

**Abstract**

It is essential that the American public understands the tactics the United States government and military use in wartime to manipulate news coverage in their favor. The purpose of this paper is to examine the 2003 Iraq War system of embedding journalists within military units, to determine the effects of journalists living with soldiers on news coverage, and to reveal ways in which the government and military attempt to maximize positive coverage and eliminate reports casting them in a negative light. To do so, this paper examines the history of war correspondence, the government's reaction to improvements in technology that allow rapid dissemination of news, and the consequences of embedding on war correspondence.

# **JOURNALISTS AS PR AGENTS:**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE PENTAGON'S EMBEDDING SYSTEM DURING GULF WAR II**

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*This thesis paper is dedicated to the faculty of the Department of Mass Communication at Francis Marion University. Without their endless advice and enthusiasm, the completion of this project would not have been possible.*

**Embed** (v): *to cause to be an integral part of a surrounding whole* (“Embed”).

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Introduction

Ron Harris, a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* embedded reporter, covered the fall of Baghdad and much of the Iraq War reprehensibly. “Either he was blind, or he refused to report the visible suffering around him,” writes Paul Rockwell, a columnist for *In Motion* Magazine (Rockwell). Harris selected his sources carefully, avoiding interviews that would cast the military in a negative light, failed to submit for publication pictures depicting destruction and casualties, and acted as an unfiltered mouthpiece for the military. Rockwell notes,

*In all of his dispatches, Harris never publishes a single photo of the rubble and ruin—the craters in the streets, the blackened taxis, the demolished buildings. He never interviews any stunned or suffering Iraqis; not the relatives of civilians killed at checkpoints, nor the shopkeepers whose businesses are wrecked, nor civilians outraged and appalled by the sacking of their cultural heritage, the libraries and museums of Baghdad under U.S. control.* (Rockwell)

In another instance, Harris unquestionably reported that the war was over as the statute of Saddam Hussein fell in Baghdad and President George W. Bush announced the end of major combat operations in his infamous “Mission Accomplished” speech (“President”). But independent journalists were critical of the declaration (Rockwell). Robert Fisk wrote in *The Toronto Star*, that the so-called liberation war may have been over, but “Iraq’s war of liberation from the Americans is about to begin. In other words, the real and frightening story starts now” (Fisk). There were two different stories, depending on whether it was coming from an embed or an independent journalist (Rockwell.)

Harris' explanation for his faulty reporting: "If that's what the Marine Corps reported, then that's what we reported" ("Did Former"). After living only four days within the unit, Harris bonded so closely with the soldiers in his unit that he began picking up military jargon. He exposed his readers to it in a March 27, 2003, article: "'Snowstorm, snowstorm, 3998,' came the call over the radio, the signal for an artillery or mortar attack and the attack coordinates" (Slagle).

*By using and explaining the Marines' peculiar argot, Harris creates a link between readers who may be unfamiliar with military terminology and the subculture of the Marines. This kind of telling detail suggests Harris might have a particular connection to the shibboleths of a culture that is presumably different from this own. (Slagle)*

According to James Martin, associate editor of *America: The National Catholic Weekly*, "Such euphemisms serve to insulate readers and viewers from the horrible realities of war" (Martin). By using military jargon, carefully selecting material that reflects positively on the military, and creating this bond between his readers and the soldiers in his unit, Harris promotes and adds credibility to the military's story (Galloway) without seeking the truth or checking for accuracy with outside sources (Rockwell).

The war coverage Harris produced serves as just one example of the inherent problems of embedding journalists within military units. Sleeping, eating, working, and living within the armed forces, embeds bond so closely with the soldiers that they are incapable of providing accurate war coverage (Martin). There were some print embeds, given the time to reflect on their stories before submitting them for publication, who were able to provide a more comprehensive view of war than Harris did. However, many Americans did not read the print reports; the majority watched war coverage on television

(Rieder). The real challenge was for broadcast embeds, who usually reported live and therefore had little time for reflection (“Embedded”).

“TV viewers would never have guessed that during the day when U.S. troops made their first raid into Baghdad, between 2,000 and 3,000 Iraqi troops were killed” (Martin). Despite the presence of approximately 700 journalists embedded on the frontlines with United States armed forces when Baghdad fell in March 2003 (Strupp, “Embeds”), embeds provided American television viewers a sanitized and inaccurate account of situation on the ground. While there were reports of thousands of dead Iraqi soldiers and hundreds of destroyed military vehicles, embedded video coverage provided no indication of such damage. Viewers saw an explosive display of artillery, but there was no indication of what was hit (Friedman). Deaths as a result of fired weapons were almost never shown (“Embedded”).

The poor journalistic coverage by embeds of the fall of Baghdad and the 2003 Iraq War served to “insulate the military from accusations of destructiveness or cruelty” and was a desired and intended result of the embed system. The impact of journalism on public perception and military success in times of war in United States history played a key role in the Pentagon’s implementation of the embed program (Zeide). In other words, embedding is a result of the government’s reaction to the press’ role in previous wars.

Chapter 1: Government Restrictions on Early American War Correspondence

Throughout American history, the United States government has sought control of the media in times of war (Reddin van Tuyl). A brief examination of American wars and past media management tactics reveals the government's obsession with limiting the dissemination of negative news and criticism of the government and military. While the press initially was hindered by few government restrictions, policies to control the press have become more sophisticated and underhanded over time.

During the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the government had little reason to control the press. Journalists relied on eyewitnesses and official military reports ("America's"), and days and sometimes weeks would pass before reporters returned from the battlefield with information (Reddin van Tuyl). The partisan newspapers of the day were largely supportive of the war and openly criticized anti-war newspapers. Thus, the government saw no need for censorship: security risks were virtually absent because of the delay in publication, and newspapers were printing generally favorable news articles. In fact, General George Washington encouraged the growth of newspapers by donating paper to them because he believed the support found within their pages was imperative to a positive outcome of the war. Some contend that newspaper reports rallied support and were the driving force that encouraged the war to begin (Reddin van Tuyl).

Following America's first war, the government began establishing press controls. The United States government took steps to avoid opposition to the government by passing the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 ("War"). The Acts criminalized the writing of "any false, scandalous and malicious" statements against the government. They were

meant to “silence critics of the entrenched political powers” (Trager, Russomanno and Ross 99). President Thomas Jefferson opposed the Acts, however, and allowed them to expire in 1801. Nevertheless, it is argued that the presence of such laws – past or present – can cause a “chilling effect.” According to the chilling effect theory, the existence of such laws may discourage people from exercising their First Amendment free speech rights, including the right to criticize the government, because of fear of prosecution (Trager, Russomanno and Ross 99).

During the War of 1812 (1812-1815), America’s second war, the press was largely divided and newspapers faced several challenges (“America’s”). Republican newspapers generally supported the war, while Federalist newspapers tended to oppose it and were largely critical of the United States’ involvement. In response to the criticism, government officials expressed the need for controls on the press. However, the public often eliminated the government’s need to enact a formal press management program; when a newspaper published an unpopular, critical view, war supporters often retaliated, destroying a newsroom in one case. Editor Alexander Hanson of the *Federal Republican* failed in two attempts to reestablish his newspaper after his operation was destroyed (Reddin van Tuyll). There were, however, instances of government control of the press. For example, General Andrew Jackson jailed a newspaper editor who failed to comply with his request for pre-publication review of all articles (“America’s”).

By the third American conflict, the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), new technologies had developed that had the potential of allowing the press to send reports to their editors with unprecedented swiftness (Reddin van Tuyll). However, despite the introduction of the telegraph and Pony Express, the hostilities occurred at such a distance

that news stories were old news by the time they were disseminated (“America’s”). Reporters spent days traveling to the closest big city to access a telegraph to send their stories. Because so much time would lapse before reports became available to readers, censorship and military-media tension were almost nonexistent. However, the relationship between the military and the media would change after the Mexican War, and improved technology and expanded use of the telegraph brought government control of war correspondence to the forefront (Reddin van Tuyll).

The effect of technological advancements on reporting caused tensions to arise between the military and the media during the Civil War (1861-1865). It was during this conflict that a “natural cultural divide between an organization that inherently values saluting smartly and a profession that encourages questioning authority” was first seen (Baker). As evidence of this tension, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman called journalists “dirty newspaper scribblers who have the impudence of Satan” (Slagle). Thus, the press was fighting a battle as well. “[N]ewspaper production technologies, as well as information dissemination technologies, were sufficiently sophisticated and swift that injudicious reporting could influence the outcome of battles or campaigns” (Reddin van Tuyll). It was a challenge never before experienced by the military or press. Also, with the enemies at such little distance, the impact of the press on the war was paramount (Reddin van Tuyll). In this light, the Civil War was very much a media war.

By the start of the war in 1861, telegraph lines and railroads were widespread; information could be disseminated in hours rather than days, fast enough to impact the war’s outcome (Reddin van Tuyll). The technological improvements had a consequence: war correspondents began circulating sensitive information in newspapers, often to the

benefit of the enemy and much to the dismay of the military. “Union General William T. Sherman, in a letter to his wife, admitted that he used intelligence gathered from Southern newspapers in planning his campaigns” (Reddin van Tuyl). In response to the growing tension, the government began managing the message through various forms of censorship (Slagle).

With the intent of controlling the press, the War Department prohibited use of telegraph lines by journalists (Slagle). Some reporters were able to find ways to transmit their messages in less than three days, but the telegraph restriction curbed news flow (Reddin van Tuyl). In addition to banning use of the telegraph, the Union government went so far as to shut down newspapers they deemed to have a negative impact on the war. And while Union General Ulysses Grant claimed to be too busy to censor reports, he did remove reporters who revealed information on future operations from the battleground (Reddin van Tuyl). In the South, correspondents were forbidden from being on the front lines altogether, and stories were subject to pre-publication censorship (Slagle). Civil War press policies reflected the government’s growing mistrust for journalists.

The Spanish-American War (1898) marks a significant step in governmental control of the press in times of war, as President William McKinley had developed a media management plan by the time United States’ involvement was approved by Congress. On the day the war was approved, President McKinley directed an Army chief to occupy the offices of seven of the nation’s major telegraphs and censor articles that featured sensitive information (Slagle). The trend of establishing a media strategy along

with the military strategy would continue throughout America's involvement in future wars (Reddin van Tuyl).

President McKinley's desire to control the press may have been a result of hype published about the war in the country's newspapers. The Spanish-American War occurred when yellow journalism was in full throttle. It is argued that editors William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* created the war in the pages of their newspapers as a result of their circulation-boosting tactics, such as sensationalism. "[H]istorians point to the Spanish-American War as the first press-driven war" ("Yellow"). Hearst and Pulitzer romanticized American soldiers and ignored hindrances for the United States. Because these newspapers garnered support for the war and despite initial restraints on the press, government attempts at censorship were minimal (Reddin van Tuyl). Often referred to as "the journalists' war," subsequent military conflicts would impose more restrictions on the press (Reddin van Tuyl).

Press controls were vast during World War I (1914-1918). Throughout the conflict, "the American government went to extraordinary lengths to maintain a monopoly on information" (Slagle). The first tactic to control news flow was the United States War Department's implementation of a strict process of credentialing war correspondents. Before journalists could be accredited to cover the war from the front lines, the system required journalists to make an appearance before the secretary of war, promising to tell the truth in his reports and to never publish sensitive operational information; to submit an autobiography detailing what he hoped to do in Europe and where exactly he planned on going; pay \$1,000 to the Army for equipment and other

expenses; post a \$10,000 bond to guarantee he would “comport himself as a gentleman of the press;” agree to wear an armband adorned with a red “C;” and pay an additional \$500 to the Army if he desired to bring an assistant (Reddin van Tuyll). Clearly, the process was rigorous. The procedure was meant to eliminate reporters who were likely to tell stories from a perspective different from the military’s (Reddin van Tuyll). Moreover, after receiving credentials, “journalists were accompanied at all times by officers who determined where they could travel, censored their reports and even read their private letters” (Slagle). And despite the availability of the technology, transmission of still pictures and film over the telegraph was prohibited (“War”).

The Espionage Act of 1917 was another restraint the government imposed on the press. “The law was, as its name suggests, directly concerned with spying and the protection of military secrets. But the proposed law also included several provisions that directly affected journalists” (Slagle). Among the provisions were three key components of censorship. First, the government prohibited the dissemination of any material containing information considered to be “useful to the enemy.” Secondly, a “disaffection provision” banned all reports that could lower troop morale or impede with troop operations. Finally, the act stipulated that the United States postmaster general could refuse delivery of newspapers containing “treasonous or anarchic character” (Slagle). Such vague wording allowed the government to punish just about any information they disliked. The Act was intended to rally and maintain support for the United State’s involvement in the war (Trager, Russomanno and Ross 71).

Nearly a year later, President Woodrow Wilson introduced an amendment to the Espionage Act. The Sedition Act of 1918 outlawed “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or

abusive language” of or concerning the United States government or military (Slagle). As a result of such laws, the credentialing of reporters, censorship, “general agreement that the war was necessary,” and other techniques the government used to manipulate the news, the press’ reports were usually favorable and supportive of the war (Reddin van Tuyll).

