

NOW TO WAR: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF EMBEDDED PRINT REPORTERS IN
THE SECOND IRAQ WAR

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MARK SLAGLE

Dr. Charles Davis, Thesis Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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EMBEDDED PRINT REPORTERS IN THE SECOND IRAQ WAR

Presented by Mark Slagle

A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Charles Davis

Professor Stephanie Craft

Professor Victoria Johnson

Professor Betty Winfield

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Chapter 1: The Military and the Media

In the last century, the pattern of wartime press control in America has shifted considerably. The American government has abandoned the outright censorship it practiced during World War I and embraced a far more sophisticated method of image management and media manipulation, the most recent and obvious incarnation of which was the phenomenon of “embedding” journalists within Army and Marine units during the current Iraq war (Knightley, 2005; Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). Embedded journalists lived, ate and traveled with their assigned units for an extended period of time, during which they provided their audiences with an in-depth look at how the American military waged the war.

Although the scope and ambition of the Pentagon’s embedding plan in Iraq was unique in the history of American warfare, embedding itself is not without some precedent. During World War II, war correspondents would frequently travel with military units and report on their actions. Ernie Pyle and Ernest Hemingway, who both wrote about their experiences with active service units, are two of the best-known examples of this early form of embedding (Stein, 1968). What made the embedding experience in Iraq different were its scale and the degree of control that the Pentagon sought to exercise upon the journalists who chose to participate in the program (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003).

The Pentagon announced that the program was in response to complaints during the first Persian Gulf war that journalists were kept far from the action, yet reporters who chose to embed themselves with a military unit were subject to a number of restrictions and regulations. One of these regulations required a journalist to stay with the unit he or

she had been embedded with (Friedman, 2003). Unlike Pyle and Hemingway, these journalists were not usually allowed to travel from unit to unit. Pentagon officials said this measure was designed to both increase the safety of journalists and ensure that sensitive information was not intentionally or inadvertently released to the public (Department of Defense, 2003). Critics contend that its purpose was to keep journalists on a tight leash while in the battlefield (Schechter, 2003)

Some embedded journalists ran afoul of these regulations. At least one embedded reporter was dismissed from the unit he was attached to because its commanding officer believed he had disclosed sensitive information in April 2003 (LaFleur, 2003). But some reporters who operated without the official sanction or protection of the military — the so-called “unilaterals” — also found themselves barred from the battlefield. A freelance reporter working for *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The Daily Telegraph* of London was asked to leave Iraq in late March after the military claimed he had revealed too much information in a live interview with CNN (LaFleur, 2003) More famously, Fox television correspondent Geraldo Rivera was told he could no longer accompany U.S. troops after he discussed troop movements on air (LaFleur, 2003).

Despite the constraints placed upon them, many embedded journalists had an overall positive perception of the Pentagon’s media management program. While acknowledging that their coverage was necessarily narrow in scope, these journalists believe that their coverage produced a mostly accurate picture of the war in Iraq (Fahmy & Johnson, 2005). However, some early studies suggest that this new form of embedding might also have had the effect — intended or not — of producing a pro-military slant in

the embedded journalists' coverage of the conflict (Pfau, Haigh, Gettle, Donnelly, Scott, Warr & Wittenberg, 2004).

This thesis will analyze 48 stories by six embedded print journalists—eight stories from each reporter—to explore how these journalists covered the first phase of the war in Iraq, before the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime and the dissolution of the Iraqi army; whether their coverage demonstrated any pro-military bias; and how their coverage changed over time. These questions are important because they address how journalists do or do not adjust their traditional notions of objectivity when confronted with the pressures of a rigidly defined organizational culture. This study is a textual analysis of a selection of news stories produced by a particular group of embedded print journalists. An earlier, quantitative study concluded that the embedding process itself encourages a rapid and profound bonding process between the troops and the journalists, resulting in more uniformly positive coverage of the military (Pfau et. al, 2004). Therefore this paper may be viewed as a qualitative analogue of that study.

Journalists on the Battlefield

Although journalists have been covering war since the advent of printed news, the designation of first modern war correspondent probably belongs to the Irish-born William Howard Russell. Russell became famous for his highly descriptive reports from the Crimean War and later went on to report on the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War and the burning of Paris by the Communards. He was also acutely aware that he had blazed a trail for those who would cover wars in the future; he memorably described himself as “the miserable parent of a luckless tribe” (Hankinson, 1982).

Since Russell, war correspondents have sought to do their reporting from as close to the front as possible. This has frequently led to confrontations with the military, which often views the press as nuisances or worse. During the Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman considered journalists to be “dirty newspaper scribblers who have the impudence of Satan” (Ewing, 1991, p. 19). In late 1862 he issued an order that “any person whatever, whether in the service of the United States or transports, found making reports for publications which might reach the enemy giving them information and comfort, will be arrested and treated as spies” (Lande, 1996, p. 110). Sherman was hardly alone in distrusting the journalists who reported on his army. General Ambrose Burnside almost had a reporter for *The New York Times* shot for spying until the intervention of General U.S. Grant saved his life (Roth, 1997).

Yet the military eventually realized that it could not bar journalists from the battlefield altogether. Years later, Sherman remarked, “so greedy are the people at large for war news that it is doubtful...whether any army commander can exclude all reporters without bringing down on himself a clamor that may imperil his own safety” (Ewing, 1991, p. 29). This tension between the military’s desire for secrecy and the media’s thirst for knowledge would be the defining quality of the relationship between the two institutions.

The military’s attempts to silence or at least control the press were not unique to America or the West. The first use of systematic and organized censorship began with the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 (McLaughlin, 2002). Enterprising correspondents such as Jack London traveled to Japan in the hopes of seeing the action up close, but instead found themselves hamstrung by a complicated military bureaucracy that kept journalists

away from the front and under strict censorship. A few reporters managed to circumvent these restrictions and produce some quality reporting, but for the most part the Japanese military succeeded in limiting the flow of information. The lesson learned was that information was best controlled not so much by limiting journalists' freedom of movement but simply denying them any facts about the war itself (Sweeney, 1998).

By the time World War I erupted, this lesson had been thoroughly absorbed by the armies of both the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. The press itself was initially kept at a distance from the battlefield. Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of State for War, had an intense dislike of reporters and was disinclined to allow them anywhere near his troops (Knightley, 2005).

His sole concession to the press was his appointment of Colonel Sir Ernest Swinton as the British Army's official journalist on the Western Front. Swinton, a Royal Engineer, issued a series of bland dispatches about the excellent morale and fighting strength of the army. These reports, which were censored first at the army's headquarters in France and again by Kitchener himself in London, contained little information and failed to satisfy the editors of Britain's newspapers. They began to quietly but forcefully lobby members of the government to permit their correspondents to travel to the front. Meanwhile, a few enterprising British journalists used guile, bribery and subterfuge to make their way to the battlefields. (Knightley, 2005).

In the end it was the efforts not of British editors but former American president Teddy Roosevelt that compelled the British government to rethink its system of censorship. In a private letter to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey in January 1915, Roosevelt admonished the Asquith government's attitude toward the press. He drew an

unfavorable comparison between the British treatment of the press and that of the Germans, who had invited American correspondents to report on their side of the war in an effort to sway public opinion in the still-neutral United States (Lasswell, 1927). Chastened by Roosevelt's letter, the British cabinet revised its press strategy. After conferring with the army's high command, the government agreed to allow six correspondents to travel to the front (Farrar, 1998). Other journalists would eventually be allowed access to the battlefield, but tensions between the two groups remained high.

The situation was also exacerbated by the nebulous relationship of the reporters to the military. All of the correspondents wore officers' uniforms and were granted the honorary rank of captain (although they did not wear any badges or insignia of rank) (Winfield, 1992). They were provided with transportation, lodging and attendants by the army. Moreover, their heavily censored stories were being used not to provide factual accounts of the fighting but to create accounts of heroism and bravery that would sustain the morale of the British public (Knightley, 2005). The reporters figured this out quickly but never offered more than a muted protest. For the most part they allowed themselves to be used as instruments of propaganda. Years later their unwillingness to challenge this arrangement led one historian to proclaim that "there was no more discreditable period in the history of journalism than the four years of the Great War" (Ponsby, 1928, p. 134).

American reporters fared somewhat better, at least before their own country entered the war. They were less willing to accept the British government's tales of German atrocities and fought hard against attempts to censor their reports. When America shed its neutrality in 1917, however, these journalists found their jobs considerably more difficult. One reporter was dismissed for reporting on the high

incidence of pneumonia among American troops, and a number of others quit rather than face further censorship from the American military (McLaughlin, 2002).

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the military's view of the press changed. The armed forces had gradually realized that the press, rather than merely being a hindrance, could be a valuable tool in the war effort. Military officers tried to strike a balance between necessary censorship and good public relations. General Eisenhower told reporters that it was

“a matter of policy [that] accredited war correspondents should be accorded the greatest possible latitude in the gathering of legitimate news” and that “Public Relations Officers and Conducting Officers give...war correspondents all reasonable assistance” (Braestrup, 1985, p. 31).

The relationship between the “warcos,” as the war correspondents were known, and their assigned military liaisons was often quite close, at least within the European Theater of Operations. Journalists were privy to some of the planning for Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy. They were assured that they would be looked after by the military's public relations officers, who would supply them with “the very best in information and communication” (Braestrup, 1985, p. 36). Whatever the military's intentions, when the invasion came journalists found themselves isolated and cut off from communication facilities. Some battles, most notably the Battle of the Bulge, occurred out of sight of reporters. The action in the Pacific, meanwhile, was poorly covered simply because there were too few reporters to cover the vast size of the operating area (Braestrup, 1985).

When U.S. forces entered Korea in 1950, there was initially no formal system of press censorship. That changed after the Chinese entered the war in September of that year. A Press Advisory Division was established in Tokyo to monitor all news coverage

while a Press Security Division attached to the U.S. 8th Army censored reports in the field (Braestrup, 1985). Most reporters favored this system, as it eliminated the need for self-censorship and resulted in less competition between rivals (McLaughlin, 2002). Indeed, most journalists had little problem adhering to the new regulations; few reporters were ever chastised or otherwise disciplined for their coverage (Braestrup, 1985).

The press-military relationship underwent a drastic change during the Vietnam conflict. Both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were extremely sensitive to negative coverage of the war effort and paid close attention to how the media reported the war (Halberstam, 1972). Although reporters such as David Halberstam and Neil Sheehan of *The New York Times* enjoyed generally good relationships with enlisted men and field officers, their increasingly pessimistic reports from Vietnam enraged the military and its civilian leadership. As the war continued to go badly and the White House staked its political fortunes on America's eventual victory, journalists who reported what they saw often found themselves accused of being communists or traitors (Halberstam, 1972; McLaughlin, 2002). Most journalists, however, wrote stories that reflected the American government's official position until the very end of the conflict, when the military and political failures became too obvious to ignore (Hallin, 1986).

Part of the problem was that there was no formal system of press management in place. The military had ended the kind of censorship it had practiced in World War II and Korea but had not replaced it with anything. Consequently, neither the reporters nor the soldiers they spoke with were entirely clear as to what the rules were (Knightley, 2005). The military did offer a daily briefing to American and foreign reporters, but these

sessions were dismissed as the “Five O’Clock Follies” by most of the press corps because they provided little in the way of actual information (Halberstam, 1972; Braestrup, 1985).

By the time Saigon fell in 1975 and the American experience in Southeast Asia came to an ignominious end, much of the news coverage was highly negative and public support for the war had been greatly eroded. A belief grew both within and without the military that the media had lost the war. Yet for most of the war, the armed forces and the press had maintained a relatively good working relationship. Out of approximately 2,000 correspondents operating out of Saigon, only six were cited for violations severe enough to warrant the revocation of their credentials (Kirtley, 1992).

