American Media and the War in the Balkans. A Pakistani Perspective.

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The print media made its debut in the 17th century with Europe, taking the lead in having the first sustained production of newspaper. Soon its potential as a mass communicator was realized. It was used both as an informer as well as a propagator. What was born essentially to disseminate factual and objective information came also to be used to misinform and dis-inform, to control and manipulate news, and to shape and mould views. It emerged as a powerful weapon to influence public opinion and to rule the people through manipulations. In the last century when it came to be reinforced by the electronic media, first by radio and then by satellite-based television channels, the media by itself became an all-influential institution of society–on many occasions more effective than the state. This mighty and all-pervasive power of the media was successfully used, in conflict situations, by vested interests to serve their purpose, benevolent or malevolent. Fortunately, for both the media and the public, the technological advances during the mid 90's and the increasing globalization of news reporting mean that the news reports can now be transmitted live to a raft of international news networks. In this new environment the control of media product is realistically not feasible.

In this article an attempt is made to examine the dynamics between Western public diplomacy and the mediation of international military conflicts by US-influenced global television news. It looks at aspects of television coverage of wars in the post-Cold War era, in

particular the Balkan wars and argues that only the wars in which the West has a geo-strategic interest appear to receive adequate coverage by Western electronic as well as print media. NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia in March-June 1999 was the most extensively covered military action since the 1991 Gulf War. In both cases, Western television news channels, notably Cable News Network (CNN), consistently reproduced what appeared as an agenda set by the United States and molded public opinion in support of war. It further assesses international implications of such coverage. Arguing that given the global reach and influence of Western television and the dependence of world's broadcasters on US-supplied television news footage, the dominant perspectives on a conflict can be American, although the US, more often than not, may be actively involved in the war.

How fully and in what ways do the media shape and monitor public opinion, debate, and policy? How adept are political leaders at manipulating the media and do their efforts undermine genuine democracy? Do new communication technologies threaten the role – for better and worse - of the traditional media? Are the answers to these questions applicable only to the United States? Or do they apply also to the world media and to news systems that share the democratic and the commercial values that are embedded in the American system? What is the role of the media in a world that increasingly values both free markets and tight political controls? We will seek to answer these questions while recognizing that many of them have no firm or final answers.

Journalists unlike politicians and decision-makers are in a better position for a number of reasons. Firstly, they possess an instinct to ask many good questions, for example about the objectives of an operation, which allows them to 'get to the core of a matter', the critical function of the media. Secondly, unlike governments, they have little at stake other than their own

reputations. They're not making policy, and therefore are not subject to the 'destabilizing' effects so drastically evident on decision-makers. As a **fly on the wall,** journalists are more likely to be able to look at a situation critically than their government counterparts. For example, during the war in Vietnam, while policy-makers floundered in their attempts to assess the current state of the campaign, the best assessment of the entire situation was made in a journalistic article, describing it as a "Stalemated War."

> "Foreign policy has never traditionally been an outcome of media, but in the present information age, it cannot be made without one as well. For global real-time television, the Internet, and other recent technological advances or inceptions have clearly affected how top foreign policy-makers do their job. The news media have become increasingly powerful; sharing even in functions once dominated by political leaders and institutions. "The press in America . . . determines what people will think and talk about--an authority that in other nations is reserved for tyrants, priests, parties, and mandarins," is how author and journalist Theodore H. White's described the media's power[1]. Should news organizations and journalists, who are not elected by the people, have greater power and are they credible enough to exercise it effectively? How has this revolution in global information technology changed the entire processing of US foreign policy?

However, journalists also face difficulties in their coverage of war in comparison to governments. The main problem is their tendency to want to **take temperatures all the time.** This constant need for assessment does harm to the quality of reporting. The fact that journalists do a better job covering war than the governments do at prosecuting them creates an awesome responsibility for journalists. They are part of the process not only of exposing problems and

reporting difficulties, but they must also contribute to the process of 'fixing up' the prosecution of the war. Because very often the stories that are written – critical, analytical, or straight news - become part of the intelligence system and serve as a strong basis for the policy makers as well.

