A cameraman being prevented from photographing the arrival of a VIP, Sarajevo, 1992.

DND Photo ISC 92-5523 by Sgt Christian Coulombe

THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH OR NOTHING: A MEDIA STRATEGY FOR THE MILITARY IN THE INFORMATION AGE

By Colonel R.M. Williams

There is a great deal of difference between not releasing information and telling the truth. We're telling the truth, we are just not releasing some information.[1]

General Maurice Baril

The media today is all-pervasive and, to some, all-important. This is the Information Age, and it is now more important than ever that the military develop effective strategies to deal with information and the systems that handle it. It is also vital that the military understand and respect the role of the media as the principal conduit of information to the Canadian people. As BBC reporter Nik Gowing noted:

A failure to embrace constantly the new media realities of the "real-time tyranny" could yet leave the military struggling in a future conflict whether as war fighter or peace implementers in one of the new generation of "complex emergencies".[2]

The military deals with the media in both a direct and indirect manner, and there is an inherent tension between these two approaches. The activity known as public affairs (PA) manages the direct interface, while the indirect approach forms part of an emerging class of warfare known as information operations (IO). Public affairs and information operations have significantly different and occasionally contradictory doctrine and policies concerning misinformation, disinformation and deception. For example, American public affairs doctrine is clear and explicit in directing that information must be disclosed to the media and public completely and in a "timely and accurate" manner unless the information threatens "national or operations security, or the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces."[3] In contrast, US and Canadian operations doctrine is far more ambiguous on this issue, with an apparent openness to operational deception or other measures designed to "influence the adversary decision makers" to cease actions that may harm our interests.[4] However, from the point of view of the media, information released in either manner enters the public domain and can thereby influence decision-makers and the general public on both sides of a dispute. Any deception, therefore, represents a potential challenge to the operation of a free press that is critical to a free and open democratic society.

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The thesis of this paper is that the most effective strategy for the military in managing the military-media relationship is to use a truthful but realistic approach for both direct (PA) and indirect (IO) interactions with the media. This will require improved doctrine and an education process to enlighten the relationship between the military and media. To be effective, doctrine must address situations where the provision of complete and correct information could impair operational security or the safety of personnel in harm's way. The most effective strategy in such cases is almost certainly to provide no information at all, rather than attempt any deception or disinformation.
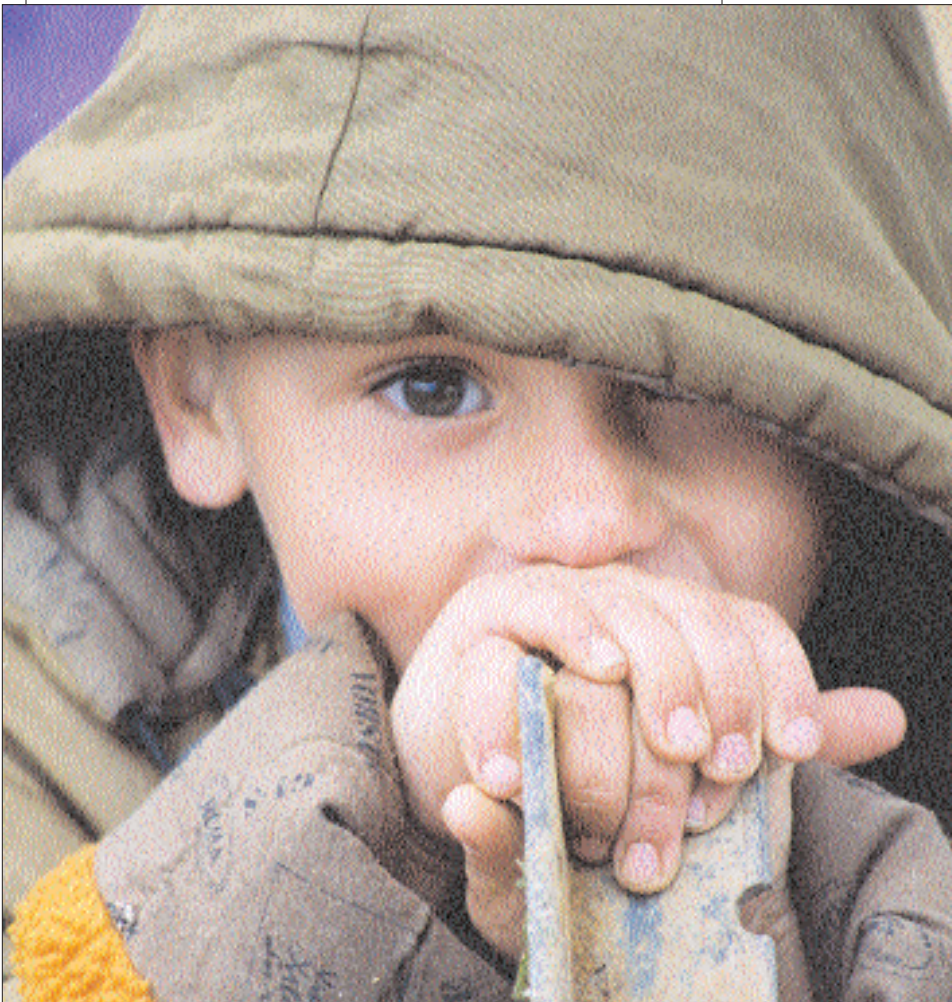
This strategy represents both an ethical and a practical solution. First, it avoids the slippery slope of deception and precludes the military from falling prey to options driven by self-interest rather than national interests. It also responds to the evolution of technology and of the nature of warfare that is making the rapid exposure of deception difficult to prevent. Once deception is revealed, the deception itself becomes the issue, and this is potentially far more damaging than the disclosure of the original information may have been. A culture that condones deception finds it difficult to limit its applica-

of the whole picture and can be subject to a variety of interpretations — and in an increasingly complex world requires a more adaptable set of realistic and pragmatic principles. Times have changed, and the military-media relationship must adapt to face these new circumstances.