Nonetheless, the perception that the media had caused irreparable damage to the war effort had taken root among the military’s leadership. Consequently, America’s first post-Vietnam conflict, the 1983 invasion of Grenada, was characterized by extreme secrecy. The spokesman for Secretary of Defense James Baker did not even learn of the invasion until it had begun (Braestrup, 1985). Initially the press was kept away from the area of operations entirely; later only a few reporters and photographers were permitted on the island. Press briefings were frequently cancelled and officers confiscated many reporters’ film and audiotape. Information, much of it incomplete and inaccurate, was dribbled out by public relations officers (McLaughlin, 2002).

The media’s anger at their treatment during the Grenada operation led to the formation of a public inquiry known as the Sidle Commission. Led by U.S. Army Major General Winant Sidle, the panel issued a series of recommendations in August 1984 designed to improve media-military relations in future conflicts. Among its recommendations:

- The media should cooperate voluntarily with security guidelines
- The military should pay more attention to its relations with the media
- The military should help the media with logistics wherever or however possible in coverage of military operations
- Any pooling system should be as big as possible but kept in operation for the minimum time possible

These recommendations led the Department of Defense to create an official media pool of select journalists who would be prepared to move with the military's first wave in any future conflict. Later, other reporters would be permitted to join the pool as circumstances allowed (McLaughlin, 2002).

The first significant test of the Sidle Commission's recommendations came in 1989 with the U.S. invasion of Panama. Once again, the media found the military's arrangements wanting. The official pool was activated too late to be of much use (Philo and McLaughlin, 1991). U.S. Army Southern Command briefed reporters only once during the four days the pool was deployed. The area designated for journalists was beset by technical problems that hampered the transmission of stories back to America (McLaughlin, 2002).

The media's complaints led to the creation of another advisory panel, this one chaired by Department of Defense official and former Associated Press reporter Fred Hoffman. The Hoffman Panel built on the work of the Sidle Commission, suggesting that the official media pool be regularly briefed by senior officials, regular channels of communication be created and maintained throughout any conflict, and that the military consider including the media in future training exercises. Secretary of Defense Dick

Cheney said he welcomed the recommendations but added that he was concerned about the release of details that might compromise the safety of the soldiers in the battlefield (Hoffman, 1991).

Although both Grenada and Panama represented important steps in the evolution of the media-military relationship, they were in some sense dress rehearsals for what came next. The U.S. military's war against Iraq in 1991 was its largest conflict since Vietnam, at least in terms of the number of troops involved. The military, consequently, was determined not to repeat what it believed were the mistakes of that conflict.

Once again, journalists in the Gulf were issued official credentials and grouped into a pooling system that the Pentagon said was designed to accommodate the media without overburdening the military. It also, however, allowed the military to exercise a large degree of control over the journalists' actions and coverage (McLaughlin, 2002). As such, many military officers considered the pool to be a success. As a tool for gathering information, however, many journalists found it greatly lacking.

Some of the problems stemmed from resentment over having to share resources. The three major American television networks objected to having to provide reports for CNN. The photography pool was dominated by the three major American newsweeklies—*Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report*—until other photographers revolted and demanded a larger role in the process. Meanwhile, the pool “nurtured a culture of grievance and encouraged poaching and plagiarism of pooled dispatches; there even [were] paranoid suspicions that ‘foreign reporters’ were looking for material from the American news pool attached to U.S. military units” (McLaughlin, 2002, p. 90).

Even as American reporters were squabbling over access and resources, they were providing very little in actual firsthand information to their audiences. With few exceptions, journalists were not present when American ground units engaged the enemy. They were mostly limited to watching aircraft take off and land from air bases and cruise missiles being launched from Navy ships in the Persian Gulf. In fact, the most defining image of that war is perhaps that of television correspondents such as CNN's Peter Arnett reporting on the siege of Baghdad from the roofs of their hotels. At least one scholar considered the first Gulf war as "the first time in American history reporters were essentially barred from accompanying the nation's troops into combat" (Blanchard, 1992, p. 6).

Some journalists, publications and organizations were unable to obtain the credentials that would allow them even this limited access. A number of them, including *Harper's Magazine* and *Mother Jones*, joined together to file suit against the Defense Department. They argued that credentialing was a form of prior restraint, and as such, not permitted. By the time the case, *Nation Magazine vs. U.S. Department of Defense* (1991), went to trial the war had ended. The judge ruled that the issue was moot and threw the case out. The legality of the Pentagon's credentialing system remained unsettled (Geary, 2004).

As with Panama and Grenada, after the fighting was over there were many recriminations about the media's ability to report the war. A 1991 Gannett Foundation survey of 43 American journalists revealed that most of them were dissatisfied with the media's performance in the Gulf. Among the major findings:

- The pool system was flawed from the beginning, in that it failed to take into account the media's needs and fostered a climate of mistrust and infighting among its members
- Overt censorship by the military was relatively rare, but lack of access to people and places severely hindered the reporters' ability to cover the war adequately
- The journalists believed that the military had been extremely effective in controlling the media's coverage of the war (Gannett Foundation, 1991)

Despite the media's general dissatisfaction with the press pools, many reporters saw them as a necessary evil. At least some reporters, however, eschewed the pool system altogether, with mixed results. These journalists were referred to as "unilaterals" or "freelancers," and their presence anticipated the divide between embedded and non-embedded troops in the second Iraq war (McLaughlin, 2002; Katovsky and Carlson, 2003).

Despite the long history of conflict between the media and the military, many critics contend that the relationship between the two institutions is in fact far too intimate (Schechter, 2003). Influenced by concerns about national security and their own feelings of patriotism, journalists in wartime often consciously or unconsciously provide a pro-military or pro-government perspective. In doing so, these journalists compromise their most valued trait: their supposed objectivity.

Objectivity and Bias

Perhaps no tenet of a journalist's professional ethos is as important as objectivity. In America at least, there is a presumptive bias against bias in the profession of newsgathering, an expectation that reporters will simply communicate the facts as they

find them without editorial comment (Mindich, 1998). Yet although many if not most journalists continue to abide by this precept, a large number of media scholars believe such a quest for objectivity is ultimately futile (Wolfsfeld, 1997).

Part of the problem stems from the fact that although objectivity is the putative ideal of almost every American journalist, it is difficult to locate a single, comprehensive definition for it. Mindich (1998) claims that no such definition exists. Other scholars and critics, while disagreeing on the particulars, offer various definitions that stress factuality and absence of bias. McQuail's (2000) suggestion is representative of many of these definitions: "a theoretically contested term applied to news...[that] includes factual accuracy, lack of *bias* [italics in original], separation of fact from comment, transparency about sources, not taking sides" (500).

Perhaps even more difficult than defining objectivity is the task of adhering to it. The reporter's quest for complete impartiality is beset by numerous forces both obvious and subtle. One of the most powerful is the journalist's own construction of his or her reality. Journalists, like all people, belong to certain socioeconomic classes and possess certain beliefs. Moreover, they inhabit a distinct culture that has a particular ideological code that frequently dictates what they do and do not report on (Schudson, 1997). This is not to say that most journalists consciously attempt to give their stories a particular slant. But the reality of the cultural constructs that they, their sources and their audiences inhabit means that journalists create their own vision of the world (Parenti, 1993). Consequently, their coverage can never be truly free of the underlying assumptions and prejudices of such coverage, regardless of attempts to remain "objective" (Carruthers, 2000, p. 18).

The subjectivity and fallibility of the individual journalist or editor, however, does not completely account for the presence of bias in his or her reports. The newsgathering and reporting process is not dominated by any single individual. Pervasive and usually invisible forces influence the construction of news stories regardless of individual prejudices and not merely as a consequence of professional socialization (Tuchman in Carruthers, 2000).

There is no consensus as to what causes bias, although there are a number of different and sometimes overlapping theories. Herman and Chomsky (1988) theorize that news organizations' ultimate devotion is to their corporate masters, a critique that has become increasingly popular as the media landscape is increasingly dominated by a few monolithic corporations (Bagdikian, 2004). According to this model, news organizations edit or filter out material that they believe might displease their advertisers, a practice that becomes notably evident during wartime (Kellner, 1992).

Other scholars believe that the media are subordinate not specifically to their owners but rather to the larger societal status quo. Tuchman (1978) points out that journalists frequently cover established and "legitimate" institutions—such as the military—favorably while marginalizing less popular or dissident ideas and movements. This lack of coverage becomes a vicious cycle, as heterodox social movements are not covered by the media because they are unpopular, because they are not covered by the media, and so on.

Another theory posits that political and social elites utilize the media's obsession with "newsworthiness" by arranging, packaging or event staging events for the express purpose of consumption by the press. Daniel Boorstin (1961) described these proceedings

as “pseudo-events.” Adherents of this theory point to the press conferences of the first Persian Gulf War and the embedding program of the second as examples of how the government and the military successfully distracted the media with their own version of the wars while other stories less flattering to the elites went underreported (Schechter, 2003).

Wartime presents a unique challenge to journalists’ attempts to objective reporting. One commonly held tenet of objectivity is the equal presentation of opposing viewpoints (Mechner, 1987). Yet Ricchiardi (1996) points out that during wartime journalists who attempt to maintain their neutrality run the risk of drawing a moral equivalence between the aggressor and the victim. Some journalists do not even make the effort to remain neutral. When confronted by facts that contradicted what they were being told by U.S. officials, some American journalists during the Vietnam war began to openly challenge the American government and military in their stories (Ricchiardi, 1996). Yet these reporters did not completely abandon any pretense of factuality; instead they created a broader definition of objectivity, one that included interpretation and analysis (Tallman & McKerns, 2000). An emphasis on analysis in journalism dates back at least as far as the Commission on Freedom of the Press (Hocking, 1947). This definition was not accepted by every journalist, however, and it remains a subject of dispute to this day.

Some research (Baroody, 1998) suggests that the military is uncomfortable with the media interpreting its actions and encourages reporters to restrict themselves to reporting “the facts.” Those facts, of course, come from the military itself. Thus the biggest obstacle to maintaining objectivity in wartime is that a journalist’s primary source

of information may actively discourage him or her from accurately portraying the reality of the conflict.

To summarize, there is no complete consensus on what constitutes objectivity in contemporary American journalism. Reporters and scholars are unable to agree upon even the definition of the term. While most reporters frequently invoke factuality and impartiality in their efforts to be objective, their ability to achieve these goals is often compromised by inchoate economic and social forces. During times of war, the quest for objectivity is further complicated by the heightened stakes and emotionally charged atmosphere in which journalists operate.

Importance of this Study

As mentioned earlier, the form of embedding used in second Gulf War is unique in its size and structure, and to date there have been relatively few investigations of how it affected the coverage produced by the embedded reporters. Moreover, much of this scholarship is of a quantitative nature. It is important to understand not only what, if any, effects embedding had on news coverage but also how and why these effects were produced. This study will take a qualitative approach to the question of how coverage was affected in order to better understand the reasons behind these effects. Although Pfau's (2004) research addressed some of these issues, as a quantitative study it was unable to specifically describe what techniques embedded reporters employed to generate pro-military bias in their stories. Qualitative studies such as this one can provide such an analysis and in doing so suggest theories as to why these techniques were used.

This research is of great importance because it raises questions about traditional journalistic notions of objectivity and how they can be affected in subtle ways. Although

the heavy-handed censorship of wars past now appears to be out of favor, it is evident that the military still has a vested interest in controlling how American journalists report on war. Given the military's positive opinion of the embedding program, it is highly likely that embedding will exist in some form for the near future. Journalists reporting from the war zones of tomorrow should therefore be cognizant of how their coverage can be shaped by forces other than military censors.

Social Penetration Theory

The theoretical basis for this study is modeled on a quantitative study of embedded newspaper journalists (Pfau et. al, 2004). That study was rooted in an understanding of how interpersonal relationships operate within small groups, how the culture of an organization affects the behavior of those who engage it and how external stimuli affect those relationships. This paper is intended to be a qualitative counterpart to that study, one that will ask *how* this process affected journalists' coverage of the war.