Kosovo represents one of the latest stages in a process of re-framing international relations in the post-Cold War era. Drawing on three different news frames developed in earlier Western reporting of Yugoslavia during the 1990s, which portrayed the break-up of the country as a; continuation of the Cold War, as a product of "ethnic" hatred, and also as a repeat of the Holocaust. The significance of today's so called moralized framework is that the "moral imperative" to intervene can override all other considerations, including national sovereignty and international law. By resorting to popular cinema through movies like Wag the Dog, the writers reveal the role of media by not only reporting about, but also the construction of wars. Media has the power to stage events that state authority needs for operation and political interests. Further more, Journalists and news reporters have played an extremely important and active role in developing and disseminating influential interpretations of the post-Cold War world.

The very name "Bosnia" came to signify an intractable geopolitical problem and ongoing moral dilemma for the West and its institutions of security, principally NATO. Bosnia was, as Warren Christopher famously described it, a "problem from hell" but, most significantly, this "hell" was located in Europe.[2] Owing to its lack of conventional strategic value and significance -- conflict in the region as such did neither hold a direct significance for NATO states nor it contained any valuable economic resources like petroleum. Bosnia acquired strategic significance by virtue of its status as a sign of Western failure and chaos on the European continent. *Its accumulated strategic value came from its negative sign value, a sign value projected and promoted by international mass media networks and the global circulation of*

images from the war. Geography mattered in explaining why the United States ended up deploying troops in Bosnia but it was a multifarious geography that (con) fused the territorial and tele-visual, the symbolic and the strategic. It was not only a war over territory in Europe, but also a **War by CNN,** recorded by an extensive international press corps and projected to the world by global telecommunication systems. Bosnia was not only in Europe but also in European, American and other international living rooms. It was consequently a widely distributed geopolitical sign, a sign value of instability and ethnic warfare that the U.S and NATO eventually needed to confront and control.

A key process in producing Bosnia, as a "strategic sign" was the role of the global media in making it a visible and significant war. Despite the often-considerable risks to reporters, Bosnia attracted the Western press because it was a story of war between outwardly similar white Europeans unfolding in a relatively prosperous and familiar environment. Sarajevo was a modern European city, which had hosted the Winter Olympics in 1984. Many Europeans who had vacationed there knew the former Yugoslav region. The Bosnian civil war slowly became a metaphor of Europe's violent past, recalling the origins of World War I and genocidal fascism during World War II, and its uncertain future. The specters of violent nationalism and ethnic intolerance also haunted many other Western states, struggling with their own issues of multiculturalism and identity politics. The story of the Bosnian war (unlike wars in the former Soviet Union or in the Third World) was not only physically close to the West but also psychologically.

Furthermore, during the administration of Bush (Senior), the Balkan Wars were projected as a 'dangerous cancer" that needed to be checked and restrained. Back in 1992 the then U.S Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger described the wars in the former Yugoslavia as a

"cancer in the heart of Europe".[3] This image of Bosnia as a cancer was a powerful one that enabled it to 'jump scale' and become a generic sign of illness in the global body politic. By 1995 the Clinton administration was also using the image as a means of globalizing Bosnia. Bosnia was a dangerous symptom of 'chaos' and 'ethnic hatred' that needed to be stopped in its tracks. After the Dayton agreements, President Clinton went on the media explaining why Bosnia was important. "A conflict that already has claimed so many lives could spread like poison throughout the region, eat away at Europe's stability and erode our partnership with our European allies."[4] Justifying U.S. troop participation in implementing the Accords, eventually signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, Clinton interpreted Bosnia as a global challenge and test, a sign of the times. The necessity for American leadership in a globalizing era was his overriding theme.