In support of this thesis, the paper will examine the major factors that have transformed the military-media relationship: the advance of information technology, the democratization of information, and the changing nature of warfare. It will then examine the impact that these factors have had on the media and the military and the issues that continue to shape their respective views of the relationship. Finally, it will examine the way ahead, exploring the means to address these factors and perceptions to establish the proposed strategy.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

War, to put it quite bluntly, is good for the media business... [but the question is now] whether the media are good for the business of waging war.[5]

CNN (the Cable News Network) joined the media world on 1 June 1980, and has made a significant impact not only on the industry but on our perceptions of the media as well. The 'CNN effect' is a shorthand way of stating that, in the process of reporting a story, the media forces government and the military to react, thereby influencing the outcome as a player in the process and not just as a reporter of the story itself.[6] However, CNN and the CNN effect are simply indicators of the evolution of the military-media relationship. This evolution was driven by three fundamental themes: the advance of communications technology, the globalization of the media, and the evolving nature of warfare.

Advances in communications technology have been all encompassing. Voice communications by cell and satellite phone and radio have merged with digital messaging to provide instant, worldwide connectivity for the average citizen. Television has moved from regular programming to specialty programming to worldwide satellite-based availability — any subject, any time, anywhere. Multimedia (the fusion of text, images, video and sound) now links communications and computer-based environments in most modern homes. Coupled with the vast growth of the Internet and the conver-

DND Photo ISC93-20039-27 by Sgt Dan Jette

Inducing the 'CNN Effect': a small refugee at a camp in Central Bosnia, 1993.

tion only to those circumstances where the justification can stand up to scrutiny, and a pattern of deception, once established, is difficult to control. Truth is, of course, an abstract and relative notion — so-called 'facts' are often only a slice

gence of personal computing into news and entertainment, we are seeing the "democratization of information"[7] and it is affecting the media itself. The globalization of media interests, manifested by hyper-competition across multiple media

and across ideologies and borders, is not only changing what is 'news,' but how that news is being acquired, processed and redistributed. And that in turn has "changed the pace and rhythm of policy making, be it foreign, defense, economic or military."[8]

This new 'pace and rhythm' can directly affect world events. For example, during the attempted coup in Russia in 1991, although the plotters shut down television and satellite links, the radio and the press, they failed to cut telephone and fax links. The result: the dramatic image of Yeltsin aboard a tank was spread widely by fax. This resulted in increased opposition to the coup, which ended shortly thereafter.[9]

International media are exploiting these technology improvements and are no longer comfortable being dependent upon the military for information. For example, when an American maritime reconnaissance aircraft collided with a Chinese fighter and was forced to land on Hainan Island, all the satellite images displayed in the media came from commercial sources. To penetrate a strict military news blackout, NBC television hired a private plane to search for the American fleet in the Mediterranean Sea before the attack on Libya in April, 1986.[10] And, in a show of independence, the major networks established a broadcasting infrastructure in Haiti in anticipation of the expected US invasion.[11] Multinational media can now muster more resources than many modern nation states.

Information is now an equalizer enabling the weak to challenge the strong. As the former head of the UN Commission for Human Rights noted, "Television is our lifeline to the politicians who want nothing to do with us or hope that the problems will go away from the public consciousness." [12] The media can also use information (such as horrific images) to exploit emotion to heighten the debate, despite official efforts to limit their coverage.[13] This raises significant questions about global coverage of 'our wars' (affecting national interests) versus 'others' wars', as noted by Taylor. "In our wars the journalist walks a very thin tightrope attached to two cliff edges labeled 'objectivity' and 'patriotism'."[14] In a globalized environment with multinational media conglomerates, and with many non-state actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), there are numerous situations where players see the two cliff edges from vastly different perspectives. The resulting coverage is difficult to control and influence, making deception almost impossible.

The greatest force influencing the globalization of the media is the Internet, undeniably the most egalitarian form of communication ever devised. With a simple personal computer or laptop, one can become a member of the media with a major impact on perceptions around the world. This lesson was not lost on the Zapatista rebels, the Burmese exiles, the United Nations, the Yugoslav dissidents protesting Milosevic,[15] nor the Chinese government who aggressively limit access by their own citizens.

The capability of the citizen to be aware of global events has indeed undergone a revolution, and so has the military environment itself, the result of the demise in the threat of total war, the increase of limited wars of choice (vice survival), the increased presence of media collection technology on the battlefield, and the increasing expectations of the people to see, hear and understand what is going on. Jamie S hea, the NATO press spokesman during the Kosovo campaign, noted:

> Wars of conscience [demand that we] gain and maintain the high ground of moral or just war [by] using conflict only as a last resort, ensuring the means are proportionate to the ends pursued, taking care to discriminate between military and civilian targets, and demonstrating [to world opinion] that the ultimate good should outweigh the costs paid.[16]

US Army Photo

American tanks deploying during the Gulf War: legitimate operational deception?