Social penetration theory posits that relationships among individuals develop by a process of personal contact and self-disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Increased time spent together leads to increased self-disclosure — the voluntary disclosure of personal information from one person to another — which in turn leads to feelings of friendship and belonging (Taylor, 1979). As these feelings grow, intimacy increases and individuals begin to emphasize and identify with the group of people with whom they share this process (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993). The normal process of social penetration is accelerated by shared stressful conditions, which encourages more self-disclosure and stronger feelings of friendship (Taylor, 1979).

The stresses of life during wartime therefore might induce journalists to strongly identify with the troops they cover. This connection between journalists and the troops might encourage the journalists to internalize the values of the military, potentially affecting their own objectivity. An explanation of this process can be found in organizational culture theory. An organizational culture comprises a group of shared assumptions about behavior and values held by a particular group (Schein, 1992). As individuals begin to identify with certain groups, they are strongly influenced by the ideas and beliefs of these groups (Beyer, Hannah, & Milton 2000). These ideas and beliefs therefore promote conformity among the group members and serve as a mechanism for social control (Schein, 1992).

The process whereby individuals take on the values of a certain group is known as enculturation (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). Enculturation occurs in every kind of group, but it is particularly pronounced in military groups, where the need for collective discipline is paramount. That need becomes even more important during times of war, when the ability of the military to function properly can quite literally mean the difference between life and death (Soeters, 2000).

Journalists, of course, are not actually members of the military. Indeed, they are individuals whose professional code prizes objectivity, although they never entirely free themselves of their personal biases and prejudices (Lippmann, 1922). Yet the exigencies of the embedding process make journalists as susceptible to enculturation as soldiers and marines. To qualify for embedding, reporters had to attend a “boot camp” to receive instruction in NBC (nuclear/biological/chemical) weapon protection and other military

protocol. This training was similar in many regards to that undergone by all military personnel in Iraq (von Sternberg, 2003).

The process of enculturation was accelerated once the embedded journalists arrived on the battlefield. Once in Iraq, these reporters were completely dependent upon their assigned unit for their own personal safety. Moreover, the embedded journalists were often connected to their editors and colleagues only by satellite phone (von Sternberg, 2003). The troops they traveled with were the only other Americans they might have encountered in person for days or even weeks at a time. In such a situation, journalists were essentially forced to absorb at least some part of the military culture, lest they endanger their own lives.

Using Textual Analysis

This study utilizes a form of qualitative analysis broadly described as textual analysis. Grounded in the discipline of cultural studies, textual analysis as defined by Hall (1975) comprises the identification of a particular subject or theme, the definition of a particular text, and the analysis of that text independent of production, author intention or audience reading. As Lester-Roushanzamir and Raman (1999) note, an exclusive study of the text itself allows the researcher to isolate it from other processes. Moreover, they continue, although the text is studied by itself, the critical cultural paradigm upon which Hall's analysis is based places the findings of such a study into the larger cultural context. Put another way, the researcher undertaking a textual analysis recognizes that the text in question is replete with socio-cultural meaning and subject to multiple interpretations by an audience, even though the researcher confines his or her analysis to the text (Hall, 1980).

The theoretical and philosophical foundation for this mode of analysis is informed by Roland Barthes' (1972) theory of the "readerly text," which tends to delimit interpretation rather than encourage it. Newspapers, and to a lesser extent magazines, are ideal examples of Barthes' readerly texts because they present themselves as products of a culture that prizes objectivity and factuality. Yet Hall (1975) notes that even the most "objective" texts are subject to different interpretations by different audiences. The intersection of the producers' intentions and the audience's interpretations creates a space that he describes as the "margin of understanding." It is the discourse that exists within this margin that this study is concerned with.

Textual analysis is in some regards similar to discourse analysis. Van Dijk (1988) writes that "media discourse should be analyzed in terms of their structure at various levels of description" (p. 2). These structures may be phonological, morphological, syntactic or semantic. They may be found in individual words, sentences, paragraphs or entire texts.

Defining the Text

To properly conduct a textual analysis, the analyst must first define the text that is to be studied. Lester-Roushanzamir and Raman (1999) point out that the text "is a unit of analysis defined by researchers for theoretically based reasons." In this study, the text comprises a series of articles written by six embedded print journalists reporting on the war from within Iraq between March 19 and April 10, 2003, a period that includes the beginning of the invasion and the fall of Baghdad. These journalists — William Branigin of *The Washington Post*, Steven Lee Myers of *The New York Times*, Ron Harris of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Rex Bowman of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, John Koopman of

the *San Francisco Chronicle* and Ravi Nessman of the Associated Press— were all selected from a list of reporters who were embedded in Iraq between the specified dates (Poynter Institute, 2003). These reporters were selected primarily for geographical diversity, both in terms of where their newspapers are based and what part of Iraq they reported from. The AP reporter, who writes for a national audience, was selected to provide a contrast to the other, locally oriented journalists. Eight stories by each reporter were selected at random to represent the time period mentioned above.

Textual analysis is not always limited to the study of words. Design, photography, typography and other visual elements are all valid subjects for study. However, many of these editorial components represent the decisions of many different people — editors, designers, photographers, graphic artists and so on. This study focuses only on the embedded reporters and the stories they produce. Therefore, only the stories themselves, and not their presentation, will be considered a text.

Having delineated the text, the next task is to properly define what elements within this text will be studied. According to Hall's (1975) theory of textual analysis, every element of a text — metaphors, similes, allusions, tone, themes, recurring patterns, omissions — can provide meaning. Therefore this paper will be analyze every aspect of the stories themselves to determine how these journalists reported the war.

To look for evidence of the military's enculturation of journalists, and of the journalists' penetration into military culture, this study will analyze the journalists' stories for use of military jargon, adjectival choices that place the military in a positive or negative light, the use of military sources, use of nonmilitary sources, and other editorial decisions that might have affected the overall coverage of the conflict.

This study will also address some more specific questions about these journalists and their stories. Where in Iraq are they reporting? The north, which is dominated by Kurds; the south, where Shiites hold sway; or the vast midsection of the country, where Sunnis traditionally live? Are they embedded with the Army or the Marines? How did the correspondents describe the Iraqi civilians and combatants? What topics do the journalists cover? Did the journalists' coverage of them change over time? Are there any noticeable lacunae within these stories — is something absent from these narratives? All of these questions are, to varying extents, based upon the central question posed by Pfau (2004): Do stories produced by embedded journalists demonstrate signs of pro-military bias, and if so, why? As a qualitative study, however, it approaches these questions from a different perspective, as mentioned above.

The answers to these questions might suggest how these correspondents were affected by the time they spend with the units they were embedded with. If their stories demonstrate an increased sense of affiliation with the military, the ramifications for the future of reporting war and notions of journalistic objectivity could be profound. Although the war in Iraq will eventually end, there will be other wars in America's future. Journalists will once again be forced to ask themselves how they can best report it. By better understanding how the story of this war was told, they can make what one hopes will be more informed decisions.

Limitations

This study will attempt to determine if the Pentagon's embedding program produced any discernable change in the print journalists who participated in it. There are, however, many related issues of interest that will be beyond the scope of this paper. Most

obviously, the results of this study would pertain only to print media. The effects of the embedding process upon broadcast journalists and their coverage can be found elsewhere (Geary, 2004).

As a qualitative textual analysis, this study seeks to explore how a select group of journalists covered the initial phase of the war. The strength of this method is its depth, not its breadth. Any conclusions arrived at will not necessarily hold true for all embedded correspondents in Iraq. The scale of the embedding program and its relevance to how American journalists cover wars, however, means that there are still serious questions to be addressed by both qualitative and quantitative researchers. Among them are what motivates journalists to censor themselves, how embeds and unilaterals covered the Iraqis themselves, and how the corporate culture of particular news outlets might affect coverage of the war.

Chapter 2: The Press at War: A Historical Literature Review

The relationship between the media and the American government during times of war has changed greatly over the years. Although the two institutions have occasionally collaborated in wartime, they have more frequently found themselves at loggerheads over issues of access, national security and freedom of speech. The history of the press at war is therefore in some sense the history of a protracted and at times contentious negotiation between the media and the military.

1861-1898, The Civil War and the Spanish-American War

The American Civil War was the first conflict to be extensively covered by a large number of war correspondents. At one point at least 500 journalists were reporting on the war from the Union side (Knightley, 2005). This was due in no small part to the recent invention of the telegraph, which enabled reporters to transmit information back to their offices with a rapidity undreamed of in earlier wars (McLaughlin, 2002).

Yet despite the improved technology and large number of journalists following the war, coverage of the conflict was generally poor. The journalists sent to the front were, by and large, young and inexperienced. Many papers were still connected ideologically, if not financially, to political parties. Objectivity had not yet become a byword for American journalists and many of them did not hesitate to file stories that were partisan, unbalanced, greatly distorted, wildly exaggerated or even made up entirely (Knightley, 2005). Some newspapers published only stories favorable to their government: Union papers ran pro-Union stories and the Southern papers did likewise (McLaughlin, 2002). Some newspapers, however, refused to toe the party line. A number of Democrats in the North opposed the war and favored a negotiated peace with the

Confederacy. These Democrats, known as Copperheads, controlled a number of important papers, most notably Wilbur Storey's *Chicago Times*. Copperhead editors frequently denounced the Union government in general, and President Lincoln in particular, in extremely harsh terms (Walsh, 1963).

Regardless of an individual newspaper's political allegiance, the relationship between the press and the military—at least on the Union side—was generally toxic. As mentioned earlier, General Sherman took a dim view of reporters on the battlefield (McLaughlin, 2002). But the problems went beyond the antipathy of a few generals. By April 1862 the Union government had seized control of the telegraph wires in Washington D.C. and placed them under the control of the War Department in an effort to control the flow of information from the battlefield. (Harper, 1951). The Union also prosecuted any publication that published information deemed harmful to the war effort. The *Chicago Times* was temporarily shut down for its criticism of Lincoln (Roth, 1997). The Confederate government was initially more accommodating of journalists, although this may reflect a lack of resources to monitor the press rather than a sincere belief in the value of an unfettered press. Later in the war the Confederate Army tightened its rules for journalists; correspondents were banned from the front and all stories were vetted by military censors (McLaughlin, 2002).

Military censors had heretofore been concerned primarily about journalists' written accounts; that changed during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Advances in communication technology, including a greatly expanded telegraph network, allowed for even quicker transmission of news. The rapidity with which messages could now be sent represented a significant security risk for the military. The same day that Congress

approved a declaration of war against Spain, President William McKinley ordered the chief of the Army's Signal Corps to occupy the New York offices of seven of the country's cable telegraph systems. His staff was instructed to censor any reports that threatened military security. In Cuba, meanwhile, field commanders were empowered to censor reports coming from the battlefield (Sumpter, 1999).

These efforts to control the information flow were not entirely successful. Many correspondents quickly figured out that they could circumvent the censors simply by cabling their stories from Haiti or Jamaica. Moreover, there was often disagreement within the military itself about what stories should be censored. This confusion, coupled with the military's inability to monitor massive numbers of journalists on the battlefield, meant that censorship was rarely more than a nuisance for the reporters. Indeed, the Spanish-American war was fondly remembered by many of the men who covered it as "the journalist's war" (Sumpter, 1999, Neuman, 1995).

1914-1918, World War I

That relative freedom from government interference would not last for long. During World War I, the American government went to extraordinary lengths to maintain a monopoly on information. Its primary tool during this period was the Espionage Act of 1917. 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. These included a press censorship provision that would have forbid the publication of any material the president deemed "useful to the enemy;" a disaffection provision that would have outlawed any statements that might interfere with the operations of the military or "cause disaffection" in the armed forces; and a

nonmailability provision that would have granted the postmaster general the authority to exclude from the mails any publication that was of a “treasonous or anarchic character.” The Sedition Act of 1918, an amendment to the Espionage Act, was signed into law by President Wilson in May of that year. The amendment forbade the use of “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language” in reference to the United States government, flag or armed forces. (Stone, 2004).