This conceptual globalization of Bosnia was supplemented by its geographical inflation into a sign for Europe. In the November 1995 television broadcast, Clinton declared that securing peace in Bosnia will "help build a free and stable Europe." Taking geographic license, Clinton proclaimed "Bosnia lies at the very heart of Europe, next-door to many of its fragile new democracies and some of our closest allies. Generations of Americans have understood that Europe's freedom and Europe's stability is vital to our own national security. That's the reason we created NATO and waged the Cold War. And that's why we must help the nations of Europe to end their *worst nightmare since World War II*, now". For the sake of Bosnia, Europe, NATO, past generations of Americans and universal moral values, America needs to be strong and lead. "America," President Clinton declared during the 1996 presidential campaign, "truly is the world's indispensable nation".[5] As a strategic sign, 'Bosnia" was not really about Bosnia as a

place at all: it was about re-generating American identity and re-legitimating continuing American leadership in Europe and across the world in a globalizing era.

This transformation of Bosnia from a small regional war with no strategic value into a global crisis with significant strategic implications was facilitated by technological improvements. This was made possible through 'live' reporting from the field in Bosnia each night and also by the emergence of transnational 24-hour news channels to project this video feed around the world round the clock. With their daily diet of journalistic copy and live video feeds from the region, media networks constituted a tele communicational panopticon of surveillance, information and judgment upon the conduct of the Bosnian war. Capturing the conditions of everyday life in cities like Sarajevo on camera -- the dangerous dash through sniper's alley, the struggle to find firewood and keep warm, the rationing of clean water, the wait for fresh bread. Global media networks were inevitably sitting in a form of judgment and issuing video indictments of those responsible for allowing this to happen. They were acting as contemporary **Video-Cameralists**[6], information age agitators for 'something to be done' about the collapse of governance and the transparent violation of human rights in Bosnia. In both television images and textual dispatches, they made visible the gap between how things are and how things are supposed to be.[7]

None of this is to suggest that the media necessarily forced the United States and NATO to finally intervene in Bosnia in the way they did. To conceptualize the media as functioning as videocameralists is not to suggest a linear model of influence whereby the mass media directly causes certain foreign policy decisions and actions. Studies of the so-called **CNN effect** by journalists themselves have tended to discredit the view that media images and technology drive the foreign policy decision-making process, the relationship between the media and foreign

policy makers is more subtle and situational. Under the right conditions, the news media can have a powerful influence on the process, but again these conditions are almost always set by foreign-policy makers themselves or by the growing number of policy actors on the international stage. Yet such a conceptualization does not adequately address the transformative influence of communicational technologies and mass media upon the practice of geopolitics. States now act on calculations about how media coverage, particularly visual images, will affect public opinion and the behavior of other actors. States attempt to manipulate global media networks in order to send certain signals and convey particular impressions. Global media in turn often force the pace of diplomacy by their speed, spin and turnover cycles. They not only report but also attempt to mobilize and represent varied public opinions. "In the era of expanded global communications and serial global crises, media and societal responses are part of world politics at every stage." [8]

Recognition of the power of television to condition foreign policy decision-making has been a growing subject of concern for the Western foreign policy community itself. In the edited collection of essays on the Kosovo conflict for The Council on Foreign Relations, Richard Ullman notes that, "When television sets worldwide nightly show pictures of massacred civilians. Governments that previously have not perceived an important interest at stake in any specific outcome of a conflict discover that they have a real interest in ceasing to appear -- to their own publics and to the world -- as not only callous but impotent."[9] While policy makers try to manipulate it to produce images they want to project. Television media can present a serious threat to foreign policy decision-makers and national security managers when it undermines the sign value of their institutions of security and order, and the legitimacy of their foundational concepts and myths. It can expose the gap between an institution's idealized image of itself and the actuality of its operation and functioning. Managing national security affairs in increasingly

information and media rich societies, therefore, requires an ever more incessantly vigilant and committed management of tele-visual images and appearances. [10]