The imposition of such restraints on the news media – and the overwhelmingly positive news reports – stemmed from President Wilson’s strong belief that public perception of the conflict largely would determine the outcome of the war (Strauber). As a result of that belief and for the first time during war, the United States government employed public relations techniques to sway public opinion toward approval of the war. “The PR industry is a product of the early twentieth century. It grew out of what was then the world’s largest propaganda campaign, waged by Woodrow Wilson’s administration to get the American public to support U.S. entry into the First World War” (Strauber). The president’s advisors convinced him that America would need to engage in both a propaganda and military war to guarantee success (Ewen). Thus, “The world’s first experience with total war became wedded with the nation’s first systematic and institutionalized national program of propaganda” (Wells).

Less than a week after the declaration of United States’ participation in the war, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was formed. “[V]irtually every person in society whose work had to do with influence became essentially drafted into the ranks of the CPI. It was an extraordinarily intricate propaganda apparatus” (Ewen). In addition to the nationwide placing of posters that were intended to mobilize support for the war, and giving speeches in the nation’s schools, movie theaters, and plays, the Committee also

sent about 6,000 news releases to the American press, which newspapers tended to print unedited (“Reporting”). The CPI’s Division of News also disbursed its own pro-war newspapers (Wells). Since the First World War, public relations has played a major role in media management during wartime.

An example of the executive branch’s tendency to say one thing and do another also took place in World War I. In Wilson’s campaign for the presidency in 1916, he assured Americans the United States would not become involved in the war. However, the nation entered the battle the following year (Ewen). Such deceptiveness on the part of the government was especially prevalent in the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Walker).

Press restraints and public relations in World War II (1939-1945) closely mirrored those of the First World War, but there were a few added dimensions (“America’s”). The first addition was the Office of Censorship. The Office’s 14,462 employees inspected all mail, radio, and cable transmissions (“Reporting”), and issued a Code of Wartime Practices that encouraged voluntary self-censorship among the news media (Cooper). The Committee on Public Information was eliminated and replaced by the Office of War Information, which distributed press releases meant to mobilize support for the war (Cameron) and broadcast on radio pro-American propaganda (“Reporting”). And that is not all the spin the government put on this war.

Journalists were, effectively, embedded during this conflict, and the government managed them with press pools. After living with the soldiers and wearing military uniforms (Harris), the news media became loyal to their subjects. “Marine correspondents were soldiers first and correspondents second ... correspondents received a baby Hermes typewriter in addition to the regulation M-1 rifle” (Reddin van Tuyll).

Also, accounts from the front lines generally featured human interest stories and did not accurately reflect the overall context of the war (Reddin van Tuyl). Such stories served to “disguise the brutality of war, maintain a united home front and cover up any instances of military incompetence or miscalculation” (Slagle).

*A good example of how well the voluntary censorship worked is the atomic bomb story. Some journalists were aware that the bomb was under development, but they wrote little about it until August 6, 1945, the day Hiroshima was bombed. William Laurence, a New York Times science writer, had written a secret history of the Manhattan Project, but his editors never knew the nature of the project. As a reward for his discretion, he was allowed to go along when Nagasaki was bombed. (Reddin van Tuyl)*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s strict war management program likely was motivated by new technologies that brought the war closer to Americans. In the Second World War, sound became available in addition to film and pictures of the hostilities (“Reporting”). The sounds and sights of war made the conflict more real to Americans than ever before; accordingly, the government sought to maximize positive public perception. To do so, newsreels from combat – largely edited and produced by the government – that were weeks, sometimes months, old were played in movie theaters across the country to sell the United State’s side of the story (Hogg). Also, President Roosevelt regularly addressed the nation via radio in his “fireside chats,” which have been called one of the greatest public relations campaigns of all time (“Top 10”).

At the beginning of the Korean War (1950-1953), there were no clear-cut restrictions on journalists. But after two correspondents were banished for reporting information the military considered useful to the enemy (Slagle), the press asked for formal rules in hopes for consistency from the censors (Naparstek). Reports from Korea endured “double censorship;” they were censored once by the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Headquarters and

reviewed again in Tokyo. The censorship channels through which dispatches were required to go slowed transmission considerably (Reddin van Tuyl). Although television had been invented, it was not a major source of war news for Americans because the technology was brand new and so few people owned a set (Humphries). This would change, however, less than a decade later in Vietnam, when television and technological advances brought about a new kind of war reporting (“War”).

Chapter 2: The Vietnam Problem and Subsequent Handling of the Media

“TV coverage was critical to attitudes about the war effort because a whopping 60 per cent of Americans got their war news from television” during the Vietnam War (Reddin van Tuyl). The power of television presented new problems for the United States government. Vietnam (1965-1973) was the first war to be visually broadcast virtually in entirety. It was the first war in which journalists openly questioned government briefings. It was the first war in which the military felt a loss of control over the press. Many military and government officials continue to believe negative news coverage undermined the military’s ability to win the war (Slagle). President Richard Nixon said, “The war in Vietnam was not lost on the battlefields of Vietnam. It was lost... in the editorial rooms of great newspapers” (Howell).

Much like the World Wars, war correspondents were essentially embedded in Vietnam (“War”). They would stay with troops for periods of days, reporting on the war from the frontlines. In contrast to the previous system, journalists needed only immunizations, a passport, and a letter from their news organizations to be considered valid war reporters (“War”). In a war without censorship (Reddin van Tuyl), television broadcasts continuously depicted the gory reality of the war to American television sets. Thus, Vietnam has been labeled “the living room war” (Howell). The raw and bloody pictures of war were exposed daily to a public who had never seen such devastation. “[M]ore than words, pictures hit Americans in the gut with the cruelty of war” (Rollings-Foley). After watching one casualty after another, public support for the war declined (“War”).

Newspaper accounts during the Vietnam conflict also had an impact on public perception of the war (“War”). Print reporters often revealed inconsistencies between what reporters knew as truth and information the United States government disseminated (Berkowitz). Details in newspaper articles often conflicted with daily government briefings that came to be known as the “five o’clock follies” because of their inaccuracy. Such revelations caused the public to lose trust in the government, and Americans began to question and oppose United States involvement in Vietnam (“War”).

In reaction to the negative coverage, President Richard Nixon took steps to ensure positive coverage – and therefore positive public perception – of the war (“War”). The government began to shape military operations around the media; in effect, the military strategy was, at the same time, a media management plan. For example, President Nixon distanced journalists from the war through the launching of a top-secret air war. Only high-ranking officials were aware of the strategy and his intentions: to convince the American public the war was over by reducing images of death and destruction disseminated by the mass media. By converting from a ground war to an air war, journalists had little to no access to combat, and Americans received sanitized images and reports of the war (Burr and Kimball). The government would continue to use tactics that reduced the possibility of negative news coverage.

“America’s first post-Vietnam conflict, the 1983 invasion of Grenada, was characterized by extreme secrecy” (Slagle). President Ronald Reagan restricted war correspondence altogether for most of the conflict by simply forbidding reporters from entering the tiny island, and “some officials even blatantly misled the press by denying initial invasion reports” (Walker). Just as the fighting was basically over and the

presence of protesting Grenadans subsided, the government arranged press pools that were escorted by military personnel in which very few reporters were allotted access to the battlefield, and censors determined which information could be disseminated (Kirby). “[T]he pool was essentially a guided five-hour tour by the military, which had left many questions were unanswered” (Walker). Also, it was common in Grenada for press briefings to be cancelled and for correspondents’ film, pictures, and audio to be seized by the government. Public relations officers disseminated the bulk of war information, much of it propaganda (Slagle). The news media “questioned how it could serve its watchdog role if controlled so strictly” (Cameron).

Restrictions on the media were similar when the United States invaded Panama (1989). The government prohibited all media representatives from covering the conflict until the major hostilities had ceased (Walker). Once the fighting died down, a press pool of only 16 journalists was flown to Panama, but those correspondents faced considerable delays before they could file stories. And transportation problems delayed the arrival of many reporters (Mordan). “Even as hordes of other reporters arrived on the scene, the pool was kept locked in a room on a U.S. military base” (Walker). Also, the government followed the trend of keeping details undisclosed in Panama. Fred Hoffman, a Pentagon correspondent for the Associated Press who was formerly a spokesman for the Department of Defense, held then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney responsible for the conflict because of an "excessive concern for secrecy" (Walker).

These heavy press restrictions and government secrecy were not only motivated by the negative press coverage and public perception that was thought to have caused the United States to lose the Vietnam War. Improvements in technology that allow

Americans to witness the war in real time also motivated the government to tighten media controls (Sullivan). David Mindich, journalism chairman at St. Michael's College, says "it was the invention of the videophone that ended the Pentagon's heavy-handed treatment of journalists which began with the Grenada and Panama" (Sullivan). In the following conflicts, media controls became as sophisticated as the technology (Slagle).

During the First Gulf War (1990-1991), press coverage was strictly managed and reporters faced harsh restrictions, including a media "blackout" (Slagle).

*[J]ournalists were denied free access to the theater of operations during deployment and combat, and were restricted by a system of military escorts, pooled coverage, and military review of copy for its potential to disclose classified information. (Cooper)*

A prominent complaint among pooled correspondents was the lack of "access to people and battlefronts" (Mordan). While approximately 1,500 media representatives traveled to the region, the military accommodated less than 200 in its press pools (Mordan). And those in the pools witnessed very little. "With few exceptions, journalists were not present when American ground units engaged the enemy" (Slagle). Furthermore, correspondents were required to be accompanied by a military officer when in the combat zone and to ask for permission before speaking with soldiers (Reddin van Tuyl). Because of these restrictions, correspondents acquired most of their information from press briefings (Slagle). "The press was caught in a situation that forced them to rely on official sources, like it or not" (Mordan).

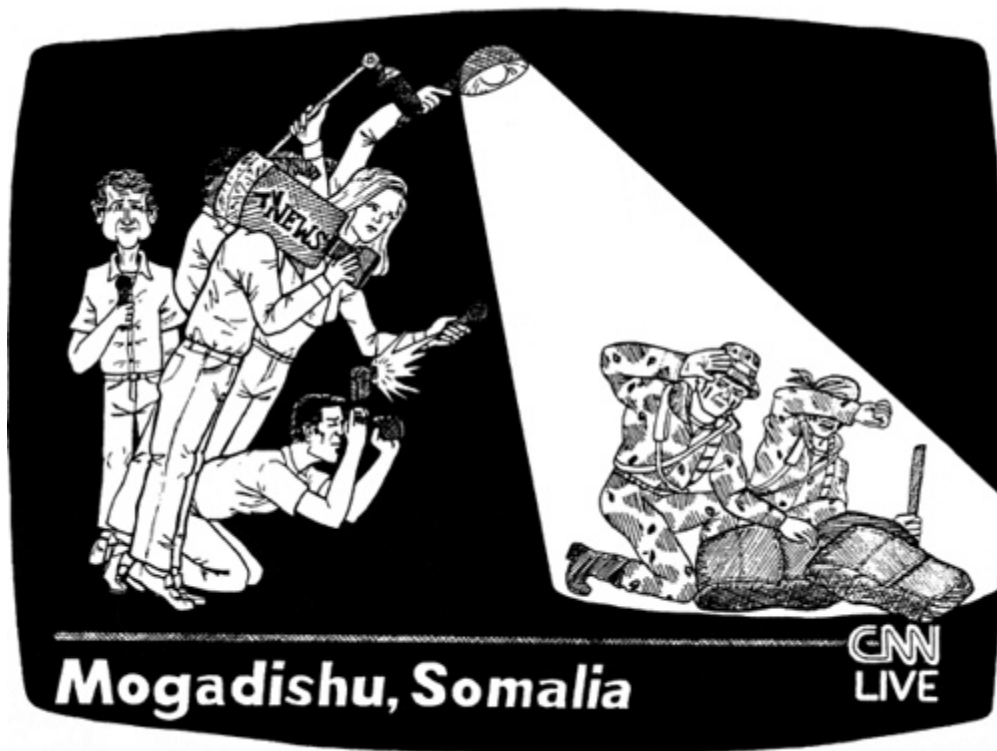
Other chief complaints pertained to government restrictions that diluted the effectiveness of news reports (Slagle). For instance, transmission of stories was slow despite technology allowing instant dissemination. This significantly reduced the news value and impact of the media's accounts. "Delays of any length make news reports

dated; delays of three days made reports worthless” (Mordan). Strict censorship reduced the value of media reports, as well (Cameron). The degree of censorship was unparalleled; “military censors not only wanted to control the information that got relayed home, but also the perceived reality of events” (Reddin van Tuyll).

Accordingly, media management in the Persian Gulf War was a public relations stunt of unprecedented measure (Mordan). “[T]he government successfully co-opted the mainstream media for use in its immense propaganda campaigns prior to and during the war,” as evidenced by their forced reliance on official briefings (Slagle). The Defense Department focused most of its PR efforts on the broadcast media, as television was the most popular source of war news among Americans. Instead of allowing messages to go through “filters,” the government candidly addressed Americans on television (Slagle). In addition, “The Pentagon helpfully supplied television networks with footage of ‘smart bombs’ homing in on their targets and the Baghdad skyline lit up at night by the explosion of Patriot missiles” (Slagle), but those videos featured no indication of the damage caused by those weapons (Stauber and Rampton).