Despite the draconian nature of these laws, the larger problem for American correspondents was simply gathering information on the battlefield. Although the newspapers had succeeded in gaining access to the war itself, their reporters still faced a number of obstacles in relaying the truth of what was actually transpiring on the front. Correspondents who wished to report from the front had to be accredited by the military and wear officers’ uniforms (Winfield, 1992). The journalists were accompanied at all times by officers who determined where they could travel, censored their reports and even read their private letters. These officers, who already resented the journalists’ presence at the front, were further incensed by having to “babysit” them. (Knightley, 2005).

American journalists in France were technically under the jurisdiction of Colonel Dennis Nolan, but they were primarily organized and directed by Frederick Palmer, the only American journalist to be accredited to the British Army during the first part of the war. Although Palmer had distinguished himself by covering the Boxer Rebellion, the Philippine insurgency, the Russo-Japanese War and Gen. John “Black Jack” Pershing’s campaign against Pancho Villa in Mexico, he quickly adopted a military mindset. Palmer dribbled out bits of mostly useless information to the journalists (Knightley, 2005).

What information the correspondents could gather on their own was subject to the careful attention of Palmer and his staff of censors. Palmer even went so far as to censor journalists' expense accounts. The censorship eased somewhat after Palmer was promoted to Gen. Pershing's staff and was replaced at the press office by his more accommodating assistant, Gerald Morgan. Nonetheless, every story filed by American journalists during and immediately after the war was subject to careful scrutiny by military censors (Knightley, 2005).

1941-1953, World War II and the Korean War

The American government was generally successful in its efforts to restrict information about World War I because the technology of the day did not permit journalists to instantly transmit their reports to the public. That changed during World War II, when advances in radio technology made it possible for a correspondent to instantly broadcast the news. The American government, concerned that vital information might be leaked to the enemy, once again developed a comprehensive plan for controlling information about the war effort. This began with a massive clampdown on all domestic radio traffic within the United States immediately after Pearl Harbor (Knightley, 2005).

As American troops were shipped overseas, meanwhile, military censors attempted to restrict information at the source. This included information about troop deployments, plans of attack, casualty figures and other metrics of warfare (Roeder, 1995). The restrictions were not limited to news stories. Roeder describes in detail the wartime censorship of images from World War II. He divides them into three categories: atrocities committed by Allied troops, depictions of black soldiers and civilians, and images of death. Government censors suppressed all three categories of information in

order to disguise the brutality of war, maintain a united home front and cover up any instances of military incompetence or miscalculation. For years and even decades after the war's end, Americans remained largely unaware of the kind of carnage that had taken place (particularly in the Pacific Theater of Operations, where racial animosity fueled brutal treatment of Japanese soldiers.) Perhaps even more damaging, argues Roeder, is the systematic removal of black soldiers from Americans' mental inventories. The heroism and bravery of many of these soldiers remained almost hidden for decades, a task made easier by the absence of any visual cues. Roeder concludes that these policies "left a legacy of ignorance" (p. 25).

Another view on the need for censorship and information controls comes from Byron Price (1942), head of the World War II-era Office of Censorship. Writing during the war, Price argues that censorship is an essential, if occasionally distasteful, practice during times of war. He draws on comparisons to the World War I-era Office of Public Information. The OPI not only restricted potentially harmful information but also manufactured propaganda essential to the morale of the civilian populace. Such practices, he argues, helped win the war. Price also insists that material is only censored when absolutely necessary, a position that Chafee (1941) had earlier noted is espoused by censors throughout American history. Price's position was strengthened by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling *Near v. Minnesota* in 1931. Although the Court ruled that prior restraint of the press was generally unconstitutional, it left open the possibility that the publication of certain information during times of war (such as troop deployments) could be censored legitimately (Lewis, 1991).

Although the government and the press were often cast in the type of antagonistic relationship described by Price, sometimes the two sides cooperated (if not always harmoniously) to censor certain kinds of information about the war. Sweeney (2001) says such arrangements are often the result of an appeal to journalists' patriotism and a sense that the war effort takes precedence over the public's right to know. The most remarkable example of this phenomenon is the "censorship missionaries" of World War II.

The "missionaries" were respected editors from around the country who acted as informal liaisons between the government's Office of Censorship (headed by Price) and the national's newspapers. The missionaries encouraged the American press to comply with the Office's voluntary guidelines for a self-censorship during the war. Absent a well-defined legal framework to institute a massive program of censorship (as existed during World War I), and wary of a potential backlash from journalists and the general public, the government instead opted to promote a voluntary code of self-censorship (Sweeney, 2001).

As Sweeney (2001) notes, "the missionaries' calm voice of reason, coupled with appeals to patriotism and egalitarianism, strongly influenced compliance" (p. 4). Here the line between official censorship and self-censorship becomes rather blurry. Although not officially operating as agents of the U.S. government, the missionaries nonetheless worked in lockstep with Price's office to control newspapers' accounts of wartime activities.

Less than five years later America would find itself at war once again, this time on the Korean peninsula. The Korean War is often described as "The Forgotten War," and Hudson and Stanier (1998) suggest that poor media coverage might be part of the

reason why. They describe one American war correspondent as saying that Korea was the worst reported war of modern times. Knightley (2005) agrees, writing that “although [journalists] showed admirable professional courage on the battlefield, they failed to show equal moral courage in questioning what the war was all about” (p. 389). There are several possible reasons for this attitude. In the beginning of the conflict, there was no official press censorship. Correspondents, however, were asked to withhold information that might be of strategic use to the North Koreans. Two wire service reporters were dismissed from the battlefield on the grounds that they violated this request when they wrote about an army battalion dubbed “the lost battalion.” Soon thereafter, Gen. Douglas MacArthur imposed an official system of press censorship. The flow of information coming out of Korea was severely curtailed (Hudson & Stanier, 1998).

The reports that correspondents were allowed to file were still subject to a high degree of military scrutiny. Steward (2005) notes that “reporters were aided by Staff Sergeant Archie Ashworth by his processing and distributing news dispatches that chronicled the exploits and achievements of his U.S. 1st Cavalry Division and its officers and men” (p. 38). Unlike many other scholars, Steward argues that such close cooperation between the military and the press is actually desirable, reasoning, “Would the current civilian news media, both print and electronic, use the material produced by the Army’s combat correspondents? Of course they would. What editor would pass up a well-written story of a gripping, exciting and topical event from a combat?” (p. 38).

1965-1975, The Vietnam War

Americans emerged from the Korean conflict with only a partial understanding of what had transpired and why. By the time America found itself entangled in a murky

conflict in a previously obscure corner of Southeast Asia, things had changed. Official censorship had ended shortly after the end of the Korean conflict, and journalists had become more sophisticated in their coverage and cynical about their government (Hammond, 1988).

The role of the media in this conflict has been the topic of much debate, as many critics contend that negative coverage of the Vietnam conflict is considered by many to be a factor in the loss of popular support for the war and the perception that America lost (Stone, 2004). What is undisputed is that the Vietnam era marks a period of change in the relationship between the government and the media in times of war. No longer using the wide-ranging censorship of earlier wars, the government mostly relied upon the media to censor themselves (Halberstam, 1972).

The news media paid little attention when America first began to send military advisers to Vietnam in the early 1960s (Knightley, 2005). But as the conflict heated up and the American troop presence increased, journalists brought an increasingly skeptical eye to bear on U.S. involvement in the country. The military, meanwhile, had dismantled its system of field press censorship (Hammond, 1988). In doing so, it left itself utterly unprepared for the impact that television would have on news coverage of the conflict. Moving images of a brutal and seemingly senseless jungle war undermined public morale and, some scholars argue, ultimately contributed to the withdrawal of American forces from the country (Hammond, 1988).

Porch (2002) agrees that media-military relations reached a nadir during the Vietnam era. Yet he argues that

The strained relationship between the media and the U.S. military has nothing to do with censorship—for the simple reason that media-military

relations have always been rocky.... The difference between World War II and Vietnam was not the presence of censorship but the absence of victory. In other conflicts, victory has erased memories of a troubled relationship; after Vietnam, the media was caught up in its quest for a scapegoat. (p. 86)

In other words, the terrible images and stories that the media brought to the average American could have been forgiven if they had been in service of a military victory. Absent that, the American people were left only with reports of death and disaster.

While Porch (2002) describes the media as an institution predisposed to challenge the government and the military, a dissenting view comes from Dan Hallin (1986). His seminal study of print and broadcast news reports during the height of the Vietnam War leads him to conclude that the news media often reflected the government's official positions on the war rather than challenge them. This was particularly true during the early years of the conflict, when both Republicans and Democrats supported U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia. It was only much later, when military operations became hopelessly bogged down and the bipartisan consensus began to fracture that the American media began to openly question their government's rationale for, and conduct of, the war.

Using *The New York Times* as one of his examples, Hallin (1986) methodically demonstrates that far from opposing the government during the critical years of the Vietnam conflict, the press was in almost perfect unity with the policymakers. This was due in part to the journalists' own professional credo of objectivity, he argues. Journalists generally attempt to report the facts of a story and refrain from editorializing. But as Hallin notes, the facts they reported "were not just any facts. They were official facts, facts about what the president said and what 'officials here believe'" (p. 25). This focus

on factuality and an absence of interpretation or analysis made it easy for government officials to manipulate the press.

Hallin's findings are echoed by David Culbert (2003), who notes that the widespread broadcast of Eddie Adams' famous image of South Vietnamese Col. Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Viet Cong agent during the 1968 Tet Offensive was seized upon by antiwar forces in the United States as a symbol for all that was wrong with the war in Vietnam and America's involvement in it. Yet the Adams image captured the public's imagination in part because it was the exception, not the rule. The American press, particularly the television media, had been notably reluctant to dwell upon the ugly nature of the fighting in Vietnam. Although many Americans now remember Vietnam as "the living-room war," the fact is that the television cameras were usually quite far from the action (Culbert, 2003).

A similar finding is made by Patterson (1995), who compares broadcast coverage of the Vietnam War with that of the Persian Gulf War. Many journalists and media critics derided the military's stringent controls on information during the latter conflict. Yet Patterson's analysis of more than 800 Vietnam-era television news stories concludes that few of them violated the strict Persian Gulf rules for reporting. His findings suggest that

the content of the sample was relatively benign. Had Gulf war rules been in place in Vietnam, they would have been violated, but the violations appear to have been on the part of the command structure, not the reporters. This suggests that selective recall on the part of the military has created a situation where media coverage of a critical historical event is misinterpreted by an important segment of the American system. This analysis would also suggest that the defensive posture taken towards the media during recent military activities—Grenada and the Gulf, for example—is not warranted based upon journalistic activities in Vietnam. (p. 29)

If journalists were indeed more restrained in their coverage than popular wisdom suggests, why? Unfettered by the kinds of restraints their predecessors had been shackled with in World Wars I and II, why didn't they speak more freely? As Stone (2004) notes, the climate of patriotism that exists during wartime often compels journalists to be more circumspect in their reporting. Journalists typically do not want to give aid to the enemy, or even give the appearance of doing so.

Public opinion also plays a crucial role in the media's decision to censor themselves during wartime. Erskine (1970) examined public opinion polls from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam conflict. These polls asked Americans about the desirability of freedom of speech in general and the toleration of "extremist" viewpoints in particular. Although differing methodologies among the various polls prevent Erskine from drawing any firm conclusions, the results suggest that Americans are less tolerant of extremist viewpoints during times of war, and that support for unorthodox opinions overall declined between 1938 and 1969. Because the commercial media depend upon public support, they cannot afford to alienate their audience. Self-censorship can therefore be a form of self-preservation.