In Bosnia, the power of television was already a part of the West's initial calculations about how to respond to the crisis. Fearful of the images of troops coming home in body bags, states like the United States were extremely reluctant to send their troops in harm's way in Bosnia. Where as countries like France and Great Britain worked to restrict UNPROFOR's role so it would be a purely peacekeeping and not a peace-enforcing role. Furthermore, fear of crossing the "Mogadishu line" and repeating the Somalian experience lead UNPROFOR commanders to adhere to what they considered strict impartiality to avoid becoming participants in the warfare. Yet, the irony of the Bosnian war was that foreign and military policy calculations made with the power of television in mind ended up creating televisual conditions that de-legitimized this policy. The West and the international community was seen to be responding but persistent television images revealed that they were not being very successful at alleviating suffering and ending the killing. Negative images of impotence, humiliation and failure became much more common than the positive images of success, stability and peace. The European Union could not produce a peace agreement, NATO air strikes were ineffective, and massacres where occurring in so-called UN 'safe havens.' Amounting to unimaginable 'collateral damage''. The Bosnian war had become a worldwide story of negative images for the European Union, NATO, the United States, the West and the international community. As a proliferating negative sign system, 'Bosnia' was a threat.

Role of Media:

In this information age, the media's role in conflict situations has come to acquire added significance. Now the wars and political conflicts are and often will be preceded by "info

attacks"–disinformation, psychological warfare and propaganda campaigns. Adversaries will attempt to win without firing bullets and rockets. It has already happened. The CNN won the war for the US-led multinational forces in the Gulf well before the Iraqi Republican Guards were destroyed. The Iraqis and others were led to believe that the Patriot missiles had a 100 % kill accuracy, but it turned out to be a myth only after the war. This ground reality of media vis-à-vis a conflict situation contrasts sharply with the defined role of the media. In an actual or potential conflict situation the role of the media is crucial. It should on no account itself contribute directly or indirectly to the creation of conflicts or situations that breed conflicts. It has to avoid oral or written words, projections of scenes and depictions of pictures, which may inflame passions of the people, create hatred between different sections of the populace, or lead to violence. All audio-visuals, news and views disseminated by it and the manner and method of their dissemination must conform to the most elementary precautions taken for civilized living.

The question thus arises that can the media play a major role in the area of conflict resolution? Can it be influential in enlightening the public opinion and in helping people take cognizance of the need for peace for their overall welfare? With the kind of proactive role media plays in the coverage of global events and occurrence of conflict, it can through an active discourse, constructive public debate and deliberation help public and policy makers reach an amicable and effective solution. Problem solution is not exactly part of media's job, but it can mold opinions and lay out the facts for people to build an opinion. Specifically, in the cases of armed/military conflicts, the objective defined for the media is "humanitarian reporting".[11] Well, this sounds quite ironical, as there is hardly anything humane about all armed conflicts: national, regional or international. In fact, humanitarian reporting consists mainly in covering all violations of the conventions of war by whichever party to the conflict. These conventions

governing the conduct of armed conflicts are called the humanitarian law of war–a compendious expression.

The impact of the media on making or influencing government policy, however, should not be overstated. The information provided by the media does go into generating public opinion or pressure, but the power of the media, in real terms, lies in highlighting situations not solving them. Their area of influence has consequences at the grand strategic rather than at the operational or tactical military levels and as such it is something that politicians rather than the military should seek to influence. "TV's unquestioned ability to provide a contemporaneous, piecemeal, video ticker-tape service must not be confused as it usually is, with a power to drive policy making". [12]

However lack of media objectivity is yet another major challenge before the military as it has a clear and direct impact on military operations. In a Low Intensity Conflict or Peacekeeping Operation, biased media reporting is always highly damaging, since one side will often seek to exploit such reporting, whilst the other will seek retribution. Throughout the conflict in Bosnia there has been considerable criticism that 'less than objective' media reporting has sought to influence the policies of various governments.