It is charged that the government used news organizations to circulate propaganda and oftentimes flat-out lies (Slagle). Thus, the Pentagon’s media program and the use of press pools were roundly condemned (Berkowitz). The restrictions were so severe that lawsuits have been filed against the government for its Gulf War I media strategy on the grounds that it imposed unconstitutional prior restraints and that the battlefield is an open forum in which all journalists have the right of access to information (Cooper). In response to such opposition, the government tried another media technique in future conflicts.

During the American intervention in Somalia (1993), President Bill Clinton completely reversed policies. He arranged for the media to show up before the military, notifying the press of the exact time United States armed forces would arrive to Mogadishu. It was a “Pentagon photo op that got out of hand” (Naureckas). In fact, there were more media crews on hand than military personnel (Coggins). “[I]n my memory the icon of media coverage of Somalia was the American forces landing on the beach. And cameras lighting special forces trying to make a sneak attack which was, of course, ridiculous,” says Claus Klebler, bureau chief of ARD German Television (“CNN Effect”). In fact, it was so ridiculous that it led to the publication of this editorial cartoon:



Knowing there would be an absence of hostility, the government did not set up a program to restrict reporters. Rather, it used modern technology to its advantage, staging this

public relations campaign to sell its justification for intervening and to increase support from the American public (Coggins).

During the American conflicts following Vietnam, the government has emphasized the importance of positive public perception in United States success (Berkowitz). It has therefore practiced public relations approaches to sell its story of war and bolster positive media coverage (Zeide). These tactics are designed to control the use of advanced technology, which can affect public perception of the war in mere minutes (Marlantes). The most outright example of this came in 2003 when Gulf War II began.

Chapter 3: Modern Technology and Pentagon Spin

*“For the news media, Operation Iraqi Freedom was considered to be the first ‘real’ digital war. News crews have ‘lipstick cameras, satellite videophones, laptop video editing, and portable TV-transmission dishes” (Miracle).*

*“No war in human history has been chronicled more constantly in real time, with reporters and photographers as close to the shifting frontlines as they have ever been, with communications equipment they have never had” (qtd. in Friend).*

Considering the fiasco presented by open reporting in Vietnam and the criticism for its handling of the media in the Persian Gulf War (Berkowitz), the Pentagon experimented with a new form of media management in the Iraq War (Friend). Its desire was to maximize positive coverage and reduce unfavorable news in the midst of controversy surrounding the United States’ involvement in Iraq. That goal is explicitly affirmed within the program’s ground rules: “[M]edia coverage of any future operation will, to a large extent, shape public perception ...” (United States). To accomplish a positive public perception, the government consulted public relations experts and designed the embed program around the latest technology (Berkowitz).

"[T]he electronic age has pushed wartime news gathering to an entirely new level of urgency" (Friend). A key challenge Defense Department officials faced when devising the Iraq War media strategy was modern communications equipment, which allows instant dissemination of information. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Larry Cox, who played a role in the development of the ground rules for the embed program, explains,

*We have real-time satellite reporting now. We didn't have that even ten years ago. We didn't have the level of competition that the information technology age has produced — the twenty-four hour news coverage, the proliferation of competition in print media and on the Internet. (Cox)*

In an era of 24-hour news, the Internet, and video phones and communication satellites with the capability of transmitting stories and images directly to America from the combat zone in just seconds, Cox acknowledges that “reporters would likely find ways to cover the conflict on their own, regardless of approval;” that is why the Pentagon invited so many reporters to join its formal media program (Cox).

The power of video phones and the Internet in revealing government and military scandals was indeed experienced during the Iraq War. However, the revelations did not come about from journalists, but soldiers. In 2004, 17 American soldiers were accused of various abuses, including torture and sexual humiliation, on detainees at the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison (“Court”). The Army began investigating the scandal after a United States soldier and military police officer at the facility, Joseph Darby, incidentally came across pictures depicting the abuses and gave his commanders a full CD of photographs (Hersh). Pictures of the torture, many of them taken on digital cameras and camera phones that were sent via satellite, as well as criticism of the American government and military, spread on the Internet like wildfire (Seijdel). The scandal, in addition to other war news, also was constantly discussed on 24-hour news programs and Web logs, or blogs (Hogg).

The constant coverage of the prison scandal in all mass communication mediums quickly revealed that the cruel interrogation methods were part of former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s top-secret operation. Referred to in code words such as “Copper Green,” the operation’s mission was to acquire intelligence on suspected terrorists (Hersh). In a previous instance of secrecy, Vice President Dick Cheney worked to keep out of public knowledge the fact that the United States government had intercepted – but had not yet interpreted – two messages from terrorists before the

September 11, 2001, attacks (Moyers). These are only two examples of secretive behavior that is typical of the current executive branch. "The Bush administration has put a much tighter lid than recent presidents on government proceedings and the public release of information, exhibiting a penchant for secrecy that has been striking to historians, legal experts and lawmakers of both parties" (Clymer).

Although the exposure of the Abu Ghraib incident could not have been foreseen by Pentagon officials, they did recognize the ability of current technology to disseminate such stories when drafting the embed program. The system was "designed to keep up with news cycles in every time zone" (Berkowitz). According to the official responsible for launching the program, Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary Bryan Whitman, "We said, what is it we need to do, given the type of conflict we're going to be engaged in, the global information environment we find ourselves in ... and the way we knew the war would be covered" (qtd. in Marlantes). After considering those aspects, the government decided the best way to sell its story would be to set in motion a "public-relations experiment of unprecedented size and scope" (Sides).

In fact, the Department of Defense official largely credited for forming the embed program has a rich public relations history. Victoria Clarke, assistant secretary of defense for public affairs at the time, was the general manager of the Washington, D.C., Hill & Knowlton office when the world-renowned public relations firm worked in conjunction with Citizens for a Free Kuwait to mislead the public during the First Gulf War (Berkowitz). During a 1990 Human Rights Caucus meeting,

*the most emotionally moving testimony... came from a 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl, known only by her first name of Nayirah. According to the Caucus, Nayirah's full name was being kept confidential to prevent Iraqi reprisals against her family in occupied Kuwait. Sobbing, she*

*described what she had seen with her own eyes in a hospital in Kuwait City. Her written testimony was passed out in a media kit prepared by Citizens for a Free Kuwait. "I volunteered at the al-Addan hospital," Nayirah said. "While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers come into the hospital with guns, and go into the room where . . . babies were in incubators. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators, and left the babies on the cold floor to die" (Stauber and Rampton).*

This story was persistently discussed in the media. It worked wonders in rallying support for the war, which began three months later. With no eyewitnesses and no proof of the story, however, it was later revealed that Nayirah was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States, Sheikh Saud Nasir al-Sabah. Hill & Knowlton developed the whole scheme for the Kuwait government, who intended to mislead the American people and encourage the war (Berkowitz). According to John MacArthur, a critic and author,

*Of all the accusations made against the dictator, none had more impact on American public opinion than the one about Iraqi soldiers removing 312 babies from their incubators and leaving them to die on the cold hospital floors of Kuwait City. (qtd. in Stauber and Rampton)*

The incident exemplified how the media not only communicates public opinion, but also regulates public perception. It reiterated to the government that, "By keeping media coverage under control, it is possible to sway the general public towards affirmation or rejection of the war" (Eilders). The "CNN Effect" theory posits that the broadcast media have the greatest ability to affect the public's attitude ("CNN Effect").

In addition to that public relations campaign and her work at Hill & Knowlton, Clarke has served as president of Bozell Eskew Advertising, spokesperson for the National Cable Television Association, and press secretary for President George H.W. Bush's reelection campaign (Berkowitz). She knows how to sell a story. As a testament to her knowledge in manipulating information to appear favorably, she has written

Lipstick on a Pig: Winning in the No-Spin Era by *Someone Who Knows the Game* (italics added for emphasis) (“About”).

Approximately three months after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when the United States began to fight in Afghanistan against the terrorist groups al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the Defense Department confined reporters to a warehouse so as to prevent them from covering casualties caused by a stray bomb. Clarke soon apologized to the media for the restriction and promised more open press access to the battle zone (Berkowitz). Shortly after that incident, the embed program was introduced under the pretext that it would allow reporters “maximum, in-depth coverage” (United States).

Clarke, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld – “a master at controlling the message” (Barnhart) – and the rest of the spinsters in the Pentagon carefully crafted the embed system’s ground rules to “indicate an official stance of openness” (Zeide). The rules state the question should be “why not release?” rather than “why release?” and that the regulations “are in no way intended to prevent release of derogatory, embarrassing, negative or uncomplimentary information” (United States).

The official justification for the embed program is one of openness, as well. One of the key factors that make up the government’s public rationale for a system of embedded reporters is to “counter enemy propaganda” (Bushell and Cunningham). That stated goal, however, reveals the underlying objective of embedding; as the foe’s propaganda “presumably casts United States tactics in an unfavorable light,” the Pentagon’s actual intent was to eliminate critical, uncomplimentary coverage (Zeide). It desired to highlight the positives and downplay any negative coverage (Jensen). Another government-stated aim of embedding war correspondents was to “document the heroic

efforts” of the United States armed forces (Marlantes). Pentagon officials state that the most effective manner of doing so is to allow professional journalists to witness and report on the war (Bushell and Cunningham).

Clarke told the American public the embed program was intended to reveal to Americans “the good, the bad, and the ugly” aspects of war, and that safety concerns should not be an excuse to prevent embeds from witnessing troop operations (qtd. in Cox). And General Tommy Franks has called the program a “platform for truth” (Harley). However, “One way to judge ... the embedded system on the public is to pay attention to what military officials were saying ... the goal of any military is not to distribute truth but to control the flow of information” (Jensen).

Thus, the embed program raised an important question: why would this secretive administration and the military “go to such lengths to accommodate so many journalists?” (Sides)

Chapter 4: The Reality and Implications of the Embed Program

“Despite its media-friendly stance, embedding imposes limitations on press access and substantive coverage that raise First Amendment concerns about governmental distortion of the news ...” (Zeide). While the program is presented as a vehicle that encourages thorough and comprehensive war coverage, in actuality, it has dire consequences on professional journalism and is highly restrictive (Jensen). Embedding is appealing on paper, but in practice, it forces journalists to violate journalism codes of ethics and act as public relations agents for the United States government and military (Burnett).

The embed system is centered around relationships, a tactic called a “brilliant strategy” by Katie Delahaye Paine in a public relations trade journal, *The Measurement Standard*. Paine wrote, “The better the relationship any of us have with a journalist, the better the chance of that journalist picking up and reporting our messages” (Paine). Accordingly, the Pentagon carefully constructed the ground rules to ensure that embedded journalists would develop a tight relationship with the soldiers on whom they were reporting (Martin).

Are journalists still journalists when they live the lives of soldiers? Chantal Escoto, an embed from *The Leaf-Chronicle* in Clarksville, Tenn., had experiences similar to other reporters who were embedded: sleeping only two to three hours in a tent or military vehicle, eating lukewarm MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), and waiting days, weeks, or even months before her next shower (Bartholomew). “In these circumstances, the close contact of the journalist and the personnel in the military unit the journalist is

assigned to unleashes a spiraling process of increasing self-disclosure” (Pfau). Living in this environment with the soldiers, embeds share “everything from bags of Skittles and baby wipes to stark terror” (Ricchiardi). They talk about past and current loves, family members, and other personal details, as if they are best friends or part of each others’ family (Marlantes). Jack Gruber, an embedded photographer for *USA Today*, said of his unit, “These guys are all brothers, and it’s like I’m in their family” (Ricchiardi).

According to *Los Angeles Times* independent reporter Sam Howe Verhovek, that is a serious consequence of embedding – military troops tend to view those within their units as family, and reporters therefore have difficulty remaining objective and distanced from their sources (Shafer).

It was also difficult for embeds to remain objective because they had to rely heavily on the military. “The program’s structure nurtures an extreme dependency, exerting both practical and psychological pressures [to cover the war favorably] that even the most professionally scrupulous journalist will have difficulty resisting” (Zeide). Embedded reporters must depend on the armed forces for transportation and protection (United States). The battlefield was so dangerous that many media outlets arranged for their reporters to enter counseling upon returning from the war (Strupp, “Papers”). Ann Scott Tyson of *The Christian Science Monitor* lived in a tent with two embeds who were later killed and also flew in the helicopter that carried the late David Bloom’s and others’ body bags (Strupp, “Papers”). Despite this danger, however, embedded reporters are prohibited from bringing their own vehicles and using weapons (United States); they are therefore dependant on the military for their stories and their lives (Friend). “A visceral sense of loyalty is only natural when your source is literally keeping you alive” (Zeide).