And it must be done publicly: "the last thing the military wants, as an institution, is a secret war .... particularly if you've got a volunteer force."[17]

But, it is the unique nature of the peace operations — their openness, the lack of a defined enemy, the mul-

tiplicity of institutions involved and the absence of vital security stakes — that ultimately permits the type of coverage that exists and determines its effects on the audience ... [T]his includes NGOs, neutral countries and multi-national industries.[18]

As one commentator notes, "limited war is an operative term for the military, it is only a descriptive term for the media."[19] That is to say, for the military, this new form of warfare challenges existing military doctrine, while for the media it simply provides an increase in coverage opportunities.

DND Photo TCN94-405-8 by Cpl Lambert

Refugee relief operations, Rwanda, 1994: a military-media failure?

THE MEDIA — WRITING THE "FIRST ROUGH DRAFT OF HISTORY"[20]

People blithely imagine that journalists are where the news is. Alas, not so; the news is where the journalists are.[21]

The media serves two vital purposes in the context of the Clausewitzian 'paradoxical trinity' of war (the govern-ment for which it is an instrument of policy, the military for whom it is an exercise of skill, and the people as a whole): it informs the public about what policies its government is pur-suing and how those policies are being executed, and it inde-pendently records for history what happened.[22] Coverage can aid the nation itself by providing the information for the nec-essary debate over the balance of the 'cost' of the intervention with the resultant 'value' received as advocated by US doctri-nal expert Colonel Harry Summers, by countering enemy propaganda and misinformation, by acting as a conduit for sig-nals and messages between the parties, and by serving as a source of intelligence.
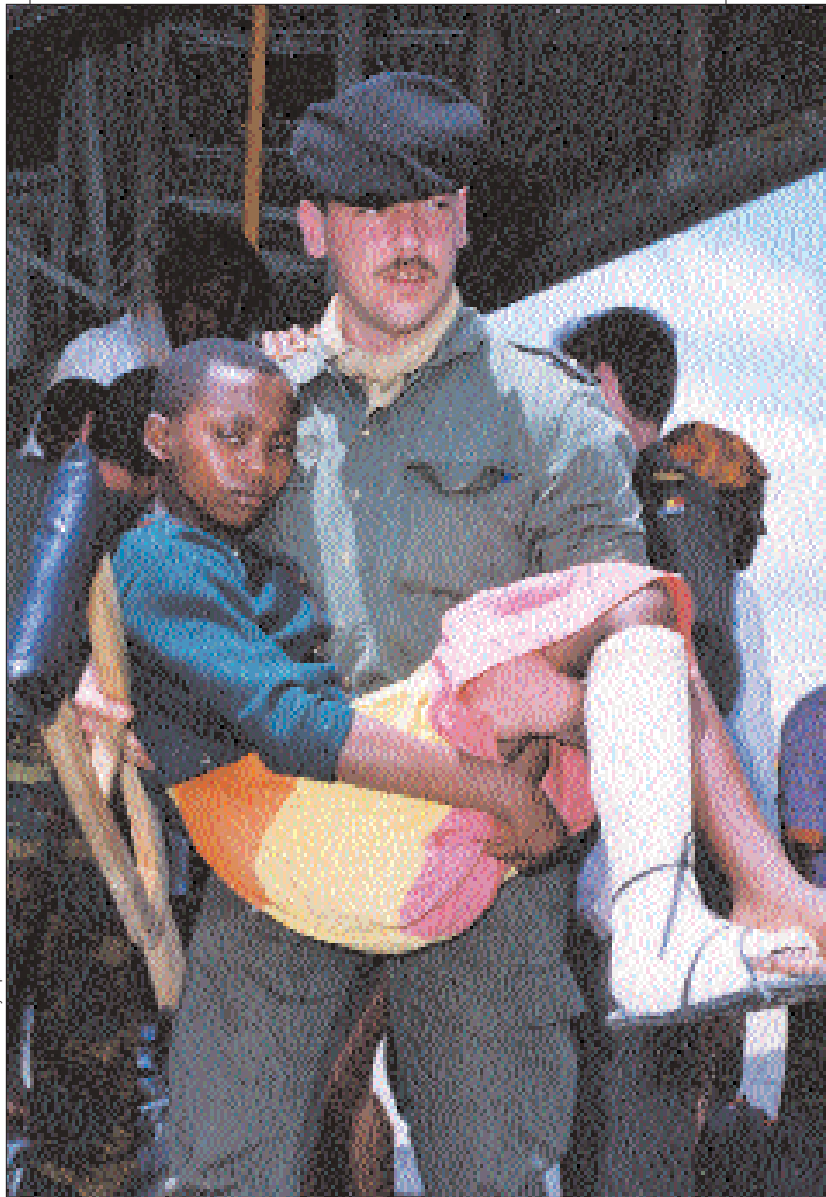
In this iterative process, the CNN effect undeniably influences the evolution of events. While many may debate whether the mass media can force policy to change or simply raise the atten-tion of decision makers who make more expeditious decisions, it is generally agreed that they ensure the story cannot be ignored — "it forces [governments] to act."[23]

While stronger today, media influence is not all that new and has been on the rise since the Crimean War. As was noted in Knightley's histori-cal analysis entitled "The First Casualty", the expansion of media influence and independence has been resisted by the military and government every step of the way. As each wave of technology advanced, from telegraph to telephone to radio to satellite transmitter, the military has attempted to delay, limit, filter or censor the flow of news report-ing. When that failed, they added means to control the physical movement of journalists, delay their access to theatres, or consolidate them into 'pools'.[24]

However, with growing media independence, the old-style military response of censoring and fil-tering information has become increasingly diffi-cult. The Operation "Desert Storm" 'managed war' model ("Desert Muzzle" as it was called by some)[25] is no longer possible, and increased media presence is simply a fact of life. Even former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney recognized this when he noted, "As an administration official, it's gotten increasingly difficult to sort out what we know from intelligence and what we know from CNN."[26] The military must now prepare for a more independent and ever-present media who are able to examine, analyze and criticize the operation from a variety of perspectives.