Why is it that the media loses objectivity in such situations? Even the best of reporters, who have spent a great deal of time in an area of conflict, become deeply involved in the horrific events on which they are required to report. Also because of the difficulty in moving from one party's area to another in a conflict, journalists have tended to spend the major portion of their time reporting from only one party's area. In doing so, some of them come under the effect of what is called the "quasi-Stockholm Syndrome effect." [13] Firstly, there is nothing like absolute objectivity. Their own experience and subjectivity in reporting facts as they see at times

contributes to errors in reporting. Such errors in reporting are human errors. Secondly, Another source of error is usually the partial availability of information due to various reasons at the time of filing a news story. The reporter being faced with the deadline for filing his story is usually left with no choice but to base his story on the information available to him till that time. And lastly, over empathy with the side with whom they were cohabiting.

American Media's Impact:

Americans' interest in global affairs has nearly always been less substantial than their nation's international prominence might suggest. The public's attitude is reflected in press practices: international coverage is scantier in the United States than in most Western democracies. And as news audiences and budgets have shrunk and the cold war has receded, news of foreign affairs has declined further in quantity. Yet visual images from abroad have never been more readily available. Some analysts allege that U.S. foreign policy has at times (e.g., Somalia, Bosnia) been driven by CNN's dramatic footage of the victims of war, famine, and oppression. The news media have become increasingly influential; sharing even in functions once dominated by political leaders and institutions. At first glance, U.S. news organizations may seem to be independent and critical, & this forms a popular self-image. But at a closer glance, rather than engage in self-examination, certain reporters have preferred to go along with the Pentagon - serving a function more akin to stenography than journalism. Despite all the pretenses, the sparring and griping is part of a game in which correspondents of the free press seem eager to show that they're on Uncle Sam's side, no matter what. [14]

Although this is a free society, the U.S. mainstream media would often serve as virtual propaganda agents of the state, peddling viewpoints the state wishes to inculcate and marginalizing any alternative perspectives. This is especially true in times of war, when the wave

of patriotic frenzy encouraged by the war-makers quickly engulfs the media. Under these conditions the media's capacity for dispassionate reporting and critical analysis is suspended, and they quickly become cheerleaders and apologists for war.

With the rapid progression in war, a problem that both the USA as well as Western media faced was that many mainstream media outlets, especially television networks were loath to even call it a war. The logos adopted were; CNN: 'Strike against Yugoslavia.' Fox News: 'Conflict in Kosovo.' The consensus winner used at CBS, NBC, and ABC: 'Crisis in Kosovo.' However this Crisis prolonged for not less than a year and none of the networks could find time for even a one hour special on what was then actually a crisis in Kosovo. The television networks would not cover it when there was just a 'crisis in Kosovo'. & When it took shape of a proper war, television media could not acknowledge it as a war. The White House and the State Department would not use the word 'war' and when the media adopted these euphemisms from the government, they ended up acting more as a fourth branch of the government than they as the fourth estate. One needs only to think back to the early years of the 1960s when U.S. government officials would refer to Vietnam as a 'police action.' At best it was the 'Vietnam conflict.' And in the early years of the 1960s many mainstream media followed the government lie and did not call it a war until many American soldiers began dying.

A second rather controversial question that arises is to identify who the real enemy is? As usual in the mainstream media, the U.S. was not making a war against a country, Yugoslavia, but against one individual. In this case the name was Slobadan Milosevic. Thus giving it the appearance of a personalized soap opera. Anchors interviewed military experts about how badly Milosevic had been hurt, or how badly he had been humiliated. At one point an anchor asked a military expert, "How much have we punished Milosevic," giving an expression as if the anchor

might get up from behind the anchor desk and show that they were wearing a U.S. Air Force uniform, but they were not. They would use the term 'we' as if they were an adjunct to the military.