The uncertain conditions of the combat zone increase embeds' dependence on soldiers (Pfau). One embed, Gordon Dillow of the *Orange County Register*, describes his experience:

*The physical hardships were constant. Sandstorms, rainstorms — once in southern Iraq there was a rainstorm during a sandstorm — mud, dust, suffocating heat in the day, teeth-chattering cold at night, sleeping on the ground, or in the ground in shallow “fighting holes” that we had to dig ourselves with entrenching tools. In the desert, precious water was for drinking only; like the Marines, I went more than a month without a shower. (Dillow)*

In such a “constrained environment ... journalists cannot afford to alienate the limited sources available” – doing so would be both impractical and dangerous (Zeide). In terms of practicality, publishing uncomplimentary stories about one's unit could cause soldiers to engage in an information blackout (Zeide).

*The embed program allows military officials significant discretion, enabling them to decide which media organizations are assigned to what unit, what information to reveal to which reporters, and when to perform security review. The press runs the risk of potential backlash—removal from the program, military reticence, or poor placement in a subsequent program—after publishing unsupportive materials. (Zeide)*

Psychological pressures also tell the embedded journalist that publishing information that casts the military in a negative light could put in jeopardy the embed's safety and military protection (Martin). In that situation, the embedded journalist shies away from reporting aggressively and is unable to fulfill his or her duty of holding the military liable for its actions (“Society”).

The idea that hazardous, unpredictable conditions on the battlefield accelerated the bond that caused embeds to report favorably on the military and its operations is a

phenomenon explained by a theory centered around “relational trust” and the “hot conditions” of combat (Pfau). According to the theory,

*Embedded journalists ... become so dependent on their military partners for their stories and their safety that they come to identify with the soldiers, thus abandoning their professional detachment and allowing themselves to be co-opted into reporting more favorably – and less skeptically – than the facts may warrant. (King and Lester)*

The loss of objectivity is inevitable when journalists are living with military troops in the war zone, as the “process is sped up whenever uncertainty is high and the conditions are dangerous,” when it is referred to as “swift trust” (Pfau). The United States government designed the embed program with the knowledge that journalists’ living conditions and forced dependency on soldiers would foster positive coverage (Cox).

Surrounded by a single group of soldiers, embeds are “vulnerable to emotional bonding that could sway news judgment” (Ricchiardi). Dillow admits how living with soldiers affected his reporting:

*I didn't hide anything. For example, when some of my Marines fired up a civilian vehicle that was bearing down on them, killing three unarmed Iraqi men, I reported it – but I didn't lead my story with it, and I was careful to put it in the context of scared young men trying to protect themselves. Or when my Marines laughed about how .50-caliber machine gun bullets had torn apart an Iraqi soldier's body, I wrote about it, but in the context of sweet-faced, all-American boys hardened by a war that wasn't of their making. (Dillow)*

Dillow explains that he was not reporting what he knew to be contrary to truth; rather, the military’s truth had become his truth. “Isolated from everyone else, you start to see your small corner of the world the same way they do” (Dillow).

Perhaps the most outright example of embeds’ loss of objectivity was the common use of the word “we.” CNN's Walter Rodgers used the word "we" on April 6,

2003, in reference to himself and his unit (“Rodgers”). He started a trend that would continue throughout the war (Jensen). Retired Colonel Richard M. Bridges says it was evidence of how close Rodgers felt to his unit and how well he understood the soldiers. He became so accustomed to their presence and identified with them so closely “that he could say ‘we’ without thinking” (Bridges). In another instance, Jim Axelrod, an embed for CBS News, said on air he just attended a military intelligence briefing, where “we've been given orders,” swiftly changing his statement to “soldiers have been given orders” (qtd. in Jensen). Hussein Ibish, ADC Communications director, asserts that many embeds seemed to have “joined the team” (Wattad).

“I found myself falling in love with my subject. I fell in love with ‘my’ marines,” one embed said (Dillow). Embedded reporters confirmed suspicions that they had become teammates with the soldiers in their units. For example, Peter Jennings, an embed from ABC, said, “Our reporters do not say things on air that they do not clear with their local commanders” (qtd. in “Caught”). And the late David Bloom, an embedded reporter for NBC News, said, “[The soldiers] have done anything and everything that we could ask of them, and we in turn are trying to return the favor by doing anything and everything that they can ask of us” (Jensen). The effect of this cooperation was that “the marines sounded much more like choirboys than they really are” (Dillow).

The United States military took advantage of the one-sided coverage from embedded journalists to further its cause (Ricchiardi). A National Public Radio embed, John Burnett, says the armed forces used positive coverage from embedded correspondents “as instruments to reflect the accomplishments and glory of the United States Marine Corps” (Burnett). He heard one military officer state, “Money can’t buy

this kind of recruitment campaign” (Burnett). Apparently, “The Pentagon’s gamble that reporters would come to identify with their units and thus provide more favorable coverage proved a winning strategy” (Martin).

Although some argue that embedded journalists are at fault for the lopsided coverage, the program was deliberately structured to create that effect (King and Lester). “While good reporters strive for objectivity and professional distance, especially when covering such an important topic as war, journalists would have to be robots not to identify with the soldiers ...” (Martin). That raises several ethical dilemmas of the embedding system.

“The price paid for being embedded was giving up one’s independent judgment” (Friend). Nearly every journalism ethics code, specifically the Society of Professional Journalists’ (SPJ) and Radio-Television News Directors Association’s (RTNDA) codes, cite the importance of reporters remaining independent from their sources and working in an atmosphere free of outside influence. SPJ advises ethical journalists to reject special treatment from sources that could influence journalistic judgment (“Society”). However, because reporters must depend on the military not only for their stories, but for their safety and transportation as well (United States), it is impossible for them to “determine news content solely through editorial judgment ...” (“RTNDA”).

*You were put in a position where you would certainly not be antagonistic to the kids that you were involved with and admired, and you went in, in those conditions, without having the ability like I had in other wars to check things out for myself. So in effect I was putting myself in a position to be a propagandist, which was great for the Pentagon, but not so great for the readers. (qtd. in Payne)*

The embed program was consciously structured to eliminate reporters' independence and ability to objectively determine news content, thereby generating pro-American war coverage (Zeide).

The elimination of objectivity and independence amongst embedded reporters began at "media boot camp," a basic military training program for journalists (Mazzetti). "The idea was to give members of the Fourth Estate a taste of military grunt life" (Crock) and to jump-start the development of embeds' relationship with members of the United States armed forces (Miracle). Stan Crock, national security correspondent for *BusinessWeek*, describes his experience at the training:

*First came the rigor of jam-packed 17-hour-days. Then there was the designation of two platoons with three 10-person squads in each platoon. It didn't take long for intrasquad camaraderie to develop. Through some ineluctable process, we ended up sitting with other squad members at meals and on the bus, even though we weren't required to do so. It was easy to see how the fabled bonds of a unit – and a determination never to leave an injured buddy behind – could develop rapidly. (Crock)*

The experience has been likened to the Stockholm Syndrome, a social science theory that attempts to explain situations in which hostages become sympathetic to their captors, or for example, why battered wives stay with abusive husbands. In recent history, it also has been used to describe changes military personnel endure in military basic training (Henson). The effect of the syndrome is that the victim takes on the view of the captor or people in charge and disregards his or her original stance (Sethi). The same process occurs with embedded reporters. "[J]ournalists who agree to go with combat units effectively become hostages of the military" (Bushell and Cunningham). *Los Angeles Times* embed John Hendren affirms the application of Stockholm Syndrome to embedded

journalism: “You definitely have a concern about knowing these people so well that you sympathize with them ...” (qtd. in Miracle).

To further ensure the process of losing objectivity and reporting favorably on the military occurs, a rule was drawn up confining journalists to one unit during their entire tenure as embeds (United States). “An embed is precisely an embed,” Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary Whitman explains. “You stay with that unit and you stay with that unit for as long as you want to stay with that unit” (Clarke). Leaving a unit, however, means the journalist’s only option is to report as an independent, or unilateral (United States). Several embeds inquired about leaving their units – perhaps because they sensed a loss of objectivity – but once reminded that they would not be allotted another embed slot, decided to stay (Strupp, “Embeds”). In order to gain access to the frontlines, embedded reporters must pay the price of control to the military (Bushell and Cunningham).

Independent journalists – unilaterals – generally experienced more dangerous conditions than embeds, as they traveled without the protection of United States troops (Galloway). Those independents who used their own transportation to travel alongside military units tended not to report aggressively, though, because of the fear that the armed forces would not provide them with food, fuel, and information after seeing an uncomplimentary story (Burnett). Clarke constantly discouraged independent reporting throughout the war, citing the dangerous conditions unilaterals experienced (Clarke) as a means to intimidate reporters into embedding (Berkowitz). That strategy, however, directly contradicts RTNDA’s code stating that journalists’ reports should be influenced

by neither fear nor intimidation, but strictly by objective, independent journalistic judgment (“RTNDA”).

In addition to experiencing increased dangers, independent reporters often found it challenging to come across military sources who were willing to provide them with information (Shafer). With the embedded system in place, embeds became “official reporters” to whom marines would generally provide information (Ricchiardi), and independents were reduced to a “second-class role” (Shafer). “[T]he unilaterals were often treated as pests with no right to the battlefield. In many instances, the military prevented unilaterals from covering the war ...” (Shafer). Hence, the one unit rule – and the embed program, in general – has drawn criticism because it creates a credentialing system among war correspondents, similar to the licensing of reporters in World War I (Shafer).

The Radio-Television News Directors Association Code of Ethics states, “any professional or governmental licensing of journalists is a violation” of accepted ethical journalistic practices (“RTNDA”). While the licensing is not formal, it is apparent in the treatment independent reporters received. For example, independent reporter Jeffrey Goldberg of *The New Yorker* says, “Some GIs wouldn’t talk to him because he was a unilateral but would speak to the embed standing nearby” (Shafer). The Pentagon’s program has brought about “embedding induced favoritism” (Zeide).

Similarly, one of the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics principal guidelines is to “Act Independently” (“Society”). But government agencies with the purpose of discouraging hard-hitting, independent reporting exist. *PR Week* reported that the Coalition Press Information Center's major function is to "discourage 'rogue'

[unembedded] journalists from venturing into dangerous areas by providing the information they might otherwise attempt to get on their own" (qtd. in Berkowitz). The government's goal is to deliver the military's story to independent reporters who are not "under the spell or direct control of the U.S. Marines" (Rockwell). Media critic Bill Berkowitz says the Pentagon's strategy to control the media is to "thoroughly embed them, surround them with PR enablers, and spread a little fear amongst those not embedded" (Berkowitz). That strategy also directly contradicts RTNDA's code stating that journalists' reports should be influenced solely by objective, independent journalistic judgment, and not by fear or intimidation ("RTNDA").

Military commanders also intimidated and spread fear amongst embeds. Exposed to sensitive information, four embedded reporters were threatened by a commander:

*"If I see any of this in the papers," he warned with a glare, "I'll find you and cut your fucking balls off." The four of us, all experienced journalists from major American news organizations, laughed a bit nervously. He didn't. "I'm serious as a heart attack," he cut in. "I'll find you and make you hurt."* (Baker)

But the Pentagon has created the false perception that the program is "minimally restrictive" (United States) and that embeds can report what they want, when they want (Zeide).

In reality, unit commanders have the right to pre-publication censorship, ultimately giving the military the ability to determine what information is published (Jensen). "The information we do get appears largely accurate, but much obfuscation is hidden behind the need for Op. Sec.: Operational Security" (Shipman). Specifics such as troop location, troop strength, and information regarding future operations are listed as grounds for operational security censorship (United States), but "in practice, [operational

security] could be defined as whatever field commanders want to censor” (Jensen). That allows unit commanders too much discretion in determining what makes the news (Zeide).

Embeds’ rules often varied “depending on the discretion of officers who were more or less media-friendly” (Zeide). Peter Baker, embedded with the Combat Operations Center, explains, “because we would be privy to classified information about everything from troop locations to future missions, we signed a specially drafted contract beyond the normal embed rules” (Baker). Because military censors can impose stricter rules than the basic ground rules and have the final say in what information is disseminated, correspondents are not in a position where “holding those with power accountable” is possible (“Society”). And by giving the military editorial power, embeds are not allowed the opportunity to “resist their pressure to influence news coverage” (“Society”).

The military’s influence on embedded reports is not limited to operational security censorship and the implementation of supplemental, more stringent rules in certain units; commanders are also in the position to decide which stories embeds are exposed to (Burnett). Coverage of the fall of Baghdad serves as a strong example of the impact of commanders having the power to determine where embeds are transported. While embeds could see a “‘tremendous pyrotechnics display’ of outgoing artillery fire,” the targets that were hit and the destruction caused by the weapons were never seen. The military either quickly got rid of the bodies and other ruins before other troops arrived on the scene, or they deliberately maneuvered around the targets (Friedman). In this way, marines have the ability to manipulate what is covered in the news. In this way, the

military has the power to use journalists to sell its side of the story. In this way, professional embedded journalists became public relations representatives for the United States government and armed forces (Jensen).