In attempting to make these preparations, mil-itary planners believe they face these significant challenges:

- **Perceived lack of media integrity**. The competition to win the "battle of first impression,"[27] the pressure to scoop a story for personal reputation or material gain, and the perceived elevation of self-interest over national inter-est, raises military and government belief that the media regularly distorts a fragment of information into a mis-leading story. This belief prevents or damages trust

between the parties and leads to a military perception that there is a "culture of incompetence"[28] in the media.

- **Insufficient depth of media understanding.** While the amount of information available to the media has increased, there has not been a corresponding increase in the level of experience or understanding on the part of journalists. This is distorting the complexity of modern warfare. To the military, the media is becoming at best "first with the obvious,"[29] or at worst "a random searchlight … [or an] erratic source of raw information"[30] that produces "more heat but less illumination." [31] One example was the bombing of the Al Firdos bunker near Baghdad during the Gulf War. As retired General Perry Smith noted, coverage by Peter Arnett, censored by Iraqi authorities, claimed that the bombing campaign was failing and had shifted to attacking civilian targets. Smith points out, however, that someone familiar with bunker fundamentals would have noted that the facility had all the key features of a military bunker, including its construction, the overhead camouflage, and a secure fence surrounding it. "A standard civilian bomb shelter does not have a perimeter fence" because people need to get in and out quickly.[32] Nevertheless, the bunker bombing became a problem for the coalition's cohesiveness, and led to changes in targeting.

- **Perceived lack of media objectivity.** It is correctly stated that when the military makes mistakes people can die; when the media makes mistakes it issues retractions,[33] leading some to deny that the military should support the media at all.[34] The military also questions the objectivity and balance of the media coverage, especially when the adversary can take advantage of the situation. Such was the complaint voiced by General Sir Michael Rose, former UNPROFOR commander. He believed some international media coverage was "mischievous at best and downright misleading much of the time." Too often, Rose felt the media took sides and doctored the truth on account of emotional involvement, usually with the Muslims. As a result of this unbalanced support from the media, the Muslims would often break a ceasefire or launch an attack, confident that the blame would be ascribed to the other faction.[35]

Let us now examine the military's evolving posture and how the media perceives this.

THE MILITARY – FIGHTING FOR THE MEDIA HIGH GROUND

This is a media war and we're going to win it.[36]

The military understands and respects the value of information on the battlefield. In fact, much of what is called the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) that now drives military force structure debates in all western countries is based upon the increased capability to gather, process and utilize information for effective command and control and employment of military forces. As a result, an overarching doctrine of information operations has emerged, defined as:

An integrating strategy which seeks to protect one's own information and influence an adversary's mili-

tary and civilian decision makers through the use of information or by affecting their information base ... [As it] encompasses political, economic and diplomatic efforts as well as defence and military measures, coordination among all government departments ... is crucial.[37]

Information operations doctrine broadens the previous military concepts of command and control warfare, electronic warfare, psychological operations and operations security into a broader national security construct, along with supporting elements such as civil and public affairs, and national infrastructure protection. It recognizes the 'vital ground' of information as the "fifth dimension of warfare … critical to success in the future."[38] By exercising the capability to monitor, intercept, selectively filter, replace or supplant information within the news media, Internet and adversary information system networks, the military (acting on behalf of the entire government) has widened the battlefield dramatically into civilian domains well removed from the scenes of devastation.

> **Truthful disclosure is the most effective strategy for the new age of mass media and the information revolution.**

Information operations has both defensive and offensive components. Defensive IO is largely protective in nature, guarding networks and systems from interception, interference or intrusion. Offensive IO, on the other hand, covers a range of options that can include destruction of the data or the systems themselves, the creation of network overloads, confusion of network topologies and distortion of the data elements. It can be as obvious as a physical attack on a critical switching or power station, or as subtle as a cyberspace attack directed towards media, banking, commerce or transportation systems, with few digital fingerprints to identify the sources. No matter the method used, the increasing scrutiny of the worldwide media means that the results of IO actions will be perceived, monitored and reported as the conflict unfolds.

Offensive IO strives to influence the decision maker by affecting the information or information system used to make decisions. At the official, public level, information operations (and public affairs) are intended to demonstrate resolve, the intention to prevail, and the capacity to deter an adversary. At the unofficial level, and after receipt of the appropriate approvals from national and coalition authorities, current IO doctrine permits offensive action, deception and psychological operations undertaken to deny, degrade, destroy or deceive.

This doctrine thus places the official agents, including public affairs, in a difficult situation. Their role is primarily defensive, and focuses on providing timely and accurate information to counter adversary misinformation, but they also form part of the IO coordination function on the staff of the commander and national authority. As an 'official' function, public affairs agents are directed to attempt no deception (as is current Canadian policy),[39] yet they must remain fully

involved in the overall IO campaign plan and coordination effort which expressly supports deception. Since the media will be the observer of some IO events, the victim of others, and a knowing or unknowing agent in still others, the management of media impact (including anticipated reactions if the deception is uncovered) is expressly included as one phase in the IO planning process. The dilemma is that media spin (that some refer to as a new principle of war)[40] becomes a critical part of the IO campaign, and public affairs implicitly becomes part of 'spin warfare'.