The Vietnam era saw less official censorship by the government but a persistent if subtle pattern of self-censorship by the media themselves (Knightley, 2005). Nevertheless, the government and military concluded, correctly or not, that a lack of censorship resulted in a loss of popular support that affected the outcome of the war (Bailey, 1976). The lessons that the government and the military took away from the war would affect the media's ability to cover foreign wars for decades to come. The official censorship of the world wars would not return, however. Instead, tightened access to

battle areas and an increasing willingness to take messages directly to the people would become the hallmarks of the government's news management policy during wartime in the late 20th century and beyond.

1991, The First Persian Gulf War

By the time the Persian Gulf War began in 1991, 24-hour cable news had made the government's attempts to control the flow of information much more complicated. Yet Kemper and Baldwin (1991) point out that the sophisticated satellite hookups and instant communication abilities that made the war so immediate to the American public also made it easier for the military to control the flow of information. A generation of officers had learned from the mistakes of Vietnam, both on the battlefield and in the briefing room (Porch, 2002).

Schiller (1992) points out that the government's media strategy during the first Persian Gulf War centered on television. Most Americans get their news from television and the government therefore concentrated most of its efforts there. 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. What was missing from the television coverage, Schiller notes, was any explanation of the government's conflicting statements regarding its intentions in the Gulf or suggestion that any relevant antiwar sentiment existed anywhere in the country. The print media was not as carefully monitored by the government and was therefore better able to scrutinize the government's case for war. Yet relatively few newspapers or magazines chose to do this, and those that did were mostly small and not particularly influential (Schiller, 1992).

Restricted access to troops, front lines and officials meant that press conferences were often the main source of information for journalists during the conflict. Officials would instead use the electronic media to speak directly to the American people, rather than allow the media to act as a “filter” (Patterson, 1995). Many journalists at the time were sharply critical of this arrangement, arguing that it infringed upon their independence. Nonetheless, most of the mainstream media outlets had agreed to the Pentagon’s restrictive rules, reasoning that some access was better than none (Smith, 1999).

John MacArthur (1992) argues that the government never had any intention of allowing the media to cover the war and that its media strategy was a crucial element of its overall war plan. Keeping journalists off the battlefield allowed the military to conduct operations out of the public view. Favorable stories and images were distributed to the press; unfavorable stories were suppressed. MacArthur criticizes the reporters and editors who went along with the Pentagon’s plan, arguing that their compliance meant that vital questions about America’s goals and conduct of the war went unasked. Many of the journalists MacArthur interviews agree with his reasoning but again note that their choices were limited to accepting the Pentagon’s rules or being barred from the theater of war entirely.

Baroody’s (1998) study of the media’s role in the first Iraq war concluded that part of the problem arose from competing views of the media’s purpose from the military and the media themselves. Although military officers and journalists agreed that the press served a role during wartime, they did not agree about what that role is. The military officers often saw the role of the press as conduits between troops and their families or as

a “force multiplier;” an unsuspecting agent for the military’s agenda. Journalists, on the other hand, usually saw their role as to record events for posterity or to serve as a watchdog.

Baroody (1998) also found that military personnel were far less comfortable with the role of the press in interpreting or analyzing events. They tended to believe that reporters should limit themselves to merely describing what is transpiring. Journalists, by contrast, saw the interpretative role as one of their main functions. Baroody suggests that this fundamental disagreement between the media and the military regarding the former’s proper function during wartime is the central irritant in the relationship between the two entities.

Sharkey (1991) meanwhile, argues that the media blackout imposed by the government during this conflict was created for political, rather than national security, reasons. She traces the evolution of military/media relations from Vietnam through Grenada, Panama and finally Iraq. The American government, she concludes, paid careful attention to the strict press controls used by the British government during the Falklands war. Stung by its experiences in Vietnam and impressed by how masterfully the British sealed the press off from the action, the U.S. government began to implement a new press management policy during the brief incursion in Grenada. Although Sharkey is sharply critical of the government, she also blames the media for their unwillingness to challenge what she views as a threat to First Amendment rights.

An even more scathing critique comes from Douglas Kellner (1992), who compares television coverage of the Persian Gulf War with information from alternative media sources. He points out that the government successfully co-opted the mainstream

media for use in its immense propaganda campaigns prior to and during the war. These media outlets were used to disseminate “a barrage of propaganda, disinformation and outright lies that covered over the more unsavory aspects of the Gulf War and that legitimated U.S. policies” (p. 1). According to Kellner, the acquiescence of the media in participating in the government propaganda campaigns represents a distressing trend away from the ideals of a free press operating independent of the government it ostensibly watches over. For Kellner, such a trend is nothing less than a crisis of democracy itself.

2001-present, Afghanistan and the “War on Terror”

This tight control of information did not end with the conclusion of the Persian Gulf War (Hickey, 2002). News coverage of the antiterrorist operations in Afghanistan is currently subject to some of the most restrictive rules in the history of U.S. military engagements overseas. As during the first Iraq war, the major causes of journalists’ ire are the way reporters have been barred from both battlefields and nearby bases and the limited information provided by Pentagon spokespeople. Yet journalists continue to abide by these conditions, and rarely air their grievances in their own editorial pages or on their own broadcasts (Matthews, 2003).

Grabner (2003) points out that the military’s press management strategies are part of a carefully crafted image management process controlled by the government. Information about the conflict consists of justifications, excuses, and “transformations” (rhetorical techniques that favor one side of an argument at the expense of the other.) These devices are used to shape the case for censorship of information. Journalists and others who oppose such censorship often employ similar tactics, but the pro-censorship

advocates (that is, the government) are typically more successful in advancing their argument. This might be because public opinion tends to tilt toward the government in times of war.

As persecution of political dissent and official censorship of the news media during wartime has become less explicit, journalists and media critics are increasingly concerned about self-censorship. Journalists, in particular broadcast journalists, are increasingly loath to depict extreme violence or gore in their reports about military operations (Klotzer, 2003). Although official censorship remains dangerous to an informed society, Klotzer argues, self-censorship is perhaps more dangerous because no other institution in America besides the news media has the ability to challenge the government's suppression of information the public deserves to know—in this case, the true nature and cost of war.

Phillip Knightley agrees, arguing that self-censorship has always been a concern and that coverage of the current war in Iraq is not fundamentally different from the way in which previous conflicts were covered (Matthews, 2003). Again, the causes for such self-censorship are usually either misplaced patriotism or a fear of angering government officials who might restrict journalists' access to sources. American journalists, Knightley notes, enjoy a constitutional protection of free expression greater than anyone else, "yet at the very moment it is most necessary to use it, they appear to have put it on ice for the duration of the war" (p. 23).

While some critics lament the media's reluctance to challenge authority, the government does not. The U.S. military has enjoyed such improved relations with the media since Vietnam that McLane (2004) suggests a return to the days of open

cooperation. Because news today is transmitted almost instantly, it is in the government's interest to work with "trustworthy" journalists to control the flow of information during a war. This, he argues, is a logical extension of the "embedding" program. Some journalists criticized this arrangement, but others found it preferable to the tight control exercised by the Pentagon during the Persian Gulf War.

Of course, many critics argue that the government already has the de facto cooperation of the media. Schechter (2003) excoriates the press for its early coverage of the second Iraq war. According to Schechter, "there were pervasive pro-Western propaganda techniques built into American presentation formats. Many may be disguised; others obvious" (p. 16). For example, reporters often presented the conflict as a kind of sporting event. Many journalists also unquestionably accepted what Schechter calls "rightwing liberation theology" as the motivating agent for the American incursion into Iraq. This alignment of the press with the political goals of the military and the government, he suggests, is the result not so much of overt bias but rather laziness and an unwillingness to challenge the government during wartime.

The disquieting behavior of the American press is brought into stark relief when compared to European and Arab coverage of the war (Schechter, 2003). Media in other countries were far more critical of the U.S. government's policies and far more willing to highlight the human cost of the war. This, Schechter says, raises disturbing questions about how the American media view their roles during wartime.

Other scholars, while recognizing the difficulties inherent in attempting the report the full truth of a war while embedded with the military, are more forgiving. Philip Seib acknowledges that the press was occasionally too quick to accept the military's version of

events (2004). The most notorious instance of this was the breathless coverage of the capture and subsequent rescue of Private Jessica Lynch, whose heroic exploits in the face of danger proved to be mostly the work of Pentagon public relations teams (p. 75). Such shortcomings become all especially glaring when placed within the context of international and online news sources that provide competing interpretations of the war.

Nonetheless, Seib argues that the American media, by and large, performed admirably in Iraq. Noting that “precision in war coverage is...elusive” (p. 77), he contends “most American journalists positioned themselves on that middle ground between reporting and saluting” (p. 86). Moreover, he says, the reliability of independent and online news sources that frequently chastised the mainstream media’s coverage of the war is itself in question. Any criticism of the media’s performance in Iraq from such corners should therefore be taken with the proverbial grain of salt.

Chapter 3: Embedded

This chapter will analyze eight stories written by each of six embedded print journalists between March 19 and April 10 of 2003, during the invasion of Iraq and subsequent collapse of Saddam Hussein's government. This was the first and shortest part of the war, a conventional battle fought between two professional armies. The guerilla tactics that would later be used to devastating effect by the anti-American insurgency were not much in evidence during this period. Consequently, the stories produced by these six reporters reflect the success of the U.S. military on the battlefield.

This chapter is divided into six parts, each one focusing upon one of the reporters: William Branigin of *The Washington Post*, Steven Lee Myers of *The New York Times*, Ron Harris of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Rex Bowman of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, John Koopman of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and Ravi Nessman of the Associated Press.

William Branigin

One of Branigin's first stories, "Infantry Confronts Scant Resistance," is datelined March 20, the beginning of the U.S. ground war. In it, Branigin describes how the 3rd Infantry Division fought its way across the Kuwaiti border and into Iraq. Much attention is given to the size and strength of the American forces: there is an "intensive" artillery barrage before troops "poured through" the border as part of the "massive U.S. ground assault." The exact size and power of the Iraqi forces is never explicitly stated (and it is unlikely Branigin could have made anything more than an educated guess on this point), but the description of the American assault suggests they are markedly inferior.

The story mentions that some of the soldiers are disappointed by the lack of action. One battalion encounters nothing in their trip across the border except some camels:

“This is our first contact of the war,” one Bradley crewman reported over his radio. “Terrible.”...

“Are the camels out of it, or are they still an option?” asked one gunner.

“Camels can carry bombs, can’t they?” queried another.

A third Bradley crewman chimed in: “Camels can actually stare at you pretty hard.”

“They spit at you. I know that for a fact,” another voice said.

Branigin’s depiction of this jocular exchange connotes not only the soldiers’ lack of concern about the enemy, but also a desire to engage them in combat.

A subsequent Branigin article, “One ‘Good Fight,’ But Little Else,” ran in the *Post* on March 23. Carrying the dateline “With U.S. Forces in Iraq,” the article describes the 3rd Infantry’s push toward Baghdad. The second paragraph of the story notes a brigade engaged Iraqi forces in battle, killing 45 of them without sustaining any casualties of its own. The enemy again remains unseen by Branigin. Unlike the earlier story, however, this article includes a description of Iraqi civilians:

[The soldiers] passed one shepherd who was smiling and blowing kisses. For the most part, however, civilians who watched the U.S. convoys pass them on the roads reacted cautiously. A number of people, especially children, smiled and waved, but most of the men looked on without expression, showing neither joy nor anger at the U.S. invasion force.

A truck driver stranded by the road scratched his head as he inspected the front of his vehicle, studiously ignoring the tons of steel rumbling past him. Many others also kept their distance.

One smiling man, wearing a traditional long robe and squatting by the side of the road, spread out his hands with his palms up as if to say, “What’s all this?”

Although the story depicts the American forces as handily defeating the enemy in their brief encounter, it also notes that the division’s trek toward the Iraqi capital was not

without difficulties. Branigin mentions that several vehicles in the division's convoy crashed into one another due to poor visibility, but quotes a captain saying that because none of the crashes resulted in fatalities, it was "a good night."