“The message is rigidly controlled” in several other ways (Shipman). For example, the Department of Defense restricted information flow through “security at the source,” which means “withholding unauthorized material from those without proper clearance” (Zeide). The concept of security at the source has the same implications of classifying information because of operational security risks; as correspondents never are exposed to the information, the grounds for withholding the information go unquestioned (Burnett). Managing the message also included the daily routine of Pentagon officials determining what information could be distributed to media briefers and the “Boys on the Base” (Shipman). “The inability to verify the military’s version ... made for one-sided reporting” (Burnett). Because embeds’ sources were almost always limited to armed services personnel, they did not have the ability to “present a diversity of expressions, opinions, and ideas in context” (“RTNDA”) and acted as unfiltered mouthpieces for the government (Jensen).

To further maximize positive coverage and eliminate stories that were critical of the United States military, five to six public relations personnel were hired for each military division in which reporters were embedded (Berkowitz). A key responsibility of the PR agents, a Pentagon official revealed, is to “keep tabs” on embeds (qtd. in Berkowitz). The embedding of public relations agents amongst reporters embedded within military troops created a “conflict of interest” between journalists, who are trusted to provide accurate, balanced information, and the cause of public relations, which seeks

to put a positive spin on stories (“Society”). The Pentagon’s media manipulation program transformed professional journalists into spokespeople for the United States government and military (Burnett).

Embeds’ transformation into public relations agents is demonstrated not only by the pro-American tone of their stories, but also by the scope of the coverage (Rockwell). By limiting embedded correspondents to one unit of the armed services, the Pentagon effectively limited the war coverage Americans received (Friedman).

*Embedded journalists are attached to specific units in order to provide a close-up and intimate view of war. As such, embedded reporters focus on in-depth coverage of the unit they are assigned to, but they are unable to provide a broad overarching view of military operations. Embedded reporters offer “a very narrow view of what’s going on,” more of a “snapshot” of combat. What is lost in the process is context, which requires the ability to step back from the micro content and view the war through more expansive lenses. (Pfau)*

“You go, and you embed with a unit, and you experience that unit and those people from start to finish, and you understand their essence,” says Lieutenant Colonel Richard Long (Williard). Accordingly, much of the embedded coverage consisted of human-interest pieces that focused on the smaller picture, instead of “hard news” that sought to explain the overall, complex state of the war (Zeide).

Human interest pieces included stories about "journalists training with troops, journalists learning how to put on gas masks and journalists explaining why their particular unit was one of the most important in the war" (Martin). While these types of stories were very interesting and provided amazing pictures of the battle zone, they served to take attention away from the hostilities and provided little, if any, useful information (Jensen). “There's nothing inherently wrong with that kind of reporting,”

*National Journal* embed George Wilson explains, “but because it was so dominant, the larger story – namely, the near absence of organized resistance – was lost amid all the ‘purple prose’” (qtd. in Marlantes). The abundance of human-interest stories was an example of “extended coverage of events or individuals that fails to significantly advance a story, place the event in context, or add to the public knowledge,” a violation of journalism ethics (“RTNDA”).

"The most common criticism of the embedded reports is that they are only isolated pieces of a larger mosaic, and that relying too heavily on them would thus skew the picture viewers get" ("Embedded"). Critics say embedding is similar to sitting second in a dog sled, "with the ability to see only what lies directly ahead and behind" (Marlantes). Embeds have also been compared to a rugby commentator, "who can only see one end of the field, and cheers enthusiastically when a try is scored but knows nothing about how many times the line is crossed at the other end of the field" (Jamieson). *Los Angeles Times* embedded reporter David Zucchino states, "Often I was too close, or confined, to comprehend the war's broad sweep. I could not interview survivors of Iraq civilians killed by U.S. soldiers ... I had no idea what ordinary Iraqis were experiencing" (qtd. in Rockwell). Rather than being in a position allowing “maximum, in-depth coverage” (United States), embedded journalists were highly restricted and lacked the resources to “give voice to the voiceless” (“RTNDA”).

Cox, the lieutenant colonel who contributed to the development of the embed program, explains, "it is the type of coverage that's looking through a soda straw at a particular point in time on the battlefield" (Cox). And former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld acknowledges that embeds can provide insight only on small “slices” of the

war (“Embedded”). “When embedded reporters comment on the action unfolding before their eyes, their reporting seems highly realistic, but it is in fact highly distorted – it shows only a very narrow slice of the war, told from a very particular angle” (“Media”).

Because the ground rules confine reporters to one unit and restrict them from using their own transportation, embeds cannot gain further perspective than what is occurring within their units. The coverage often is accurate, “but not in overall context” (Bauder). Journalists who do not have a full grasp of the situation cannot properly assess the conflict nor accurately commentate on it (Jamieson). The restrictions placed on embedded reporters eliminate their ability to abide by ethics codes urging that correspondents report “accurately, in context, and as completely as possible” (“RTNDA”).

In fact, within the first few days of the war, *Editor and Publisher’s* Greg Mitchell, editor, named fifteen reports in which the press got it “wrong or misreported a sliver of fact into a major event” (Mitchell). Among the events, Mitchell cites:

## 15 Stories They've Already Bungled

by Greg Mitchell

Editor and Publisher, March 27, 2003

1. *Saddam may well have been killed in the first night's surprise attack (March 20, 2003).*
2. *Even if he wasn't killed, Iraqi command and control was no doubt "decapitated" (March 22, 2003).*
3. *Umm Qasr has been taken (March 22, 2003).*
4. *Most Iraqis soldiers will not fight for Saddam and instead are surrendering in droves (March 22, 2003).*
5. *Iraqi citizens are greeting Americans as liberators (March 22, 2003).*
6. *An entire division of 8,000 Iraqi soldiers surrendered en masse near Basra (March 23, 2003).*
7. *Several Scud missiles, banned weapons, have been launched against U.S. forces in Kuwait (March 23, 2003).*
8. *Saddam's Fedayeen militia are few in number and do not pose a serious threat (March 23, 2003).*
9. *Basra has been taken (March 23, 2003).*
10. *Umm Qasr has been taken (March 23, 2003).*
11. *A captured chemical plant likely produced chemical weapons (March 23, 2003).*
12. *Nassiriya has been taken (March 23, 2003).*
13. *Umm Qasr has been taken (March 24, 2003).*
14. *The Iraqi government faces a "major rebellion" of anti-Saddam citizens in Basra (March 24, 2003).*
15. *A convoy of 1,000 Iraqi vehicles and Republican Guards are speeding south from Baghdad to engage U.S. troops (March 25, 2003).*

Many embeds admit that they felt uncertain about the information they were provided by their military sources; NPR's Burnett "couldn't shake the sense that we were cheerleaders on the team bus" (Burnett). And embed Mark Mazzetti of the *U.S. News & World Report* "had trouble determining whether the Marines were spinning him and his three fellow embeds" (Shafer). But despite having no outside way of confirming information (Shafer), embeds were obligated to fulfill their journalistic responsibility of enlightening the public of their findings ("Society"). As a result, embedded correspondents often reported inaccurate accounts and "went through a roller coaster of false alarms" (Baker). While the media ultimately set the stories straight, "the initial lie usually travels further and with more effect on the public memory than subsequent corrections" (Jensen).

The system also causes embeds to "highlight incidents out of context" ("Society") by requiring that 72 hours elapse or next of kin notification is verified before identifying casualty information is disclosed (United States). As a result of this restriction, viewers were exposed to a sanitized war with little bloodshed (Martin). A Project for Excellence in Journalism study that evaluated war coverage in three of the first, most intense days of the hostilities revealed that there were no stories from embeds depicting victims injured by weapons ("Embedded") although there were thousands of casualties (Martin). And newspapers almost never acquired from embedded correspondents photographs portraying those who had been injured or killed (King and Lester). "The ban ... impersonalizes the enemy, reduces the appearance of American brutality, and suppresses horrific images like those disseminated during the Vietnam War" (Zeide). The Defense Department's goal in implementing the rule was to minimize negative perceptions of

American involvement in the war (Martin). “In the absence of such restrictions, more explicit coverage might prompt greater disapproval of a conflict” (Zeide).

While the casualty rule formally allows non-identifying information and pictures to be released before the mandatory waiting period, the military kept embeds so far from the action that images rarely captured the essence of the fatalities and injuries (Rosenstiel). The sanitized coverage of the fall of Baghdad is an example (Friedman). Too often, embeds complained that they had no way of determining what had been hit after witnessing marines shoot off bombs and other ammunition. Embedded journalists explain, “Without our own transportation or translators, embedded reporters lived exclusively within the reality of the U.S. military” (Burnett). And because the Defense Department limited the number of embeds per unit, “it was unrealistic to expect two-person television teams working under such conditions with inadequate equipment to do much more than they did” (Friedman). As embeds were placed in such situations and often were exposed to a sanitized version of the war, they relayed to Americans a clean and unrealistic account of the hostilities (Friend).

The Pentagon’s desire to minimize coverage that would cast the military in a negative light was coupled with the objective of maximizing “messages and images that make American victory appear all but inevitable” (Barnhart). By allowing embedded correspondents to witness the vast outgoing American artillery fire but prohibiting them from seeing and reporting the associated casualties and damage, the government successfully sold its Shock and Awe campaign (Friedman).

*Shock and awe is a military doctrine similar to the guerilla Terror doctrine that calls for attempting to directly influence your adversary's will, perception, and understanding of events by inducing a state of shock and awe. It is not intended to replace*

*the traditional military aim of destroying the adversary's military capability, but instead to integrate that destruction into a larger suite of actions intended to produce the psychological effect of "breaking the enemy's will to fight." ("Shock")*

According to Harlan Ullman, who developed the war strategy at the National Defense University of the United States, Shock and Awe is aimed at psychologically tearing down the enemy to the point that he gives up through a dramatic display of weapon strength. On both of the first two days of the Iraq War, the United States launched three to four hundred cruise missiles; that is more than were launched throughout the complete duration of the First Gulf War ("Iraq Faces"). The constant exploding of bombs – along with the lack of evidence of any significant aftermath – better resembled a “fireworks display” than explosives with the capability of killing people (Jensen).

Unexposed to the human element of the war’s consequences, embeds produced “gushing stories about the marvelous destructive capacity of the weaponry” (Jensen). The Project for Excellence in Journalism study reveals that among all the embedded reports featuring outgoing military fire, half showed “non-human targets such as buildings and vehicles” being hit and “viewers could see the firing but not see whether those weapons struck a target or not” in the other half (“Embedded”). Nonetheless, the images were incredible. “Television was simply stunning. The combination of technology and access made war a spectator event – you could see it as it happened. It was addictive” (Rieder). Embeds were the United States government’s key tool in promoting the Shock and Awe campaign (Barnhart). “To a large extent, the embedded system served the Pentagon well as propaganda. It conveyed the Pentagon's message, it touted the technological prowess of the U.S. military, and it fed the home audience a constant diet of U.S. bravery” (Jensen).

### Conclusion

The embed program has been short lived. At the end of 2006, only nine reporters remained embedded within military units, many of whom were working for military institutions (Vaina). Three of the embeds came from the Armed Forces' *Stars & Stripes*, and one from the Armed Forces Network (Warner). At one point, before the fall of Baghdad, there were nearly 800 embedded journalists from an interesting variety of media outlets (Strupp, "Embeds") – although it is said that only 50 to 70 were placed in units that witnessed any major action (Shafer). The majority of embeds came from respected news organizations such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, but there were also embeds from outlets such as *Men's Health* magazine and MTV (Martin).

While the Pentagon was able to dupe a wide variety of journalists into the program, it did not take long for reporters to realize that being embedded was preventing any chance of "seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues" ("Society"). Americans are seeking the truth, as well. Later in 2003, Clarke resigned for "personal reasons," but rumors have circled that she buckled under intense pressure from the public and media for honest information (Easton). Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld resigned, also. He offered to do so twice during the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, but stayed in the position until late 2006, when President Bush accepted his offer amidst extremely low approval rates ("Bush"). Clearly, Americans do not appreciate flat-out lies and highly restrictive governmental programs that are advertised as something they are not (Berkowitz).

In the future, it may be beneficial if all war correspondence are independent. The media could bring their own vehicles and fuel, “and travel like lampreys under a shark, under the protection of the Marines” (Burnett), but not under the “spell or direct control” of the armed forces (Rockwell). The media also should be more skeptical of new government media programs, considering the real intent and potential consequences (Jensen). The government indicates the desire to bring democracy to Iraq; “Democracy at home is precious too, and it requires media that are not cowed by ... government power ...” (“Media”).

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WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

INFO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OASD-PA/DPO//

UNCLAS

SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE (PAG) ON EMBEDDING MEDIA

DURING POSSIBLE FUTURE OPERATIONS/DEPLOYMENTS IN THE U.S.

CENTRAL COMMANDS (CENTCOM) AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (AOR).

REFERENCES: REF. A. SECDEF MSG, DTG 172200Z JAN 03, SUBJ:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE (PAG) FOR MOVEMENT OF FORCES INTO THE  
CENTCOM AOR FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE OPERATIONS.