In defence of this ambiguity, many in the military or government in general proclaim the "right to lie"[41] or, more generally, the right to censor, filter or alter information that will diminish public support, contending that the ends justify the means. They further note that the US judiciary has been blunt in the dismissal of a universal public "right to know,"[42] and has supported measures to limit access to military operations.

> **Information is now an equalizer enabling the weak to challenge the strong.**

For the most part, the public is prepared to support restrictions on the withholding of information for limited periods during a conflict, and the media often acquiesce reluctantly. As General Dugan notes, "Democratic societies, in whose name the 'right to know' is so frequently claimed, do not want information that will hazard its sons and daughters, friends and neighbours to be available to any and all. Societies inherently understand there are boundaries."[43] With this in mind, the media generally supports a self-policing function so that 'aid and comfort' not be provided to the enemy through its coverage or the provision of critical information.[44]

However, where the media disagrees significantly with the military position is in the acceptable justification for such measures, and in the duration allowed for the military to preserve the restrictions. When do the ends no longer substantiate the means? And is a renunciation of the 'right to know' the equivalent to giving the military the 'right to lie'?

It is significant that the 'right to lie' is not allowed under current public affairs doctrine, while it is left ambiguous for information operations. This ambiguity differs by nation and by region, and represents a concern for international coalitions. As one United Nations observer notes, "[while] counter-propaganda … [including] proactive radio programmes by the peacekeepers are desirable ... jamming of hate radio, which has been advocated by some international observers of conflicts in Central Africa or the Balkans, [is suspect] legally or politically [and] is a highly sensitive issue."[45]

The media has a number of concerns about IO doctrine that implies or permits the 'right to lie':

- **The military culture is already predisposed to deception**. As the British Chief of the Defence Staff noted during the Falklands War, "I do not see it as deceiving the press or the public; I see it as deceiving the enemy. What I'm trying to do is win. Anything I can do to help me win

is fair as far as I'm concerned." [46] Further evidence can be found in the quote from Sun Tzu, cited by both the US and Canadian IO doctrine manuals: "Generally in battle, use the normal (direct approach) to engage; use the extraordinary (indirect approach) to win."[47] These attitudes lead to suspicion and mistrust on the media's part.

- **The military frequently employs delay and censorship as an evasive strategy.** There is no question that the logistics necessary to support worldwide media coverage of operations is complex and demanding. However, the media perceives that many limits are merely fabrications, since meeting media deadlines is not a high priority for the military.[48] These measures can include extensive accreditation processes for journalists, enforced pooling of media activities (shared coverage), centralized information bureaus imposing lengthy clearance processes for news items, and limitations imposed on real-time feeds of material sent out of theatre. The dependence upon the military is a critical weakness that the media are working hard to minimize, though they recognize that complete independence will never be possible. Both sides agree that the problem is getting more difficult to manage, and that the final solution will be based more on trust than on technology.

- **The military are hypersensitive to criticism**. To the media, history has shown that justified criticism can serve the interests of the nation by exposing ineffectiveness or grievous incapacity.[49] However, they perceive the military as culturally sensitized to criticism. "In the military, we tend to think that even the slightest criticism … is a disaster. 95% of an article can be glowing and yet we torture ourselves over 5% of criticism. ... [W]e have to get used to accepting a little bit of rough with the smooth."[50] This hypersensitivity can set the stage for patterns of behaviour that threaten the integrity of the military profession itself. The attempt to deceive the Access to Information process following the Canadian deployment to Somalia, and the attempts to lie or manipulate data to promote the US Marine Corps V-22 Osprey aircraft programme[51] are but two recent examples. It is relevant to note, that the first example was exposed by staff members who refused to follow the questionable direction and complained to colleagues and to the media. In the second, allegations were exposed using surreptitious videotapes of squadron staff meetings subsequently sent to both the media and the Secretary of the Navy. In the current Information Age there is little chance of sustaining deception for very long.

- **There is no independent oversight body**. Noting the ease with which deception can be mounted, the media are quick to point out there are few processes to vet IO measures (with the notable exception of certain capabilities for which legal controls are mandated). As General Schwarzkopf noted when the Gulf IO plan was tabled for approval, "One of the principal proposals was that we would plant false stories in the newspapers [so] the enemy would believe them. We don't do that in the United States of America. We don't lie to the press. We're not going to do that."[52] Under current doctrine such activity would not be allowed, but the media has no

way to validate that, especially when they can see dissension amongst the military itself. As Pounder notes, there was significant mistrust and limited mutual support amongst the IO and PA staffs planning the Gulf campaign.[53]

MAKING THE RELATIONSHIP WORK

If it can help it, the military is done letting other people tell its' story. Tactical events take on strategic significance because CNN makes them so.[54]

Experienced commentators generally agree that the military-media relationship cannot be permanently resolved by a set of specific measures, and that it will take constant attention and cooperation. An effective relationship requires a combination of principles, processes and cultural adjustments that will, from time to time, be tested by circumstances that defy simplistic solutions. The following themes are proposed to build the most effective relationship:

Plan for a more effective partnership.

The media and military will remain joint stakeholders in future conflicts and must plan "to put aside their common antagonisms in favour of their common interests."[55] They must engage in joint planning to ensure that acceptable access and distribution mechanisms are prepared in advance of operations. This must also include discussion of technology requirements for the timely movement of visual and audio products from the scene.