This makes the role of media connected very closely to the issues of war. Why? An important reason is that both mass warfare and mass media owe their modern forms to a fertile period of 'invention' towards the end of the nineteenth century. In some cases, the technology which has enabled civilians to learn of, or even see, events in a war zone has derived, more or less directly, from military research. 'The history of battle', Paul Virilio suggests, 'is primarily the history of radically changing fields of perception'.[15] Modern warfare, in which destruction has become more distanced, relies on the accurate location of targets, human or otherwise. The term 'shooting war' is aptly suggestive of both soldiers' and photojournalists' professions, as the camera owe its sighting mechanisms to those developed for artillery. Likewise, many means of transmission by which news from war zones reaches those at home evolved from the technologies originally pioneered to allow soldiers to communicate with one other (telegraphy and radio broadcasting), or secretly to ascertain their enemy's military capabilities.

Grudgingly or enthusiastically, the military as well as the policy-makers in many 20th century wars have come to recognize potentially positive applications of media power in wartime. Media can forge bonds between the home front and the fighting front-increasing civilian commitment to the war, while raising the morale of combatants. A feature of many of 20th century wars has been their greater involvement of civilians, whether as spectators, victims or active participants; and a feature of most 20th century states has been greater concern with their own popular legitimacy. Thus governments, mindful of their own popularity, generally seek to harness mass media in wartime to persuade citizens of a war's justness and the enemy's

implacability. The Soviet regimes of the 1980s, for example, were so concerned to stem any hemorrhaging of popular support for the war in Afghanistan that they insisted the dead were returned to the USSR in sealed zinc coffins, encased against any possible media intrusion. Media thus serve as the vital conduit between those fighting and those more distantly participating in-or vicariously experiencing-war. But the flow of news and images that filters through media channels is likely to be as strictly regulated by the state as conditions permit. News and images become strategic commodities in wartime.

Almost nowhere, does the press have more freedom and carries a heavier public responsibility than is the case in America. And among nations with a vibrant free press, there are few countries where the press is more widely criticized and held in such low public esteem. But journalists of today are also the least admired professionals in America. Why? There is no single or simple answer, but some analysts have suggested that journalists have lost their traditional moorings as they try to cope with the pressures of competition and technology.

Conclusion

We are in an age in which two trends are fundamental: globalization on the one hand, on the cultural level, is an attempt to homogenize reality. Secondly, there is the incidence of new technology. As a response to these two categories, there is a cultural resistance of countries, communities, and identities. How does this impact on media performance in the context of conflicts? The media can play an important role in creating a positive environment for peace: they can demonize or legitimize enemies, they can emphasize the benefits of peace or the risks of compromise, and they can monitor the peace processes for progress. The U.S. news media have become increasingly influential and over empathize with the side with whom they were cohabiting. sharing even in functions once reserved for political leaders and institutions. The

news media in democratic societies are expected to serve not only their interests but also the public interest.

Americans' interest in global affairs has nearly always been less substantial than their nation's international prominence might suggest. The public's attitude is reflected in press practices: international coverage is scantier in the United States than in most Western democracies. And as news audiences and budgets have shrunk and the cold war has receded, news of foreign affairs has declined further in quantity. Yet visual images from abroad have never been more readily available. Some analysts allege that U.S. foreign policy has at times (e.g., Somalia, Bosnia) been driven by CNN's dramatic footage of the victims of war, famine, and oppression. We have all heard about the new Electronic Information Highway. The words "digital," "high-technology," and "advanced telecommunications" have taken on an almost mystical and defining importance for the future of society.