1. PURPOSE. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES ON EMBEDDING NEWS MEDIA DURING POSSIBLE FUTURE  
OPERATIONS/DEPLOYMENTS IN THE CENTCOM AOR. IT CAN BE ADAPTED  
FOR USE IN OTHER UNIFIED COMMAND AORS AS NECESSARY.

2. POLICY.

2.A. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) POLICY ON MEDIA COVERAGE  
OF FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS IS THAT MEDIA WILL HAVE LONG-  
TERM,

MINIMALLY RESTRICTIVE ACCESS TO U.S. AIR, GROUND AND NAVAL  
FORCES THROUGH EMBEDDING. MEDIA COVERAGE OF ANY FUTURE  
OPERATION WILL, TO A LARGE EXTENT, SHAPE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF  
THE NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT NOW AND IN THE YEARS  
AHEAD.

THIS HOLDS TRUE FOR THE U.S. PUBLIC; THE PUBLIC IN ALLIED  
COUNTRIES WHOSE OPINION CAN AFFECT THE DURABILITY OF OUR  
COALITION; AND PUBLICS IN COUNTRIES WHERE WE CONDUCT  
OPERATIONS,

WHOSE PERCEPTIONS OF US CAN AFFECT THE COST AND DURATION OF  
OUR

INVOLVEMENT. OUR ULTIMATE STRATEGIC SUCCESS IN BRINGING PEACE  
AND SECURITY TO THIS REGION WILL COME IN OUR LONG-TERM  
COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING OUR DEMOCRATIC IDEALS. WE NEED TO  
TELL

THE FACTUAL STORY - GOOD OR BAD - BEFORE OTHERS SEED THE MEDIA  
WITH DISINFORMATION AND DISTORTIONS, AS THEY MOST CERTAINLY  
WILL

CONTINUE TO DO. OUR PEOPLE IN THE FIELD NEED TO TELL OUR STORY

– ONLY COMMANDERS CAN ENSURE THE MEDIA GET TO THE STORY ALONGSIDE THE TROOPS. WE MUST ORGANIZE FOR AND FACILITATE ACCESS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA TO OUR FORCES, INCLUDING THOSE FORCES ENGAGED IN GROUND OPERATIONS, WITH THE GOAL OF DOING SO RIGHT FROM THE START. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, WE WILL EMBED MEDIA WITH OUR UNITS. THESE EMBEDDED MEDIA WILL LIVE, WORK AND TRAVEL AS PART OF THE UNITS WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBEDDED TO FACILITATE MAXIMUM, IN-DEPTH COVERAGE OF U.S. FORCES

IN COMBAT AND RELATED OPERATIONS. COMMANDERS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO BALANCE THE NEED FOR MEDIA ACCESS WITH THE NEED FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY.

2.B. MEDIA WILL BE EMBEDDED WITH UNIT PERSONNEL AT AIR AND GROUND FORCES BASES AND AFLOAT TO ENSURE A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF ALL OPERATIONS. MEDIA WILL BE GIVEN ACCESS TO OPERATIONAL COMBAT MISSIONS, INCLUDING MISSION PREPARATION AND DEBRIEFING, WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

2.C. A MEDIA EMBED IS DEFINED AS A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE REMAINING WITH A UNIT ON AN EXTENDED BASIS - PERHAPS A PERIOD OF WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS. COMMANDERS WILL PROVIDE BILLETING, RATIONS AND MEDICAL ATTENTION, IF NEEDED, TO THE EMBEDDED MEDIA

COMMENSURATE WITH THAT PROVIDED TO MEMBERS OF THE UNIT, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO MILITARY TRANSPORTATION AND ASSISTANCE WITH COMMUNICATIONS FILING/TRANSMITTING MEDIA PRODUCTS, IF REQUIRED.

2.C.1. EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE NOT AUTHORIZED USE OF THEIR OWN VEHICLES WHILE TRAVELING IN AN EMBEDDED STATUS.

2.C.2. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, SPACE ON MILITARY TRANSPORTATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR MEDIA EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO COVER A

PARTICULAR OPERATION. THE MEDIA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOADING AND CARRYING THEIR OWN EQUIPMENT AT ALL TIMES. USE OF PRIORITY INTER-THEATER AIRLIFT FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA TO COVER STORIES, AS WELL AS TO FILE STORIES, IS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED. SEATS ABOARD VEHICLES, AIRCRAFT AND NAVAL SHIPS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALLOW MAXIMUM COVERAGE OF U.S. TROOPS IN THE FIELD.

2.C.3. UNITS SHOULD PLAN LIFT AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST IN MOVING MEDIA PRODUCTS TO AND FROM THE BATTLEFIELD SO AS TO TELL OUR STORY IN A TIMELY MANNER. IN THE EVENT OF COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULTIES, MEDIA ARE AUTHORIZED TO FILE STORIES VIA EXPEDITIOUS MILITARY SIGNAL/COMMUNICATIONS

CAPABILITIES.

2.C.4. NO COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY MEDIA IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR DUTIES WILL BE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED. HOWEVER, UNIT COMMANDERS MAY IMPOSE TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS ON

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSIONS FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY REASONS. MEDIA WILL SEEK APPROVAL TO USE ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN A COMBAT/HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED BY THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE. THE USE OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN FULL WHEN THE MEDIA ARRIVE AT THEIR ASSIGNED UNIT.

3. PROCEDURES.

3.A. THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS (OASD(PA)) IS THE CENTRAL AGENCY FOR MANAGING AND

VETTING MEDIA EMBEDS TO INCLUDE ALLOCATING EMBED SLOTS TO MEDIA

ORGANIZATIONS. EMBED AUTHORITY MAY BE DELEGATED TO SUBORDINATE

ELEMENTS AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES AND AT THE DISCRETION OF OASD(PA). EMBED OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE ASSIGNED TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS, NOT TO INDIVIDUAL REPORTERS. THE DECISION AS TO WHICH MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE WILL FILL ASSIGNED EMBED SLOTS

WILL BE MADE BY THE DESIGNATED POC FOR EACH NEWS ORGANIZATION.

3.A.1. IAW REF. A, COMMANDERS OF UNITS IN RECEIPT OF A DEPLOYMENT ORDER MAY EMBED REGIONAL/LOCAL MEDIA DURING PREPARATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT, DEPLOYMENT AND ARRIVAL IN THEATER

UPON RECEIPT OF THEATER CLEARANCE FROM CENTCOM AND APPROVAL OF

THE COMPONENT COMMAND. COMMANDERS WILL INFORM THESE MEDIA, PRIOR TO THE DEPLOYING EMBED, THAT OASD(PA) IS THE APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR ALL COMBAT EMBEDS AND THAT THEIR PARTICULAR EMBED

MAY END AFTER THE UNIT'S ARRIVAL IN THEATER. THE MEDIA ORGANIZATION MAY APPLY TO OASD(PA) FOR CONTINUED EMBEDDING, BUT

THERE IS NO GUARANTEE AND THE MEDIA ORGANIZATION WILL HAVE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AND PAY FOR THE JOURNALISTS' RETURN TRIP.

3.B. WITHOUT MAKING COMMITMENTS TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS, DEPLOYING UNITS WILL IDENTIFY LOCAL MEDIA FOR POTENTIAL EMBEDS

AND NOMINATE THEM THROUGH PA CHANNELS TO OASD(PA) (POC: MAJ  
TIM  
BLAIR, DSN 227-1253; COMM. 703-697-1253; EMAIL  
TIMOTHY.BLAIR@OSD.MIL). INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE FORWARDED  
INCLUDES MEDIA ORGANIZATION, TYPE OF MEDIA AND CONTACT  
INFORMATION INCLUDING BUREAU CHIEF/MANAGING EDITOR/NEWS  
DIRECTOR'S NAME; OFFICE, HOME AND CELL PHONE NUMBERS; PAGER  
NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES. SUBMISSIONS FOR EMBEDS WITH  
SPECIFIC UNITS SHOULD INCLUDE AN UNIT'S RECOMMENDATION AS TO  
WHETHER THE REQUEST SHOULD BE HONORED.

3.C. UNIT COMMANDERS SHOULD ALSO EXPRESS, THROUGH THEIR CHAIN  
OF COMMAND AND PA CHANNELS TO OASD(PA), THEIR DESIRE AND  
CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL MEDIA EMBEDS BEYOND THOSE  
ASSIGNED.

3.D. FREELANCE MEDIA WILL BE AUTHORIZED TO EMBED IF THEY ARE  
SELECTED BY A NEWS ORGANIZATION AS THEIR EMBED  
REPRESENTATIVE.

3.E. UNITS WILL BE AUTHORIZED DIRECT COORDINATION WITH MEDIA  
AFTER ASSIGNMENT AND APPROVAL BY OASD(PA).

3.E.1. UNITS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT ALL EMBEDDED  
MEDIA  
AND THEIR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SIGNED THE "RELEASE,  
INDEMNIFICATION, AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT AND AGREEMENT  
NOT  
TO SUE", FOUND AT  
[HTTP://WWW.DEFENSELINK.MIL/NEWS/FEB2003/D20030210EMBED.PDF](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/feb2003/d20030210embed.pdf).  
UNITS MUST MAINTAIN A COPY OF THIS AGREEMENT FOR ALL MEDIA  
EMBEDDED WITH THEIR UNIT.

3.F. EMBEDDED MEDIA OPERATE AS PART OF THEIR ASSIGNED UNIT. AN  
ESCORT MAY BE ASSIGNED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE UNIT  
COMMANDER.  
THE ABSENCE OF A PA ESCORT IS NOT A REASON TO PRECLUDE MEDIA  
ACCESS TO OPERATIONS.

3.G. COMMANDERS WILL ENSURE THE MEDIA ARE PROVIDED WITH EVERY  
OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE ACTUAL COMBAT OPERATIONS. THE  
PERSONAL  
SAFETY OF CORRESPONDENTS IS NOT A REASON TO EXCLUDE THEM  
FROM  
COMBAT AREAS.

3.H. IF, IN THE OPINION OF THE UNIT COMMANDER, A MEDIA  
REPRESENTATIVE IS UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE RIGOROUS CONDITIONS  
REQUIRED TO OPERATE WITH THE FORWARD DEPLOYED FORCES, THE  
COMMANDER OR HIS/HER REPRESENTATIVE MAY LIMIT THE  
REPRESENTATIVES PARTICIPATION WITH OPERATIONAL FORCES TO  
ENSURE

UNIT SAFETY AND INFORM OASD(PA) THROUGH PA CHANNELS AS SOON AS

POSSIBLE. GENDER WILL NOT BE AN EXCLUDING FACTOR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.

3.I. IF FOR ANY REASON A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN AN OPERATION, THEY WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO THE NEXT HIGHER HEADQUARTERS FOR THE DURATION OF THE OPERATION.

3.J. COMMANDERS WILL OBTAIN THEATER CLEARANCE FROM CENTCOM/PA FOR MEDIA EMBARKING ON MILITARY CONVEYANCE FOR PURPOSES OF EMBEDDING.

3.K. UNITS HOSTING EMBEDDED MEDIA WILL ISSUE INVITATIONAL TRAVEL ORDERS, AND NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL (NBC) GEAR.

SEE PARA. 5. FOR DETAILS ON WHICH ITEMS ARE ISSUED AND WHICH ITEMS THE MEDIA ARE RESPONSIBLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES.

3.L. MEDIA ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING THEIR OWN PASSPORTS AND VISAS.

3.M. MEDIA WILL AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE CENTCOM/OASD(PA) GROUND RULES STATED IN PARA. 4 OF THIS MESSAGE IN EXCHANGE FOR COMMAND/UNIT-PROVIDED SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO SERVICE MEMBERS, INFORMATION AND OTHER PREVIOUSLY-STATED PRIVILEGES. ANY VIOLATION OF THE GROUND RULES COULD RESULT IN TERMINATION OF THAT MEDIA'S EMBED OPPORTUNITY.

3.N. DISPUTES/DIFFICULTIES. ISSUES, QUESTIONS, DIFFICULTIES OR DISPUTES ASSOCIATED WITH GROUND RULES OR OTHER ASPECTS OF EMBEDDING MEDIA THAT CANNOT BE RESOLVED AT THE UNIT LEVEL, OR THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, WILL BE FORWARDED THROUGH PA CHANNELS FOR RESOLUTION. COMMANDERS WHO WISH TO TERMINATE AN EMBED FOR CAUSE MUST NOTIFY CENTCOM/PA PRIOR TO TERMINATION. IF

A DISPUTE CANNOT BE RESOLVED AT A LOWER LEVEL, OASD(PA) WILL BE THE FINAL RESOLUTION AUTHORITY. IN ALL CASES, THIS SHOULD BE DONE AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE TO PRESERVE THE NEWS VALUE OF THE SITUATION.

3.O. MEDIA WILL PAY THEIR OWN BILLETING EXPENSES IF BILLETED IN A COMMERCIAL FACILITY.