The military should take formal steps to acknowledge the respective roles of media and the military by establishing formalized accreditation and training processes to enable media to accompany Canadian Forces overseas, as the US military has done. This should also include increased funding for media representative support to maximize the opportunity for the Canadian perspective to be presented. As former DND public affairs director Colonel Ralph Coleman has pointed out, some support is provided routinely, although there are some in the media who feel this challenges their objectivity. He notes, ironically, that the reporter "who broke the Somalia story was on a DND-sponsored flight and he did not seem to feel that he was being compromised."[56]

It is generally agreed that an information vacuum is in neither party's interest. To fill the vacuum, there must be a proactive PA effort to supply appropriate material that accurately depicts the real situation in its difficulty, nobility and horror, while exposing none of the operationally sensitive elements. As *Washington Post* reporter Bradley Green noted, "Overall, my feeling is that the military lost something important because of the Pentagon-NATO media strategy. By staying quiet, they denied those involved their due for their heroism and bravery."[57] This is a challenging task since high paced and stealthy conflict may occur at night and well outside traditional media eyes and ears. But an absence of information opens the door to adversary information, or to an aggressive media pursuing information either in harm's way or acquiring it on the open market. Neither is desirable.

Mechanisms to vet material in the most efficient manner must be well established before the pace of activity reaches crisis stages. To maintain openness and transparency, the US military has encouraged the concept of "security at source"[58] to decentralize the process and make it as efficient as possible. Practical measures such as these need to be discussed and resolved at the earliest possible stage.

Incorporate the Clausewitzian concept of the trinity into consistent PA/IO doctrines.

While there are valid reasons to retain separate IO and PA doctrines, since each encompasses many issues beyond the overlapping interests, they must be made more consistent, especially with regard to the fundamental role and objectives of the military-media relationship. An often cited example of acceptable deception in both US and Canadian IO doctrine occurred during the Gulf War: coalition leaders freely provided information about a possible course of action (an amphibious landing near Kuwait City), while the movement of troops to prepare for the actual strategy (a westward swinging 'left hook' attack) was executed under a media blackout. The media complained of deception, but military commanders were quick to admit the initiative and claim it was totally justified since it protected soldiers on the battlefield and forced Iraq to maintain forces near Kuwait to repel the possible attack. This, however, adds little to the debate. In essence, it is far too simplistic and conveys little of the subtleties that face the IO/PA planner: it is a black and white example in what is clearly a grey world. Instead, more subtle examples are needed to give the reader a fundamental understanding of the dilemmas facing a commander on a realistic battlefield. More relevant examples should examine how to deal with situations such as media exposure of friendly fire incidents, tensions amongst coalition members, critical equipment that fails to perform properly, collateral damage causing civilian casualties, or ethnically inspired mass killing. The effectiveness of the relationship is tested more by subtlety than direct operational security interests.

In addition, there must be better guidance on the separation of the national interest from the self-interest, taking a longer-term view with less sensitivity. The understanding inherent in Summers' cost/value balance, mentioned earlier, should be made apparent to both military and media so that coverage reinforces the trinity of people, military and government.

The current ambiguity of PA and IO doctrine should be addressed, establishing the strategy of truthful disclosure except for those situations where the justification for deception can be made conclusively. Consideration should be given to establishing a process to ultimately disclose necessary deceptions at an appropriate time — as soon as possible after the operational security rationale is no longer justified.

> **With growing media independence, the old-style military response of censoring and filtering information has become increasingly difficult.**

Build expertise in both the military and media.

Both military and media agree that the modern battlefield environment requires increased media expertise and understanding if it is to deal credibly with Gowing's "real-time tyranny." Unfortunately, the cadre of media with military experience is decreasing rapidly. Such capability can only be built through joint training and exposure to exercises and training sessions, preferably well before the crisis unfolds. This must emphasize open and frank discussion of goals and objectives to align expectations. To this end, it may be useful to encourage media representatives to attend professional military education courses (such as the National Security Studies Course), and to second military officers (not simply those employed in public affairs, but also future combat commanders) to work in regional or national media centres. Additionally, assistance, perhaps in the form of a battlefield primer, full of facts, terms, methods and background data that can be handed out for quick reference, is urgently needed. In essence, the military need to explain what they are doing and why it is necessary in terms and concepts that the public can understand easily. As one commentator noted:

> In most coverage of US forces in both Somalia and Haiti, for example, there was almost no reporting on the changing tactics, ground rules, locations, morale and performance of US or allied forces, despite the fact that these peacekeeping efforts were the first such endeavors since the Cold War ended. We simply did not know how our forces did.[59]

Once the understanding begins to build, the processes themselves need to be fully developed so that the information flow between the military and media can meet the speed and volume that modern coverage demands.

And, most importantly, emphasize a strategy of truthful disclosure.

IO, while needed in some instances, is too powerful a tool to be used indiscriminately. The strategy of truth must be addressed openly and with minimal ambiguity. While the establishment of process, understanding and expertise will lead to credibility, the inevitable disagreements will require resolution based on trust and accountability. This will be difficult to establish for, as we have seen, there remains cultural mistrust and misunderstanding amongst the military and media players. However, the military or government must resist the use of arbitrary solutions. "Turning off the news flow, as some suggest, only breeds scepticism and suspicion, no matter for what reason," notes Paul Edwards.[60] And this leads to the second, and perhaps more difficult issue: to hold the military and media accountable to the people for the prop-

> **There must be a proactive public affairs effort to supply material that accurately depicts the real situation in its difficulty, nobility and horror, while exposing none of the operationally sensitive elements.**

er support of the trinity. Neither side seems ready to accept a measure of culpability, but common ground must be found. As Dr. Heidi Studer, a political philosopher, points out, "it will only be the honourable who are bound by honour."[61]

MOVING FORWARD

Train as you fight, and fight as you train.

