in an effort to minimize his public affairs losses and limit damage to his mission. He needs thoughtful and comprehensive doctrine which recognizes the media's presence as an operational asset and articulates the means to employ that asset to best advantage.

Notes

¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-07 (Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War) (Washington: 1995), ix.

² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-07.3 (Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Peacekeeping Operations) (Washington: 1995), VII-8.

³ William T. Sherman, quoted in Marlys M. Campbell, "Media Access to Military Operations: Grenada and Beyond, Unpublished Thesis, Defense Technical Information Center, Alexandria, VA: 1989, 10.

⁴ R.F. Rokosz, quoted in Aukofer, Frank and William P. Lawrence, America's Team: The Odd Couple - A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military (Nashville, TN: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995), 187.

⁵ Campbell, 82.

⁶ Sharkey, 24-30. For a detailed discussion of media pools operations during OPERATION DESERT STORM, see John J. Fialka, Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1991).

⁷ Ed Fouhy, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, 112.

⁸ Potter Stewart, quoted in Campbell, 51.

⁹ Hugo Black, quoted in Campbell, 52.

¹⁰ Campbell, 13-18.

¹¹ Sharkey, 25.

¹² Campbell, 58-61.

¹³ Joint Pub 3-07, IV-6.

¹⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-0 (Doctrine for Joint Operations) (Washington: 1995), V-6.

¹⁵ Aukofer and Lawrence, 155.

¹⁶ Joint Pub 3-0, V-6

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, VI-5.

¹⁸ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-08 (Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations: Volume I) (Washington, 1995), III-25

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, II-14.

²⁰ Joint Pub 3-07, IV-6

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- ²¹ Joint Pub 3-07.3, VII-8.
- ²² *Ibid.*, VII-8.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, VII-9.
- ²⁴ John D. Waghelstein, "El Salvador and the Press: A Personal Account," Parameters, Vol. XV, No. 3, Autumn 1985, 66.
- ²⁵ Joint Pub 3-07.3, VII-10.
- ²⁶ Campbell, page 22.
- ²⁷ Joint Pub 3-07, IV-6.
- ²⁸ Sharkey, page 25.
- ²⁹ Aukofer and Lawrence, 115, 148.
- ³⁰ John Shalikashvili, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, 161.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Aukofer and Lawrence, 103.
- ³³ Waghelstein, 67.
- ³⁴ John D. Waghelstein reaches the same conclusion in "El Salvador and the Press: A Personal Account."
- ³⁵ John Shalikashvili, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, 161.
- ³⁶ Charles W. Ricks. The Military-News Media Relationship: Thinking Forward (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1993), 7.
- ³⁷ Campbell, page 42.
- ³⁸ George Wilson, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, 173.
- ³⁹ Anthony C. Zinni and Frederick M. Lorenz, "Media Relations: A Commander's Perspective," Marine Corps Gazette, December 1995, 72.
- ⁴⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations (Washington: 1995), 25.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 26.
- ⁴³ Anthony C. Zinni, "Somalia Operations," Lecture, National War College, Washington, DC: 6 March 1996.
- ⁴⁴ John D. Waghelstein, "Insurgency/Counterinsurgency," Lecture, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 27 January 1997.
- ⁴⁵ JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations, 8.

⁴⁶ Zinni, "Somalia Operations."

⁴⁷ Sharkey, 162.

⁴⁸ Paul E. Hanover, "Man the Guns! Press Reps Approaching!" Marine Corps Gazette, December 1995, 70. For a detailed discussion on combating media bias in coverage of the war in El Salvador, see Waghelstein, "El Salvador and the Press: A Personal Account".

⁴⁹ JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations, 9.

⁵⁰ Interview with LCDR Mark Young, Former Commanding Officer, USS CYCLONE (PC 1), U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 22 January 1997.

⁵¹ Joint Pub 3-07, IV-6.

⁵² JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations, 25.

⁵³ RADM Brent Baker, USN (Ret.), quoted in JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations, 28.

⁵⁴ General Perry M. Smith, Taking Charge: A Practical Guide for Leaders (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1986), 116.

⁵⁵ Bradley Graham, reporter for The Washington Post, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, 116.

⁵⁶ Hanover, 70.

⁵⁷ Ibid..

⁵⁸ John Shalikashvili, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, 159.

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