3.P. MEDIA WILL DEPLOY WITH THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO COLLECT AND TRANSMIT THEIR STORIES.

3.Q. THE STANDARD FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE TO ASK "WHY NOT RELEASE" VICE "WHY RELEASE." DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE ASAP, PREFERABLY IN MINUTES, NOT HOURS.

3.R. THERE IS NO GENERAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR MEDIA PRODUCTS. SEE PARA 6.A. FOR FURTHER DETAIL CONCERNING SECURITY AT THE

SOURCE.

3.S. MEDIA WILL ONLY BE GRANTED ACCESS TO DETAINEES OR EPWS WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949. SEE PARA. 4.G.17. FOR THE GROUND RULE.

3.T. HAVING EMBEDDED MEDIA DOES NOT PRECLUDE CONTACT WITH OTHER MEDIA. EMBEDDED MEDIA, AS A RESULT OF TIME INVESTED WITH THE UNIT AND GROUND RULES AGREEMENT, MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF ACCESS.

3.U. CENTCOM/PA WILL ACCOUNT FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA DURING THE TIME THE MEDIA IS EMBEDDED IN THEATER. CENTCOM/PA WILL REPORT CHANGES IN EMBED STATUS TO OASD(PA) AS THEY OCCUR.

3.V. IF A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE IS KILLED OR INJURED IN THE COURSE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS, THE UNIT WILL IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY OASD(PA), THROUGH PA CHANNELS. OASD(PA) WILL CONTACT THE RESPECTIVE MEDIA ORGANIZATION(S), WHICH WILL MAKE NEXT OF KIN NOTIFICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INDIVIDUAL'S WISHES.

3.W. MEDIA MAY TERMINATE THEIR EMBED OPPORTUNITY AT ANY TIME. UNIT COMMANDERS WILL PROVIDE, AS THE TACTICAL SITUATION PERMITS AND BASED ON THE AVAILABILITY OF TRANSPORTATION, MOVEMENT BACK TO THE NEAREST LOCATION WITH COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION.

3.W.1. DEPARTING MEDIA WILL BE DEBRIEFED ON OPERATIONAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AS APPLICABLE TO ONGOING AND FUTURE OPERATIONS WHICH THEY MAY NOW HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING.

4. GROUND RULES. FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF U.S. FORCES AND EMBEDDED MEDIA, MEDIA WILL ADHERE TO ESTABLISHED GROUND RULES. GROUND RULES WILL BE AGREED TO IN ADVANCE AND SIGNED BY MEDIA PRIOR TO EMBEDDING. VIOLATION OF THE GROUND RULES MAY RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE EMBED AND REMOVAL FROM THE AOR. THESE GROUND RULES RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF THE MEDIA TO COVER MILITARY OPERATIONS AND ARE IN NO WAY INTENDED TO

PREVENT RELEASE OF DEROGATORY, EMBARRASSING, NEGATIVE OR UNCOMPLIMENTARY INFORMATION. ANY MODIFICATION TO THE STANDARD

GROUND RULES WILL BE FORWARDED THROUGH THE PA CHANNELS TO CENTCOM/PA FOR APPROVAL. STANDARD GROUND RULES ARE:

4.A. ALL INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE MEMBERS WILL BE ON THE RECORD. SECURITY AT THE SOURCE IS THE POLICY. INTERVIEWS WITH PILOTS AND AIRCREW MEMBERS ARE AUTHORIZED UPON COMPLETION OF MISSIONS;

HOWEVER, RELEASE OF INFORMATION MUST CONFORM TO THESE MEDIA GROUND RULES.

4.B. PRINT OR BROADCAST STORIES WILL BE DATELINED ACCORDING TO LOCAL GROUND RULES. LOCAL GROUND RULES WILL BE COORDINATED THROUGH COMMAND CHANNELS WITH CENTCOM.

4.C. MEDIA EMBEDDED WITH U.S. FORCES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO CARRY PERSONAL FIREARMS.

4.D. LIGHT DISCIPLINE RESTRICTIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED. VISIBLE LIGHT SOURCES, INCLUDING FLASH OR TELEVISION LIGHTS, FLASH CAMERAS WILL NOT BE USED WHEN OPERATING WITH FORCES AT NIGHT UNLESS SPECIFICALLY APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE ON-SCENE COMMANDER.

4.E. EMBARGOES MAY BE IMPOSED TO PROTECT OPERATIONAL SECURITY. EMBARGOES WILL ONLY BE USED FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY AND WILL BE

LIFTED AS SOON AS THE OPERATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE HAS PASSED.

4.F. THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION ARE RELEASABLE.

4.F.1. APPROXIMATE FRIENDLY FORCE STRENGTH FIGURES.

4.F.2. APPROXIMATE FRIENDLY CASUALTY FIGURES BY SERVICE. EMBEDDED MEDIA MAY, WITHIN OPSEC LIMITS, CONFIRM UNIT CASUALTIES

THEY HAVE WITNESSED.

4.F.3. CONFIRMED FIGURES OF ENEMY PERSONNEL DETAINED OR CAPTURED.

4.F.4. SIZE OF FRIENDLY FORCE PARTICIPATING IN AN ACTION OR OPERATION CAN BE DISCLOSED USING APPROXIMATE TERMS. SPECIFIC FORCE OR UNIT IDENTIFICATION MAY BE RELEASED WHEN IT NO LONGER WARRANTS SECURITY PROTECTION.

4.F.5. INFORMATION AND LOCATION OF MILITARY TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES PREVIOUSLY UNDER ATTACK.

4.F.6. GENERIC DESCRIPTION OF ORIGIN OF AIR OPERATIONS, SUCH AS "LAND-BASED."

4.F.7. DATE, TIME OR LOCATION OF PREVIOUS CONVENTIONAL MILITARY MISSIONS AND ACTIONS, AS WELL AS MISSION RESULTS ARE RELEASABLE ONLY IF DESCRIBED IN GENERAL TERMS.

4.F.8. TYPES OF ORDNANCE EXPENDED IN GENERAL TERMS.

4.F.9. NUMBER OF AERIAL COMBAT OR RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS OR SORTIES FLOWN IN CENTCOM'S AREA OF OPERATION.

4.F.10. TYPE OF FORCES INVOLVED (E.G., AIR DEFENSE, INFANTRY, ARMOR, MARINES).

4.F.11. ALLIED PARTICIPATION BY TYPE OF OPERATION (SHIPS, AIRCRAFT, GROUND UNITS, ETC.) AFTER APPROVAL OF THE ALLIED UNIT COMMANDER.

4.F.12. OPERATION CODE NAMES.

4.F.13. NAMES AND HOMETOWNS OF U.S. MILITARY UNITS.

4.F.14. SERVICE MEMBERS' NAMES AND HOME TOWNS WITH THE

INDIVIDUALS' CONSENT.

4.G. THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION ARE NOT RELEASABLE

SINCE THEIR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST COULD JEOPARDIZE OPERATIONS AND ENDANGER LIVES.

4.G.1. SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TROOPS IN UNITS BELOW CORPS/MEF LEVEL.

4.G.2. SPECIFIC NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT IN UNITS AT OR BELOW THE AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING LEVEL.

4.G.3. SPECIFIC NUMBERS REGARDING OTHER EQUIPMENT OR CRITICAL SUPPLIES (E.G. ARTILLERY, TANKS, LANDING CRAFT, RADARS, TRUCKS, WATER, ETC.).

4.G.4. SPECIFIC NUMBERS OF SHIPS IN UNITS BELOW THE CARRIER BATTLE GROUP LEVEL.

4.G.5. NAMES OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS OF MILITARY UNITS IN THE CENTCOM AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY RELEASED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OR AUTHORIZED BY THE CENTCOM COMMANDER. NEWS AND IMAGERY PRODUCTS THAT IDENTIFY OR INCLUDE IDENTIFIABLE FEATURES

OF THESE LOCATIONS ARE NOT AUTHORIZED FOR RELEASE.

4.G.6. INFORMATION REGARDING FUTURE OPERATIONS.

4.G.7. INFORMATION REGARDING FORCE PROTECTION MEASURES AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR ENCAMPMENTS (EXCEPT THOSE WHICH ARE

VISIBLE OR READILY APPARENT).

4.G.8. PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWING LEVEL OF SECURITY AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR ENCAMPMENTS.

4.G.9. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.

4.G.10. INFORMATION ON INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION ACTIVITIES COMPROMISING TACTICS, TECHNIQUES OR PROCEDURES.

4.G.11. EXTRA PRECAUTIONS IN REPORTING WILL BE REQUIRED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES TO MAXIMIZE OPERATIONAL SURPRISE. LIVE BROADCASTS FROM AIRFIELDS, ON THE GROUND OR AFLOAT, BY EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE PROHIBITED UNTIL THE SAFE RETURN OF THE INITIAL STRIKE PACKAGE OR UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY THE UNIT COMMANDER.

4.G.12. DURING AN OPERATION, SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON FRIENDLY FORCE TROOP MOVEMENTS, TACTICAL DEPLOYMENTS, AND DISPOSITIONS

THAT WOULD JEOPARDIZE OPERATIONAL SECURITY OR LIVES.

INFORMATION ON ON-GOING ENGAGEMENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED UNLESS

AUTHORIZED FOR RELEASE BY ON-SCENE COMMANDER.

4.G.13. INFORMATION ON SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNITS, UNIQUE

OPERATIONS METHODOLOGY OR TACTICS, FOR EXAMPLE, AIR OPERATIONS, ANGLES OF ATTACK, AND SPEEDS; NAVAL TACTICAL OR EVASIVE MANEUVERS, ETC. GENERAL TERMS SUCH AS "LOW" OR "FAST" MAY BE USED.

4.G.14. INFORMATION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF ENEMY ELECTRONIC WARFARE.

4.G.15. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING POSTPONED OR CANCELED OPERATIONS.

4.G.16. INFORMATION ON MISSING OR DOWNED AIRCRAFT OR MISSING VESSELS WHILE SEARCH AND RESCUE AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS ARE BEING PLANNED OR UNDERWAY.

4.G.17. INFORMATION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF ENEMY CAMOUFLAGE, COVER, DECEPTION, TARGETING, DIRECT AND INDIRECT FIRE, INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, OR SECURITY MEASURES.

4.G.18. NO PHOTOGRAPHS OR OTHER VISUAL MEDIA SHOWING AN ENEMY PRISONER OF WAR OR DETAINEE'S RECOGNIZABLE FACE, NAMETAG OR OTHER IDENTIFYING FEATURE OR ITEM MAY BE TAKEN.

4.G.19. STILL OR VIDEO IMAGERY OF CUSTODY OPERATIONS OR INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONS UNDER CUSTODY.

4.H. THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES AND POLICIES APPLY TO COVERAGE OF

WOUNDED, INJURED, AND ILL PERSONNEL:

4.H.1. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE REMINDED OF THE SENSITIVITY OF USING NAMES OF INDIVIDUAL CASUALTIES OR PHOTOGRAPHS THEY MAY HAVE TAKEN WHICH CLEARLY IDENTIFY CASUALTIES UNTIL AFTER NOTIFICATION OF THE NOK AND RELEASE BY OASD(PA).

4.H.2. BATTLEFIELD CASUALTIES MAY BE COVERED BY EMBEDDED MEDIA AS LONG AS THE SERVICE MEMBER'S IDENTITY IS PROTECTED FROM DISCLOSURE FOR 72 HOURS OR UPON VERIFICATION OF NOK NOTIFICATION, WHICHEVER IS FIRST.

4.H.3. MEDIA VISITS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, OPERATIONS ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS BY ATTENDING PHYSICIANS. IF APPROVED, SERVICE OR MEDICAL FACILITY PERSONNEL MUST ESCORT MEDIA AT ALL TIMES.

4.H.4. PATIENT WELFARE, PATIENT PRIVACY, AND NEXT OF KIN/FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS ARE THE GOVERNING CONCERNS ABOUT NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOUNDED, INJURED, AND ILL PERSONNEL IN MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITIES OR OTHER CASUALTY COLLECTION AND TREATMENT LOCATIONS.

4.H.5. MEDIA VISITS ARE AUTHORIZED TO MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES, BUT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE MEDICAL FACILITY COMMANDER AND ATTENDING PHYSICIAN AND MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH MEDICAL

TREATMENT. REQUESTS TO VISIT MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES OUTSIDE THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES WILL BE COORDINATED BY THE UNIFIED COMMAND PA.

4.H.6. REPORTERS MAY VISIT THOSE AREAS DESIGNATED BY THE FACILITY COMMANDER, BUT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN OPERATING ROOMS

DURING OPERATING PROCEDURES.

4.H.7. PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW OR PHOTOGRAPH A PATIENT WILL BE GRANTED ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR FACILITY COMMANDER AND WITH THE PATIENT'S INFORMED CONSENT, WITNESSED BY THE ESCORT.