The theme of the enemy's futile struggle in the face of immense firepower is revisited in Branigin's March 24 article, "Iraqi Militia No Match For Armored Column." The story describes the American division's "relentless" advance to Baghdad and its successful capture of an airfield near Najaf. Emphasis is placed on the technological superiority of the 3rd Infantry, especially when compared with the Iraqi irregulars. Branigin notes that the Iraqi fighters' pickup trucks and machine guns "proved no match" the division's more than 70 M1 Abrams tanks and 60 M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles. He also mentions the division's snipers, who are equipped with high-powered scopes and night-vision devices. Finally, the story describes the additional support available to the division: A-10 Thunderbolt tank-killing planes, AH-64 Apache helicopters and Paladin 155mm howitzers. Iraqi forces, according to Branigin's military sources, are "ill-equipped and poorly trained." Once again, the biggest threat to the American forces depicted in Branigin's stories is the Iraqi terrain. He mentions that some tanks and armored vehicles became stuck in a marshy area.

Branigin does provide an interesting historical note at the end of the story. After noting that Najaf is a sacred city to Iraq's Shiites, he continues: "after the Gulf War in 1991, Shiites in the southern part of the country revolted against Hussein's government, but the U.S. assistance they expected never came, and the rebellion was brutally suppressed." The statement might be seen as critical of previous U.S. policy toward Iraq, but it also references Hussein's brutal treatment of his own people, behavior that was part

of the Bush administration's rationale for the war.

Branigin's story, "Dash to Baghdad Earns A Day Of Rest," was published on March 26. Although it continues to emphasize the enormity of the American invasion force—the soldiers are described as completing an armored road march that is "unprecedented in size"—the theme struck by this article is one of exhaustion. American troops are "drained" and "bleary-eyed." This fatigue leads to anger on the part of some officers, who are frustrated by their apparent inability to maintain perfect discipline.

Once again, the primary antagonist for the U.S. forces is not the Iraqi army but the environment. The American camp is beset by a raging sandstorm. Branigin points out that this force of nature neutralizes some of the Americans' technological advantages, such as their night-vision goggles. Military technology, which is described in nearly awe-struck terms in Branigin's earlier stories, is depicted here as being overwhelmed by elemental forces not of human control. The contrast between the American reliance on technology and the harsh conditions of the Iraqi desert promotes an image of Iraq as a primitive place, out of touch with the modern world but still quite dangerous to it.

On April 3, the *Post* published "Resistance On Road Is Light, Convoy Faces Only Small Arms." In this article, Branigin continues to track the progress of the 3rd Infantry as it marches toward Baghdad. As the headline implies, the story describes the Iraqi efforts to hinder the division's progress as futile. Even American commanders are surprised by the ease with which they have advanced:

U.S. commanders had expected to meet stiff resistance from the Medina Division of the elite Republican Guard. But a relentless pounding in recent days by Air Force planes, including B-52 bombers, rendered at least two of the division's key brigades "combat ineffective," officers said.

Again, American technological superiority is explicitly compared to the ragtag Iraqi

fighters. Their vehicles include civilian pickup trucks and four-wheel-drive vehicles, the burned-out husks of which, with dead bodies nearby, provide the only firsthand evidence of the enemy. Once again soldiers use humor when describing the lack of any effective resistance:

“Black 6, Black 7,” 1st Sgt. Chris French radioed to his Bravo Company commander at one point from his slow-moving M113. “Be advised I was passed by a dog on the side.”

“Is he a threat?” chimed in one platoon leader.

Branigin follows this anecdote, however, with this quote: “It’s all fun and games until a mortar gets dropped on your head.” Here Branigin directly addresses the contradictory images of the Iraqi forces advanced by his sources: they are simultaneously not a serious threat to the American military, yet they remain exceptionally dangerous.

Branigin’s April 7 story, “At Airport, Probe Leads Army To Secret Room,” goes beyond description of Iraqi’s regular and irregular fighters and provides some context about Saddam Hussein’s style of leadership. In the article, Branigin describes some of the buildings seized at Saddam International Airport, one of which is a “VIP terminal that contains what U.S. soldiers suspect was a hideaway for President Saddam Hussein. Elaborately appointed, it has a thick hand-carved mahogany door, gold-plated bathroom fixtures and a veranda opening onto a rose garden.” The American troops, Branigin says, are convinced that the room has a secret exit:

“We’re sure there’s a way out of it,” said Grimsley, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division’s 1st Brigade. “We just can’t figure it out.” But it stands to reason that another concealed passage exists, said the 45-year-old native of Arlington and graduate of McLean High School. “It’s a very secretive regime. This is his means of escape.”

The description of the hidden room, coupled with the commander’s comment about Hussein’s “secretive regime” reinforce the image of Hussein as paranoid tyrant,

concerned with nothing other than his own safety and comfort. The story also describes a foray by an armored regiment under the famous saber arch in downtown Baghdad.

Branigin quotes the same commander as saying the regiment made the trip “just because we can.” Here the bravado and derring-do of the American forces is made explicit in the face of increased danger, in the form of the sniper and RPG attacks that Branigin also describes in the article.

The next day the *Post* published another dispatch from Branigin, this one entitled, “At Intersection, Army’s Mission Turns To Chaos.” The article describes an intensive firefight between Iraqis and elements of the 3rd Infantry. Far from the one-sided engagements the division fought in the desert, this battle is depicted as more dangerous for the American forces, as the Iraqis use the urban landscape to their advantage.

Branigin provides a vivid portrait of urban warfare as the Americans blast away at mostly unseen adversaries. Once again, their technological advantage is blunted, this time not by the elements but by the different tactics of their foes. As the Iraqis abandon a traditional battlefield posture and adopt guerilla tactics, they become more of a threat. This is evidenced in Branigin’s mention of the division’s discovery of “hundreds of rocket-propelled grenades” and a soldier’s increased concern about suicide attacks. Two American soldiers are killed during this battle, further evidence of the increasingly dangerous nature of the enemy. Yet Branigin also compares that number to the 25 Iraqis killed and 30 others captured by U.S. forces. If the Iraqis have become more dangerous, they are still outclassed by their American opponents.

But Branigin’s story describes not only the Americans’ fighting prowess but also their mercy:

An Army medic, Sgt. Mario Manzano of St. Petersburg, Fla., said one wounded prisoner offered him a thick wad of Iraqi dinars for treating him. When he refused, Manzano said, the Iraqi man began weeping, thanked him for the medical treatment and denounced President Saddam Hussein in broken English.

Here we see the Americans as magnanimous in victory, behaving not as conquerors but as benevolent rulers. The Iraqi, in turn, is grateful for his treatment.

One of the last stories Branigin wrote before the fall of Baghdad ran on April 10. Headlined “Army Seizes Final Government Strongholds; Commander Says End Of Combat ‘Days Away,’” the story describes the entrance of the 3rd Infantry into the heart of Baghdad and its defeat of most of Hussein’s fighters. Unlike the tone of the earlier story, which suggested capturing Baghdad might be a bloody endeavor, the mood of this story is mostly triumphant. The division has beaten Hussein’s “most loyal and best-trained defense force,” what resistance is left is limited to a few “die-hard fighters.”

Iraqi civilians are depicted here as uniformly welcoming of the division’s arrival into Baghdad. The troops are “offered information, food and drink by residents who expressed joy at seeing the end of more than three decades of Baath Party rule.” The cooperation of the Iraqis is portrayed as the natural result of the Americans’ effective ouster of Hussein as leader of Iraq. The Americans are described as liberators rather than occupiers or conquerors, in terms very similar to the ones used by the Pentagon to describe the military’s role in Iraq.

The human cost of the invasion does not go unnoticed: Branigin refers to the bloated corpses that line the streets of Baghdad. He makes clear, however, that these are the bodies of “Hussein loyalists” one of whom tried to disguise himself as an American soldier. The description of the American uniforms found on the man carry a connotation

of cowardice or duplicity that is again contrasted with the straightforward nature of the U.S. soldiers who clean the streets of dead bodies.

Overall, Branigin's stories reflect a sense of awe at the advanced technology of the American military and an appreciation for the fortitude and commitment of the American soldiers. He pays particular attention to the thoughts and actions of the enlisted men and women who do most of the fighting and presumably come from backgrounds very different from that of Branigin himself. The Iraqis in these stories are more discussed than seen, and they are depicted as alternately menacing or harmless.

Steven Lee Myers

Steven Lee Myers of *The New York Times* was also embedded with the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division. One of his first stories, headlined "A Nation At War: Troops, G.I.'s and Marines See Little Resistance," was published on March 21. In it, Myers describes the 3rd Infantry's (and 1st Marine Division's) advance into Iraq. As with Branigin's stories, Myers' article emphasizes the size and power of the American forces, describing the "thousands of soldiers" and the firepower they wield.

The Iraqi forces are mostly unseen; the only real evidence of their presence are the corpses and destroyed equipment left by the opening salvo of the American attack. The soldiers quoted in the story do not mention the Iraqis directly, instead often commenting on the weapons at their disposal: missiles, jets and tanks. The net effect of these quotes is to render the war as a highly technical and depersonalized experience for the soldiers who are fighting it. Rather than engage the enemy face to face, as combatants once did, these troops are separated from their foe by their own technology. Thus the human consequences of this combat are obscured to the American soldiers and, by

extension, to the article's readers.

Myers also takes note of the American troops' treatment of the Iraqi corpses they encounter: "American soldiers gathered the dead, placing the bodies in black bags and leaving them beside the road before moving on. They also collected the dead soldiers' belongings, one officer said, so that word could be passed to their families." The respectful treatment of the Iraqis' bodies stands out in the middle of a war zone. The irony of soldiers carefully caring for the bodies of the men they've just killed is not mentioned by Myers.

Myers also explicitly notes that as an embed, he is subject to certain restrictions: "Guidelines imposed on journalists traveling with the military prohibit reporting on many details of operations, including locations." This, however, is the only comment Myers makes. What other restrictions might apply are not mentioned. Nonetheless, this is one of the few explicit mentions of such restrictions in any of the stories analyzed in this study.

The next Myers story analyzed was headlined "A Nation At War: With The Troops/Third Division; G.I.s Pause on Push to Baghdad, and One Falls to a Sniper." It ran in the *Times* on March 25. Myers leads with the death of a soldier, apparently the only one sustained in this round of fighting. The placement of this information at the beginning of the story highlights its rarity—the unit encounters only "small pockets of Iraqi forces" and "probing attacks" and apparently sustains no other casualties in this round of the fighting. Myers also notes that many of the Iraqis surrendered without firing a shot, and that the division has taken a large number of prisoners. The implication here is that the Iraqi forces have no reasonable expectations of defeating the Americans and have instead given themselves up.

Myers notes that the part of the division's mission is to search for the chemical weapons that Hussein's regime was alleged to possess. Myers points out that

The discovery of chemical weapons would give a significant political boost to the administration's rationale for the war—a thought that seems to be less on the mind of officers here than the desire to ensure the quick capture of any potential sites for storing weapons that might be used against their troops.

At this stage of the war, American claims of an Iraqi chemical weapons program had not yet been discredited (Schechter, 2003). Many newspapers, including the *Times*, readily accepted these claims—much to their later chagrin (Bishop, 2004). Myers notes that the division's initial search for such weapons yields no results, but also mentions the discovery of gas masks. Their existence, according to Myers, is “a possible indication of Iraq's intention to use chemical weapons.”

Later in the story Myers describes an incident in which two Iraqis in civilian clothes are captured in a white Volvo with 14 AK-47s in the trunk. This underscores “the unsettled situation behind the vanguard of the Third Infantry Division,” says Myers. Although the division has had no difficulty in defeating the regular Iraqi forces, Myers suggests they will not fare as well waging a guerilla war. Later events would bear out this interpretation.