Old military proverb

In an ideal world, a unified trinity built on a strategy of truthful disclosure, with demonstrated public support for the decision of government to commit military forces into conflict, with a capable and professional military force that projects resolve and determination, and with a diligent media providing professional and knowledgeable oversight, there would be little room for enemy propaganda and deception to mislead the nation.

Whether we prefer a justification based on an ethical position that integrity is fundamental to the modern profession of arms, or a pragmatic rationale reflecting the inevitability of disclosure, the strategy of truthful disclosure is the most effective strategy for the new age of mass media and the information revolution.

But the trust, support and understanding necessary to implement this strategy are not yet fully established within the military culture. If we return to the Marine Corps scandal involving the Osprey aircraft, we can still see evidence that deceptive wartime habits and resultant peacetime practices are hard to change. Flaherty and Ricks paint the picture for us (and all quotations are cited from their work):[62]

> General James Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps, travelled to the New River air base to "take the measure of his Marines" at the squadron implicated in the investigation. Standing on the stage at the base theatre, "he knew he had to give the speech of his life." Addressing a group saddened by the loss of colleagues to aircraft crashes, angered by the political pressure placed on their disgraced commanding officer and senior staff, and disheartened by the lack of support by the system, the General spoke from the heart. "This is about trust," he said. "This is about the uniform."

> To demonstrate his point and relate to the troops, he spoke of his experiences in Vietnam. "In a different world, in a different time, I've been where you have been," Jones said. He recounted the story of the unreliable M-16 rifle and drew a parallel to the current peacetime crisis.

> He enjoined them to look beyond the dispute and said the Marine Corps would do the right thing. If the V-22 couldn't be made right through redesign, as was the M-16, the Marine Corps would "summon the moral courage to walk away from it." After he took questions, he left the stage uncertain as to the effect of his work. Had he resolved the "skepticism, frustration, and discouragement" of his Marines over this dilemma? Had he ensured that trust and truth would

replace the atmosphere of lies and deception? He turned to Alford McMichael, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, for his perspective. "So, how did it go?" Jones asked. McMichael shook his head, "You've got work to do."

The comment applies to the military-media relationship as well.

CMJ

NOTES

1.   General Maurice Baril, quoted in CBC Newsworld, "Canada on the Attack," at http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/canadaattacke/military.htm.

2.   Paul Edwards, "The Military-Media Relationship – a Time to Redress the Balance?", *RUSI Journal*, October 1998, p. 49.

3.   US Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-61, *Doctrine for Public Affairs in Joint Operations*, 14 May 1997, p. II-2. This document and the accompanying Appendix A, DOD Principles of Information, Appendix B, Guidelines for Coverage of DOD Combat Operations, and Appendix X, Media Ground Rules, represents the explicit guidance for PA activities. It is far more extensive and explicit than the DND/CF doctrine.

4.   US Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-13, *Doctrine for Information Operations*, 9 Oct 1998, p. I-1, and the CF Information Operations Doctrine (interim), para 101 (a) Policy.

5.   Philip M. Taylor, "War and the Media," lecture delivered at media-military relations conference at RMA Sandhurst, 1995, http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ics/arts-pt2.htm, p. 1.

6.   Warren P. Strobel, *Late Breaking Foreign Policy*, Washington: US Institute of Peace Press, p. 4.

7.   *Ibid,* p. 225.

8.   Peter R. Young, *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War,* London: Cass, p. 175. Perspectives of General Michael Dugan, relieved of his position as Chief of Staff US Air Force by President Bush during the Gulf War for inappropriate comments to the press.

9.   Lt Christopher Devereaux, "Combat Leadership and the Media," *US Naval Proceedings*, July 1995, p. 64.

10.   *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage*, ed. Loren B. Thompson, New York: Lexington Books, p. 90.

11.   Devereaux, p. 64.

12.   Nik Gowing, "Real Time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises: Does it Distort Foreign Policy Decisions?", Research paper, Harvard College, 1994, p. 35.

13.   *Ibid*, p. 79. Quoting Marlin Fitzwater, Press Advisor to President Clinton, "The charge of hiding deaths [of the US Marines dragged through the streets of Mogadishu] was almost worse than showing it."

14.   Taylor, p. 8.

15.   Margarita S. Studemeister, "The Impact of Information and Communication Technologies on International Conflict Management," *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science*, Feb/Mar 1998, pp. 1-4. She describes the sophisticated use of Internet sites and broadcast capabilities to move data, voice or television images beyond the reach of local censorship to a worldwide audience.

16.   Jamie P. Shea, "The Kosovo Crisis and the Media," *NATO Nations and Partners for Peace*, Uithorn, p. 39.

17.   First Amendment Centre, "The Military and the Media," a collection of annotated comments found at www.fac.org/ppublicat/military/14-views.htm, p. 36, citing Jerry Friedheim, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

18.   Strobel, p. 212.

19.   Young, p. 75.

20.   Taylor, p. 2.

21.   Edwards, p. 43.

22.   Major Raymond R. Hill, "The Future Military-Media Relationship: The media as an actor in war execution," Air University Research Paper AU/ACSC/0307/97-03, p. 2.

23.   Gowing, p. 7.

24.   Taylor, p. 9.

25.   Gowing, p. 16.

26.   Rear Admiral Brent Baker, "Decisions at the Speed of Satellite," *US Naval Proceedings*, Aug 1992, p. 69.

27.   Hill, p. 19.

28.   *Defense Beat,* p. 124.