4.H.8. "INFORMED CONSENT" MEANS THE PATIENT UNDERSTANDS HIS OR HER PICTURE AND COMMENTS ARE BEING COLLECTED FOR NEWS MEDIA PURPOSES AND THEY MAY APPEAR NATIONWIDE IN NEWS MEDIA REPORTS.

4.H.9. THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR ESCORT SHOULD ADVISE THE SERVICE MEMBER IF NOK HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED.

5. IMMUNIZATIONS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR.

5.A. MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT MEDIA ARE PROPERLY

IMMUNIZED BEFORE EMBEDDING WITH UNITS. THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC)-RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT TO THE

MIDDLE EAST INCLUDE HEPATITIS A; HEPATITIS B; RABIES; TETANUS/DIPHTHERIA;

AND TYPHOID. THE CDC RECOMMENDS MENINGOCOCCAL IMMUNIZATIONS FOR VISITORS TO MECCA. IF TRAVELING TO CERTAIN AREAS IN THE CENTCOM AOR, THE CDC RECOMMENDS TAKING PRESCRIPTION

ANTIMALARIAL DRUGS. ANTHRAX AND SMALLPOX VACCINES WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE MEDIA AT NO EXPENSE TO THE GOVERNMENT (THE MEDIA

OUTLET WILL BEAR THE EXPENSE). FOR MORE HEALTH INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS TO THE MIDDLE EAST, GO TO THE CDC WEB SITE AT [HTTP://WWW.CDC.GOV/TRAVEL/MIDEAST.HTM](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/mideast.htm).

5.B. BECAUSE THE USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR, SUCH AS HELMETS OR FLAK VESTS, IS BOTH A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHOICE, MEDIA WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCURING/USING SUCH EQUIPMENT. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR, AS WELL AS CLOTHING, WILL BE SUBDUED IN COLOR AND APPEARANCE.

5.C. EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE AUTHORIZED AND REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED

WITH, ON A TEMPORARY LOAN BASIS, NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL (NBC) PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT BY THE UNIT WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBEDDED. UNIT PERSONNEL WILL PROVIDE BASIC INSTRUCTION IN THE

PROPER WEAR, USE, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EQUIPMENT. UPON TERMINATION OF THE EMBED, INITIATED BY EITHER PARTY, THE NBC EQUIPMENT SHALL BE RETURNED TO THE EMBEDDING UNIT. IF SUFFICIENT NBC PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA, COMMANDERS MAY PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, WITH FUNDS NORMALLY AVAILABLE FOR THAT PURPOSE, AND LOAN IT TO EMBEDDED MEDIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PARAGRAPH.

6. SECURITY

6.A. MEDIA PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO SECURITY REVIEW OR CENSORSHIP EXCEPT AS INDICATED IN PARA. 6.A.1. SECURITY AT THE SOURCE WILL BE THE RULE. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL SHALL PROTECT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FROM UNAUTHORIZED OR INADVERTENT DISCLOSURE. MEDIA PROVIDED ACCESS TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION, INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT CLASSIFIED BUT WHICH MAY BE OF OPERATIONAL VALUE TO AN ADVERSARY OR WHEN COMBINED WITH OTHER

UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION MAY REVEAL CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, WILL

BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE BY THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OR DISCLOSURE OF SUCH INFORMATION. WHEN IN DOUBT, MEDIA WILL CONSULT WITH THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE.

6.A.1. THE NATURE OF THE EMBEDDING PROCESS MAY INVOLVE OBSERVATION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, INCLUDING TROOP MOVEMENTS,

BATTLE PREPARATIONS, MATERIEL CAPABILITIES AND VULNERABILITIES AND OTHER INFORMATION AS LISTED IN PARA. 4.G. WHEN A COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT

A MEDIA MEMBER WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THIS TYPE OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, PRIOR TO ALLOWING SUCH ACCESS, HE/SHE WILL TAKE PRUDENT PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THAT INFORMATION.

THE PRIMARY SAFEGUARD WILL BE TO BRIEF MEDIA IN ADVANCE ABOUT WHAT INFORMATION IS SENSITIVE AND WHAT THE PARAMETERS ARE FOR COVERING THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION. IF MEDIA ARE INADVERTENTLY EXPOSED TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION THEY SHOULD BE BRIEFED AFTER EXPOSURE ON WHAT INFORMATION THEY SHOULD AVOID COVERING. IN INSTANCES WHERE A UNIT COMMANDER OR THE DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE DETERMINES THAT COVERAGE OF A STORY WILL INVOLVE

EXPOSURE TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION BEYOND THE SCOPE OF WHAT MAY

BE PROTECTED BY PREBRIEFING OR DEBRIEFING, BUT COVERAGE OF WHICH IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE DOD, THE COMMANDER MAY OFFER ACCESS IF THE REPORTER AGREES TO A SECURITY REVIEW OF THEIR COVERAGE. AGREEMENT TO SECURITY REVIEW IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS TYPE OF ACCESS MUST BE STRICTLY VOLUNTARY AND IF THE REPORTER DOES NOT AGREE, THEN ACCESS MAY NOT BE GRANTED. IF A SECURITY REVIEW IS AGREED TO, IT WILL NOT INVOLVE ANY EDITORIAL CHANGES; IT WILL BE CONDUCTED SOLELY TO ENSURE THAT NO SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE PRODUCT. IF SUCH INFORMATION IS FOUND, THE MEDIA WILL BE ASKED TO REMOVE THAT INFORMATION FROM THE PRODUCT AND/OR EMBARGO THE PRODUCT UNTIL SUCH INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE. REVIEWS ARE TO BE DONE AS SOON AS PRACTICAL SO AS NOT TO INTERRUPT COMBAT OPERATIONS NOR DELAY REPORTING. IF THERE ARE DISPUTES RESULTING FROM THE SECURITY REVIEW PROCESS THEY MAY BE APPEALED THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, OR THROUGH PA CHANNELS TO OASD/PA. THIS PARAGRAPH DOES NOT AUTHORIZE COMMANDERS TO ALLOW MEDIA ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

6.A.2. MEDIA PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE CONFISCATED OR OTHERWISE IMPOUNDED. IF IT IS BELIEVED THAT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION HAS BEEN COMPROMISED AND THE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE REFUSES TO REMOVE

THAT INFORMATION NOTIFY THE CPIC AND/OR OASD/PA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THE ISSUE MAY BE ADDRESSED WITH THE MEDIA ORGANIZATION'S MANAGEMENT.

7. MISCELLANEOUS/COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

7.A. OASD(PA) IS THE INITIAL EMBED AUTHORITY. EMBEDDING PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENT AUTHORITY MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO CENTCOM PA AT A LATER DATE. THIS AUTHORITY MAY BE FURTHER DELEGATED AT CENTCOM'S DISCRETION.

7.B. THIS GUIDANCE AUTHORIZES BLANKET APPROVAL FOR NON-LOCAL AND LOCAL MEDIA TRAVEL ABOARD DOD AIRLIFT FOR ALL EMBEDDED MEDIA

ON A NO-COST, SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS. NO ADDITIONAL COSTS SHALL BE INCURRED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IAW DODI 5410.15, PARA 3.4.

7.C. USE OF LIPSTICK AND HELMET-MOUNTED CAMERAS ON COMBAT SORTIES IS APPROVED AND ENCOURAGED TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

8. OASD(PA) POC FOR EMBEDDING MEDIA IS MAJ TIM BLAIR, DSN 227-1253, CMCL 703-697-1253, EMAIL TIMOTHY.BLAIR@OSD.MIL.



# Code of Ethics

## Preamble

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility.

Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

## Seek Truth and Report It

Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

### Journalists should:

- ▶ Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- ▶ Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.
- ▶ Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.
- ▶ Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.
- ▶ Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.
- ▶ Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.
- ▶ Avoid mislabeling re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.
- ▶ Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.
- ▶ Never plagiarize.
- ▶ Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.
- ▶ Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.
- ▶ Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.
- ▶ Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- ▶ Give voice to the voiceless: official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- ▶ Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- ▶ Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
- ▶ Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

## Minimize Harm

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

### Journalists should:

- ▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.
- ▶ Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- ▶ Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.
- ▶ Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.
- ▶ Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.
- ▶ Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- ▶ Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- ▶ Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

## Act Independently

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

### Journalists should:

- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- ▶ Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- ▶ Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- ▶ Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- ▶ Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- ▶ Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- ▶ Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

## Be Accountable

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

### Journalists should:

- ▶ Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.
- ▶ Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.
- ▶ Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.
- ▶ Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.
- ▶ Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.

## **CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT RADIO-TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION**

The Radio-Television News Directors Association, wishing to foster the highest professional standards of electronic journalism, promote public understanding of and confidence in electronic journalism, and strengthen principles of journalistic freedom to gather and disseminate information, establishes this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

### **PREAMBLE**

Professional electronic journalists should operate as trustees of the public, seek the truth, report it fairly and with integrity and independence, and stand accountable for their actions.

**PUBLIC TRUST:** Professional electronic journalists should recognize that their first obligation is to the public.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Understand that any commitment other than service to the public undermines trust and credibility.
- Recognize that service in the public interest creates an obligation to reflect the diversity of the community and guard against oversimplification of issues or events.
- Provide a full range of information to enable the public to make enlightened decisions.
- Fight to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public.

**TRUTH:** Professional electronic journalists should pursue truth aggressively and present the news accurately, in context, and as completely as possible.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Continuously seek the truth.
- Resist distortions that obscure the importance of events.
- Clearly disclose the origin of information and label all material provided by outsiders.

Professional electronic journalists should not:

- Report anything known to be false.
- Manipulate images or sounds in any way that is misleading.
- Plagiarize.
- Present images or sounds that are reenacted without informing the public.

**FAIRNESS:** Professional electronic journalists should present the news fairly and impartially, placing primary value on significance and relevance.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Treat all subjects of news coverage with respect and dignity, showing particular

compassion to victims of crime or tragedy.

- Exercise special care when children are involved in a story and give children greater privacy protection than adults.
- Seek to understand the diversity of their community and inform the public without bias or stereotype.
- Present a diversity of expressions, opinions, and ideas in context.
- Present analytical reporting based on professional perspective, not personal bias.
- Respect the right to a fair trial.

**INTEGRITY:** Professional electronic journalists should present the news with integrity and decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subjects of news.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Identify sources whenever possible. Confidential sources should be used only when it is clearly in the public interest to gather or convey important information or when a person providing information might be harmed. Journalists should keep all commitments to protect a confidential source.
- Clearly label opinion and commentary.
- Guard against extended coverage of events or individuals that fails to significantly advance a story, place the event in context, or add to the public knowledge.
- Refrain from contacting participants in violent situations while the situation is in progress.
- Use technological tools with skill and thoughtfulness, avoiding techniques that skew facts, distort reality, or sensationalize events.
- Use surreptitious newsgathering techniques, including hidden cameras or microphones, only if there is no other way to obtain stories of significant public importance and only if the technique is explained to the audience.
- Disseminate the private transmissions of other news organizations only with permission.

Professional electronic journalists should not:

- Pay news sources who have a vested interest in a story.
- Accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
- Engage in activities that may compromise their integrity or independence.

**INDEPENDENCE:** Professional electronic journalists should defend the independence of all journalists from those seeking influence or control over news content.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Gather and report news without fear or favor, and vigorously resist undue influence from any outside forces, including advertisers, sources, story subjects, powerful individuals, and special interest groups.
- Resist those who would seek to buy or politically influence news content or who would

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seek to intimidate those who gather and disseminate the news.

- Determine news content solely through editorial judgment and not as the result of outside influence.
- Resist any self-interest or peer pressure that might erode journalistic duty and service to the public.
- Recognize that sponsorship of the news will not be used in any way to determine, restrict, or manipulate content.
- Refuse to allow the interests of ownership or management to influence news judgment and content inappropriately.
- Defend the rights of the free press for all journalists, recognizing that any professional or government licensing of journalists is a violation of that freedom.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Professional electronic journalists should recognize that they are accountable for their actions to the public, the profession, and themselves.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Actively encourage adherence to these standards by all journalists and their employers.
- Respond to public concerns. Investigate complaints and correct errors promptly and with as much prominence as the original report.
- Explain journalistic processes to the public, especially when practices spark questions or controversy.
- Recognize that professional electronic journalists are duty-bound to conduct themselves ethically.
- Refrain from ordering or encouraging courses of action that would force employees to commit an unethical act.
- Carefully listen to employees who raise ethical objections and create environments in which such objections and discussions are encouraged.
- Seek support for and provide opportunities to train employees in ethical decision-making.

In meeting its responsibility to the profession of electronic journalism, RTNDA has created this code to identify important issues, to serve as a guide for its members, to facilitate self-scrutiny, and to shape future debate.

*Adopted at RTNDA2000 in Minneapolis September 14, 2000.*

## Biography

Lindsay Elaine Reilly was born in Columbus, Ohio, on September 14, 1986. She moved to Florence, South Carolina in the Fall of 2004 to pursue an undergraduate degree at Francis Marion University. She currently is a junior majoring in mass communication – convergence and Spanish and plans to graduate in May 2008. This thesis paper was completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree “With University Honors.” In Fall 2007, Lindsay will begin serving as managing editor of the FMU student newspaper, *The Patriot*.