The third Myers story studied here, “A Nation at War: In the Field—Third Infantry; A Pause in the Advance, and Some Time to Reflect,” ran on March 28. The story begins with the ruminations of Sgt. Mark Redmond and his concern about the men he has killed in combat. “I mean, I have my wife and kids to go back home to,” he said...I don't want them to think I'm a killer.” This reference to the psychological toll the conflict might be inflicting upon the Americans is unusual; most of the quotes in the

stories analyzed in this study reflect an unadulterated enthusiasm for the war and the troops' mission. Myers' inclusion of the quote might indicate a recognition of the increasingly one-sided nature of the war, and the anguish that such killing inspires.

Readers are also told that Redmond

joined the Army three years ago after doing odd jobs around his hometown, a four-church and no-stop-light town outside of Gainesville, Fla. He wanted to be a combat soldier, he said, but his wife told the Army recruiter that she wanted him to have a safer job.

This background information establishes that the sergeant is from a small, apparently rural community. He is married and is evidently not particularly wealthy. These traits recur many times in descriptions of American enlisted troops, both in Myers' stories and others'. Such personal details are rarely present in descriptions of commissioned officers. Myers again describes how the Americans treat the bodies of the slain Iraqis, including this quote from a member of the Graves Registration Team: "Basically we did the same thing with the Iraqi dead that we would have done with American dead." This comment again reinforces the basic humanity and kindness of the American troops. Their courtesy is even extended to their slain foes.

Indeed, Myers suggests that the Americans are in some sense reluctant warriors, a reluctance connected to the religious faith of many of the soldiers. He quotes Redmond as saying, "I'm a Christian man. If I have to kill the other guy, I will, but it doesn't make me a hero. I just want to go home to my wife and kids." This element of faith is reinforced by the words of the unit's chaplain, who manages to reconcile the pacifist teachings of his own church with his participation in the war: "War is love's response to a neighbor threatened by force." The chaplain's words both acknowledge and justify the immense and lethal force that the American troops have brought to bear on their enemies.

A fourth story by Myers appeared as part of an occasional series in the *Times* entitled “Tours of Duty.” Entitled “A Nation at War: Intelligence Sergeant; After 11 Days of War, Anticipation and Reflection,” it ran on April 1. The story is a profile of Sgt. Jennifer Raichle, an intelligence analyst with the 3rd Infantry who was also mentioned in previous stories by Myers. The story begins with Raichle’s admission that she and other intelligence officers underestimated the willingness of the Iraqis to resist the invasion. Although the division has managed to fight its way into the country’s interior, “firefights slowed the division’s thrust northward, threatening supply lines and slowing up her convoy.”

Raichle is portrayed as an enthusiastic supporter of the war and has “an instinctive faith that the American cause is right and the Iraqi wrong.” Yet Raichle also believes that the conflict will inevitably be costly. She theorizes that the Iraqi resistance is motivated by the fear instilled by Hussein and will hold out until the end. Myers mentions that the threat of chemical attack remains foremost in the minds of soldiers such as Raichle. Gas masks are again referenced, another suggestion of Hussein’s reputed weapons program and a reminder of the Bush administration’s *casus belli*.

Along with the gas masks, Raichle and her colleagues discover “a Koran, a cache of weapons and a poster of American aircraft.” The mention of the Koran in connection with the weapons provides an implicit connection between the Islam and the threat posed by the Iraqi fighters. This, coupled with Myers’ earlier references to the Christian faith of the American soldiers, sets up the conflict as a religious struggle.

After this lull in action, the 3rd Infantry soon regained its momentum and surged toward Baghdad. On April 3, the *Times* ran Myers’ story “A Nation At War: In the Field,

Third Infantry Division; G.I.'s Pry Iraqis Loose And Surge Over River." Although the battle described in the story is characterized as "intense," Myers makes clear that once again, the Iraqis are no match for the technological and tactical savvy of the U.S. forces. He describes in exacting detail the weapons and vehicles used by the Americans: rocket-propelled Paladin howitzers, Bradley fighting vehicles, Apache helicopters and fighter jets. He also notes that "The Iraqi tactics that had proved effective against forces encircling Najaf, Nasiriya and Samawa—sniping, ambushes, a taxi bomb—could do little to slow, let alone halt, the division's armored forces." Here the Iraqis are portrayed as little more than a nuisance to the American troops, albeit an occasionally deadly one. Their encounters with the Americans are merely "skirmishes."

Myers also quotes a soldier describing the death of an Iraqi in an explosion: "The only thing that was skin color was his head," said Specialist Brandon L. Grey, who is 20 years old and had never seen a dead body before. "It kind of gives you a chill." The specialist's reaction to the gruesome nature of the dead body reinforces the notion of the Americans as disturbed by the nature of the violence they cause. Yet such distaste for their mission does not prevent them from accomplishing it. Their professionalism is highlighted by the engineers who endeavor to cross the damaged bridge at the beginning of the story.

Myers' next story, "A Nation At War: In the Field March to Baghdad; At Airport, Bombs Provide the Only Light," ran the following day. In chronicling the 3rd Division's assault on Saddam International Airport, Myers again characterizes the American thrust as something the Iraqis are either unwilling or unable to resist; the

troops “faced only light resistance at dusk and then later virtually no resistance at all.”

The Iraqis, when they do attack, remain mostly unseen:

“They’re there,” Sgt. Maj. Gary J. Coker, an engineer, said as he arrived Thursday night, gesturing into the blackness. “They’re out there right now.”

As if in response, six Iraqi anti-aircraft rockets soared across the airport, exploding to the south, beyond the troops massing here. Just as quickly as they shuddered across the sky, all was silent again.

The way the Iraqi attack comes from “the blackness” creates an aura of menace. The Iraqis do not confront the Americans head-on, preferring to strike from the darkness.

Iraqi civilians are also mentioned, and Myers’ description of them hints at a suspicion that they may be linked to the attacks on the Americans:

Along the road into one village, Yusufiya, Iraqi civilians mingled on the roadside. Some waved and cheered, holding leaflets that have been dropped by the millions over Iraq. Children, especially, ran beside the armored columns, collecting rations or sweets that soldiers tossed out. Most, however, glared – whether in awe or anger, it was hard to say. Not long after the First Brigade’s mobile command post passed the village’s shops, schools and mosque, someone opened fire on an artillery unit from a grove of trees.

“I expect some of them were wearing uniforms a couple of days ago,” Lt. Col. James E. Lackey, the brigade’s artillery commander, said of those on the roadside.

Myers suggests only two options for the civilians’ response to the Americans. Other possible reactions—fear, concern, relief—go unmentioned.

Myers’ next article, “A Nation At War: In the Field Third Infantry Division; With Blockade, Officers See a Government on Autopilot,” was published on April 7. It describes the final days of the push toward Baghdad and the collapse of Hussein’s control of the country. Myers describes the remaining resistance forces as “pockets of Iraqi defenders.” He says the remaining Republican Guard divisions “have more or less collapsed” and are “devastated.” Yet the story also notes that American officers

“acknowledged that there remained legions of irregular fighters who continue to attack American forces.”

Unlike many of Myers’ early stories, this one does not feature any quotes from enlisted soldiers. Instead, Myers relies upon officers for most of this information. He speaks to a colonel, a lieutenant colonel, a major and a first lieutenant. There is less emphasis on the individuality of these men. Myers provides no personal information about these officers, only their insights on the ongoing operations.

As with previous stories, Myers quantifies each side’s gains and losses. He notes that “officers reported that more than 100 Iraqi fighters had been killed and that 23 Iraqi tanks had been destroyed, along with more than 90 armored troop carriers, artillery pieces, antiaircraft batteries and trucks.” He goes on to contrast these losses with the two American soldiers killed in the fighting. By describing the conflict simply in terms of number of vehicles destroyed and troops killed, Myers portrays the combat as almost a kind of competition—one that the Americans are easily winning.

The final Myers article in this study ran under the headline “A Nation At War: In the Field 101st Airborne Division; Battalion Stages Assault On Iraqi Hilltop Position And Guard’s Complex” on April 9. By this time Myers had left the 3rd Infantry and re-embedded himself with the 101st Airborne as it also closed in on Baghdad. This move was unusual; most reporters stuck with their original units for the duration of major combat operations (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003).

This article contains many of the same traits of Myers’ earlier stories. There is a detailed list of the Americans’ weapons and vehicles: antitank missiles, A-10 Thunderbolts, satellite-guided ordnance. However, Myers also describes the weapons

used by the Iraqis: AK-47's, grenades and a mortar launcher. The comparison paints the conflict as a contest between competing technologies; the Americans, with their superior firepower, are the presumptive victors. Myers ends the article with a sketch of the scene of the battle:

At the top of the hill stood the remains of a monument—dedicated, according to its inscription, by Mr. Hussein himself on April 10, 2001—that had been heavily damaged. It had included a metal bas-relief portrait of Mr. Hussein, and an inscription that foretold the creation of a new Iraqi civilization.

The hilltop, planted with new, half-dead trees, was cratered with the blasts of artillery rounds and strewn with bits of metal. An outbuilding lay in a crushed heap. As for Mr. Hussein's portrait, it was in the back of one of Company D's Humvees.

The depiction of the destroyed monument and the looted portrait set against the grandiose inscription makes Hussein's designs seem rather pathetic in the face of the American onslaught.

Myers' stories share a number of characteristics with those of Branigin, particularly the amount of coverage devoted to the personal lives and thoughts of enlisted personnel. Myers' profiles of Redmond and Raichle in particular stand out as examples of Myers' depiction of the archetypal American soldier: devoted to his or her country and willing to fight and kill for it. The portrayal of the Iraqis, however, is even murkier than Branigin's. They appear mostly as faceless civilians or an unseen threat, always striking from a distance.

Ron Harris

Ron Harris of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was embedded with the 7th Marines in Southern Iraq. One of his earlier stories ran on March 22 with the headline, "Without a Fight, Marines Take Over Iraqi Military Camp." In it, Harris details L Company's seizure

of an Iraqi military facility. Most of Harris' quotes come from enlisted men, all of whose hometowns are mentioned. By contrast, Harris does not provide any distinguishing details about the two officers he quotes in the story.

Harris writes that the "Marines had a look of disappointment on their faces as they moved through the empty compound." He quotes several marines who express a desire to engage the Iraqis in combat. In contrast with some of Branigin and Myers' stories, these troops are portrayed as hungry for combat. The absence of a foe to fight is depicted as a disappointment rather than relief. The only threat mentioned in the story is a landmine that detonates under an American tank. The Marines suffer no casualties, and although Harris quotes L Company's commanding officer as saying "we got lucky," the story gives the impression that the fleeing Iraqis are hardly a danger for the Marines.

In the next Harris story in this study, however, the Iraqi enemy has suddenly become a threat. The headline of the March 25 story, "Surprise Attacks By Iraqis Who 'Surrendered' Turn Military's Mood Mean," conveys the change in attitude of the Marines. Harris writes:

In one incident Sunday near An Nasiriyah, a crossing point over the Euphrates River, a group of Iraqis waved a white flag in surrender, then opened up with artillery fire. Another group, dressed as civilians, appeared to welcome coalition troops, then attacked them, U.S. officials said. Nine Marines died and a dozen U.S. soldiers were missing and presumed captured after the surprise engagements.

This incident, and others like it, hardens the mood of the marines in the 7th. Harris mostly uses quotes from several marines to describe the shift in behavior, rather than characterize it himself. Neither does he quote any marines who might feel differently, creating an impression that the atmosphere of suspicion permeates the entire unit.

Harris ends the story with a quote from a lance corporal: "I just do my job,"

Brown, 25, said. ‘I just want to go home alive and intact. Some of the Marines want (rules of engagement) changed, but most of them are just like me. They just want to go home.’” This is a marked change from the attitude of the marines described in the earlier story, who displayed a decidedly gung-ho air. Now the marines who are not angry are cast as the kind of reluctant warriors seen in Myers’s description of the soldiers of the 3rd Infantry.