29.   William V. Kennedy, *The Military and the Media*, Westport: Praeger, p. 39. Citing Ted Koppel of ABC News describing the competition amongst network news divisions.

30.   Gowing, p. 36.

31.   Gary Pounder, "Opportunity Lost," *Aerospace Power Journal*, Summer 2000, p. 62.

32.   Perry Smith, *How CNN Fought the War,* New York: Birch Lane, pp. 32-37.

33.   Lt Col Marc D. Felman, "The Military/Media Clash and the New Principle of War: Media Spin," Air University Press Research Paper, p. 26. Quoting Maj Gen Sidle, head of a DOD task force study on military-media relations, he adds, "the military has learned through experience that some of the [media] do not always know what will impair operational security and endanger the troops."

34.   Felman, p. 9. Admiral Boorda, then Chief of Naval Operations: "The operation cannot include a public affairs component. We've lost sight of what we're all about if we do that."

35.   Edwards, p. 49.

36.   Felman, p. 5, quoting Ken Bacon, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs during the lead-in phase of the Gulf War.

37.   Policy Directive (draft), *DND Information Operations*, p. 1. This document covers the CF doctrinal and guidance issued as B-GG-005-004/AF-010, *CF Information Operations Manual,* and is subordinate to B-GG-005-004/AF-000, *Canadian Forces Operations Manual*.

38.   Pounder, p. 4, quoting General Fogleman, Chief of Staff US Air Force.

39.   *CF IO Operations Policy*, para 101.a.(9) (g) notes PA activities "are governed by existing statutes, laws, policies, and principles and shall not compromise nor be compromised by IO orders or directives." Furthermore, at 302.1e.(2).(f) declares that PA will only serve by "disseminating factual information." This is confirmed by the Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs) for Public Affairs, namely DAOD 2008-0, *Public Affairs Policy* and DAOD 2008-4, *Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations* (both effective March 1, 1998).

40.   Felman, p. 1. In defining Media Spin as a new principle of war, he assigns the following key objectives and recognizes the need to separate truth from fabrication: 1. Paying close attention to public relations and recognizing that public support is an essential ingredient of combat success. 2. Aggressively insuring that media portrayal of combat operations is neither distorted nor misrepresented through press omissions. And 3. Above all, safeguarding the safety of troops and operational security, but not lying to the media merely for the sake of convenience.

41.   Kennedy, p. 131. Arthur Sylvester, then Asst Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs in the Kennedy administration during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, noted "The government has a right to lie anytime it considers itself in a dangerous situation, especially where the use of nuclear weapons might be possible."

42.   See Hill, p. 15 and a more extensive piece in Thompson, pp. 165-176, entitled "Constitutional Concerns in Denying the Press Access to Military Operations" by Silverburg.

43.   Young, p. 177.

44.   Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty*, New York: Harcourt Brace, p. 346.

45.   Ingrid Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information*, London: Cass, p. 151.

46.   Taylor, p. 2.

47.   Joint Publication 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*. US Department of Defense, 9 Oct 1998, p. 1-1 and *CF IO Doctrine*, Chapter 1.

48.   Taylor, p. 9.

49.   Knightley, pp. 8-16. Critical coverage of the Crimean War by William Howard Russell in 1854 led to a parliamentary investigation that ultimately resulted in the sacking of the commander and his staff, and the replacement of the Prime Minister. Contemporary reporting by Thomas Chenery (see Knightley, page 18) on the deplorable state of field nursing was noted by a British woman who wrote to the Secretary of War, asking "Why have we no sisters of charity?" She was offered the opportunity to create and lead a government nursing service that saved many lives. Her name: Florence Nightingale.

50.   Edwards, p. 48.

51.   Mary Pat Flaherty and Thomas E. Ricks, "A Troubled Osprey Wounds the Corps," *Washington Post*, Tuesday, May 1, 2001, pp. 1-4. The report outlines the fabrication of false data, lies and cover-ups to improve the serviceability statistics of the aircraft to generate positive media and congressional support pending a critical program decision.

52.   First Amendment Centre, p. 97.

53.   Pounder, p. 64. He notes the IO group felt the PA group was "disinterested" in using public information as a "deterrent factor", while the PA group felt that engaging in IO had the "potential" to put them on the "slippery slope."

54.   John Donnelly, "Spinning: the Military's Other War," *American Journalism Review*, Apr 1998, p. 1, quoting Admiral "Snuffy" Smith, USN, first Commander of NATO Forces in Bosnia.

55.   Colonel Wallace B. Eberhard, "A Familiar Refrain but Slightly Out of Tune," *Military Review, Feb 1987,* p. 83, quoting Colonel Summers.

56.   Michael Croft, Sharon Hobson and Dean Oliver, *Information Warfare: Media-Military Relations in Canada*, Workshop Report, No. 20 – 1999, Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, Ottawa, p. 7.

57.   Pounder, p. 69.

58.   Joint Publication 3-61, *Doctrine for Public Affairs in Joint Operations*, 14 May 1997, Appendix A, paragraph 2. Outlines the process and responsibilities for joint military-media accountability for the vetting of material. It provides a list of models for prohibited information items and guidance on how to resolve disagreements.

59.   First Amendment Centre, p. 13, quoting Dr. Braestrup, Director of Communications at the Library of Congress.

60.   Eberhard, p. 83.

61.   Croft et al, p. 10.

62.   Flaherty, Ricks, pp. 3-4.

A Canadian soldier watches over a landing zone in the mountains near Gardez, Afghanistan during a search for Taliban and al-Qaeda terrorists.