As the World and particularly Americans have moved to embrace the new technology, they have, moved away from the traditional news media. Finding themselves, in the midst of a fundamental reconfiguration of communication media, for the US and the world at large, this is a truly revolutionary era. In which new digital informational technologies are likely to replace the traditional communication and media industries and would bring forth a reconstitution of communicational infrastructure. Where in the post war period, television dramatically altered the domestic culture of US households, thus casting a strong influence on the nature of journalism as well as public discourse. In the recent years two contrasting and epoch defining trends dominate the US as well as the global media and communication. On the one hand there have been both rapid corporate concentration and commercialization of media industries, with six to ten colossal **Conglomerates** dominating global communication. This rampant commercialization and control

over communication means poses a severe challenge to the social capacity to generate a genuine democratic political culture. And on the other hand, with dramatic developments such as that of the **Internet**, it may no longer be possible to control communication in the traditionally hierarchic manner. Alternatively defined as the "functioning anarchy" the Internet is virtually impossible to control from a centralized command post, and is described as " a profound turning point in the evolution of human communication – of much greater significance than the creation of the printing press".[16]

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NOTES

[1] Theodore H. White, from the proceedings of the conference on *Journalists Covering Conflict: Norms of Conduct*, sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, April 28, 1999. http://www.ccpdc.org/events/journalist/report.htm#introduction

[2] Warren Christopher, "Send Troops to Bosnia," *USA Today,* October 18, 1995, p. 13.

[3] Lawrence Eagleberger, *Intervention at the London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia,* US Department of State Dispatch p 673, 1992.

[4] President Bill Clinton's statement, 27 November 1995, http://www.whitehouse.gov.

[5] President Bill Clinton, Remarks by the President to the People of Detroit, http://www.whitehouse.gov, October 22, 1996.

[6] This term videocameralists combines 'Video' with 'Cameralists,' an elite eighteenth century movement for administrative and governmental reform in Central Europe. See K. Tribe, *Cameralism and The Science of Government*, Journal of Modern History 56 263-84, 1984.

[7] T. Luke, Gerard Ó Tuathail, "On Videocameralistics: The Geopolitics of Failed States, the CNN International and UN Governmentality" *Review of International Political Economy,* pp. 709-734, 1997.

[8] . M. Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises* (Pinter, London), 1996.

[9] R. Ullman, Introduction: The World and Yugoslavia's Wars, in *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars* Ed R. Ullman (Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York), pp. 1-8, 1996.

[10] Panelist at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Conference, Lt. Gen. *Anthony Zinni* of the U.S. Marine Corps said that television has captured the initiative in defining the context in which events take place, how they are proceeding, and how the military, for example, is performing. "We have to tune in to CNN to see how we're doing," he said, adding that parties to a conflict--such as former warlord Mohamed Aideed in Somalia--are watching the same news programs and being influenced by what is reported making note of the fact that public has little patience for setbacks, which was well illustrated in Somalia after 18 U.S. soldiers were killed in 1993. The mission had accomplished a lot in terms of saving lives, but "the story," according to the media, was the setback, he said. If television had been present at the major battles of World War II, public reaction to the war might have been significantly different, he said. "I've often wondered what [the landing at] Normandy would have looked like [back home, in the living rooms of America] if there had been instantaneous coverage."

Zinni added that instantaneous coverage puts enormous pressure on the military commanders because their tactics and casualties are scrutinized immediately and what the media report impacts the morale of the troops. "There is a constant lens on your operation," he said. "That has never happened before in military history."

[11] B. Woodward, *The Commanders*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991) p. 278.

[12] Ajay K. Rai, "Military-Media Interface: Changing Paradigms New Challenges", *Strategic Analysis,* August 2000 (Vol. XXIV No. 5)

[13] ibid.

[14] Source: Philip Hammond, http://ww.fair.org/articles/hammond.htm

[15] P. Virilio, War and Cinema: *The Logistics of Perception* (London: Sage, 1989) p. 7.

[16] Robert W. Mc Chesney, " the Internet and US Communication Policy-Making in Historical and Critical perspective," *Journal of Communication,* 46(1), winter. 0021-9916/96.