A third Harris story, “Attacks Slow Down Marines On Push To Capital; Iraqis Harass Units By Stepping Up Guerilla Assaults” was published on March 27. Here Harris rarely describes the Marines’ opponents as “Iraqi.” Instead, he uses the term “enemy” or does not characterize the enemy at all, preferring to only mention the weapons that are being used against the Marines. This has the effect of making the enemy more generic by denying them identifying characteristics and making them all-purpose “bad guys.”

Harris also introduces his readers to the Marines’ military jargon in this sentence: “‘Snowstorm, snowstorm, 3998,’ came the call over the radio, the signal for an artillery or mortar attack and the attack coordinates.” 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.

A fourth story by Harris, “Focus Shifts From Drive To Staking Out A Secure Supply Line; Iraqis Are Harassing Convoys,” ran on March 30. In this article, Harris describes how the Iraqis continue to attack supply lines, although they are portrayed as a lesser threat to the Marines’ success than the logistical problems of supporting units that

are stretched out across the country. Even the weather—hail and sandstorms—are mentioned before the mortar and sniper attacks that appear far down in the story.

Presumably this is because such attacks do not pose a large threat.

Harris also notes that the Marines expect to encounter pockets of resistance even after their major objectives are achieved, “similar to what troops have encountered in Afghanistan.” The comparison to the American invasion and subsequent reconstruction of Afghanistan creates a sense that the operations in Iraq will be completed as efficiently and quickly as they were in that country. (Ironically, security in Afghanistan has deteriorated markedly since this story was written.)

Another Harris story, “Marines Escort Convoy Delivering Precious Fuel; Overwhelming Force is Demonstrated to Discourage Attacks,” ran in the *Post-Dispatch* on April 3. Bylined “From Central Iraq,” the article provides a laundry list of the weapons available to the highly armed convoy: “Tow missiles, heavy machine guns, and loaded with Marines packing M-16s and 9 mm pistols.” The list reinforces the idea that the Americans wield what the headline describes as “overwhelming force.” In fact, “overwhelming” is a word that recurs frequently throughout many of the stories in this study.

The Marines here differ from both the eager fighters and the reluctant warriors depicted in Harris’ earlier stories. In this article, they appear laconic and mostly unruffled in the face of danger. Explaining why their truck is labeled “Enola Gay,” one of the marines notes that

They had heard erroneously that a tanker like theirs had hit a land mine and exploded. “So we’re just trying to say it’s a rolling bomb,” Webb said. “You can’t take this stuff too seriously. You can’t get wrapped around the axle. You just roll with the punches.”

Moreover, the sergeant has “a chew of tobacco between his cheek and gum,” an image that takes some of the urgency out of his command to his subordinates to “keep your eyes open.”

A sixth story by Harris, “Marines Resolve Tense Standoff With Crowd of Angry Iraqis” appeared in the *Post-Dispatch* on April 5. The article describes the Marines’ efforts to calm down “hundreds of angry Iraqi men, women and children.” The people are usually described only as “a crowd.” Only one individual in the group is mentioned, an English-speaking man who speaks with the Marines. He is not named. The crowd is portrayed as a faceless, chanting mass that exists only as a potential threat to the outnumbered Marines. This contrasts with the friendly behavior of the previous day, which Harris describes as “fawn[ing].”

The lieutenant in charge at the scene is described as “a tall, sturdy redhead” who refuses to capitulate to the demands of the crowd: “‘You can’t start giving in to their demands, or there’ll be one more demand after the other,’ he said. ‘I didn’t really believe that they were going to launch any attacks.’” Here the Marines’ leader is seen as resolute in the face of danger. The story implicitly compares his cool demeanor with the heated behavior of the shouting crowd, making him appear to be completely in control of the situation.

A subsequent Harris story was published on April 7. Appearing under the headline, “‘Palace’ Is Little More Than Summer Getaway; Presidential Home Has Three Bedrooms, About 1,600 Square Feet,” the article is datelined Salman Pak, a suburb of Baghdad. In the story, Harris describes the 7th Marines’ discovery of one of Hussein’s presidential palaces. But as he notes, “at best, the white stucco structure could be

described as a modest summer home, or a rural getaway for family and friends. But palatial, hardly.” The tone of the story is gently mocking and notes that even by the standards of the American government, Hussein’s penchant for exaggeration “went far beyond a little hype.”

Harris goes on to describe the house in detail, including the grounds and the security facilities around it, before ultimately concluding

By local standards, Saddam’s home and grounds in a similar place in a rural area of the St. Louis region would probably go for about \$200,000, not much for a “palace.” But it means that a lot of people in the area can claim to live at least as well at times as the president of Iraq.

The comparison between Hussein’s house and those of Harris’ audience further degrades Hussein, a head of state. This is by far the most lighthearted of Harris’ stories, containing no mention of combat or casualties.

The final Harris story in this study ran in the *Post-Dispatch* on April 10. Entitled “Gunfire Interrupts Iraqis Warm Welcome of Marines,” the article describes the generally positive reception given to the invading troops. Notably, the article is one of the few to contain quotes from Iraqis themselves. Each Iraqi interviewed expresses either gratitude toward the marines or hatred or fear of Hussein. At least one man is described as trying to hug the Americans. No dissenting opinions are mentioned.

Like earlier Harris stories, this one features the Marines’ own terminology: “‘Lima 5, Lima 5, this is Delta 3,’ said Stanley-Smith, ‘We’re observing four to five men with AK-47s close to that burning warehouse. We suggest you prosecute that area.’” Again this desire to include jargon may indicate a desire for the writer and/or his audience to see these warriors as a unique class of men with their own language and traditions.

Harris' articles are noteworthy for the way in which the Iraqis are depicted as minor characters in their own nation. The marines are the singular focus of these stories, and they are described in uniformly positive terms. The only suggestion of complexity or nuance is the shift in the marines' attitude between the March 22 and March 25 stories. In one article these troops are seeking the thrill of combat; in the next they want to quickly accomplish their mission so they can return home.

Rex Bowman

Reporter Rex Bowman of the Richmond (Virginia) *Times-Dispatch* was embedded with the 1st Marine Division. One of his early stories, "90 Iraqi Tanks On the Move, Previously Hidden Fleet Moves South," ran in that newspaper on March 22. In it, Bowman describes the Marines' movement into Iraq and the first stages of the U.S. invasion. Bowman's story, at 220 words, is far shorter than most of the other stories in this study, which typically run between 600 and 800 words.

More interestingly, the story contains no direct quotes and no attribution. Bowman describes the Marines' preparations for the invasion and their reports of a large Iraqi tank force massing near Basra, but the sources of this information are not revealed. The reasons for this are unclear. All embedded reporters were subject to certain restrictions, but the other reporters in this study still provided at least partial attribution in their stories ("commanders say," "a senior officer said," etc.) The absence of attribution is particularly confusing given Bowman's first sentence: "The common infantryman rarely sees the big picture of war, but the marines of Charlie Company clearly realized Thursday that the big push was on." Without any supporting quotes or statements from said marines, the reader is left to simply accept (or reject) Bowman's assertion.

Bowman's subsequent stories were more conventional. His March 25 story, "Marines Make Bold, Early Morning Dash" contained 917 words and contains quotes from several marines. One of them offers Bowman his reason for the Americans' presence in Iraq: "'Our job isn't to kill today, but to liberate a repressed people,' Stillwell said. 'We will kill if attacked, but that's not our first choice. I guess I'm sorry it came to this, but Saddam had plenty of chances.'"

This rationale partially echoes the Bush administration's own justification for the war but makes no mention of weapons of mass destruction—ostensibly the main reason for the conflict. Bowman makes no mention of this omission, nor does he provide any competing or contradictory claims for the causes of the war.

Bowman's story is unusual in that it makes a rare reference to inter-services rivalry:

Members of Charlie Company were still sore at the Army as they rolled over the Euphrates today and surveyed the burned-out Soviet-era tanks and demolished buildings of An Nasiriyah. They felt the Army should have completely cleaned out the city before leaving it to the Marines.

Bowman also mentions reports of friendly fire—Americans accidentally firing upon other Americans. The intimation that the U.S. military is in any way divided or incompetent is rarely found in any of the stories in this study.

Bowman's March 28 story, "400 Marines Seek the Source of One Grenade, Danger Haunts Road to Baghdad," contains a detailed description of a Marine mission in the rural town of Tarrad al-Jahf. Bowman describes the town in great detail, noting the one-story buildings, a pig trough and "several varieties of pungent dung—goat dung, chicken dung, sheep dung." The depiction of the town and the description of the residents' behavior—gesticulating and kissing their American interrogators—create an

image of the Iraqis as wildly different and even backwards in comparison to the American soldiers. They do not seem particularly threatening, but instead figures of contempt or pity.

In the article “Death of Captured Marine Confirmed, Report Body Was Strung Up Disputed,” published on March 31, Bowman describes the fate of a marine who was captured as his convoy passed through the town of Shatrah. He writes

The Marine was part of an air-wing support squadron making its way north late at night when it was hit by rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire.

The attack turned over a 7-ton truck, and when members of the convoy repelled the attack and got back on the road, they noticed the Marine was missing.

Bowman characterizes this incident as typical of the engagements between the Marines and their enemies, noting that the Iraqis prefer hit-and-run tactics to large-scale firefights. As he puts it, the Marines are “being harassed,” a word that intimates more annoyance than danger. Bowman also writes that the attacks are carried out by villagers forced to fight by Hussein’s Republican Guard and quotes a Marine commander as saying “the villages are torn.” The implication here is that the Iraqis are beset by internal strife and that many of them do not want to fight the Marines. This dovetails with the theme in other Bowman stories that the Marines are present as liberators, not occupiers.

Bowman’s April 2 article, “Stomachs Growl, So Do Marines,” is unusual in that it does not describe any combat operations. Apparently written during a lull in the action, this story describes a food shortage caused by overstretched supply lines. Bowman notes that

Buddies all at once got testy with one another. Not only did you suddenly have to endure the filthy Marine lying next to you in the sand amid the dried feces of some unknown wild animal, you had to endure the Marine’s

loud, growling stomach as well.

Bowman's sudden transition from the traditional, detached perspective of third-person narration to the more immediate and personal second-person narration suggest a growing connection between the writer and his subjects, and perhaps a desire to communicate that bond to the newspaper's readers. Bowman, as an embed, would have experienced the same hardships he details in this article; he may have commiserated with the Marines and in the process become more involved than might have otherwise.

Bowman ends his story with an unusual verbatim exchange about the comedian Roseanne Barr:

Postoyan: Would you ever sleep with Roseanne?

Gray: Hell no!

Postoyan: Even after she lost weight?

Gray: She didn't lose that much weight.

Postoyan: She lost enough.

Gray: She's a freak. And you're a hairy freak.

Postoyan (to a reporter): You're not writing that down, are you?!

Reporter: No.

This conversation, with its sexual crudity and put-downs, suggests a certain level of comfort between the marines and Bowman. That comfort is not complete, however, as evidenced by Postoyan's query to the reporter. That reporter—presumably Bowman, here adhering the convention of keeping one's self out of one's own story—lies to Postoyan indicates that he is still aware that is an outsider whose mission is not the same as the Marines'.

A sixth Bowman story, "The Sunshine State's A Long, Long Way Away" appeared on April 4. This story profiles a group of Marine reservists from Florida attached to the 1st Marines. It describes the hardships they endure, their thoughts on the war and their occupations back in the civilian world. The story's focus on the personal

experiences of a few of these reservists conforms to Pfau's (2004) conclusion that much of the reportage produced by embedded reporters tends to frame stories as personal tales and avoids discussing the larger military, political and economic ramifications of the conflict the reporters witness.

The story also fits several other trends observed in other stories in this study. It provides an inventory of the weaponry at the Marines' disposal, describing the armored amphibious vehicles, or "tracks" that they ride:

The tracks are 26-ton pieces of steel and metal tread that the Marines climb aboard each morning. About 500 pounds of Marine backpacks are strapped to the side of the vehicle. An additional 200 pounds of backpacks are carried inside, along with canisters of ammunition and a dozen or so M-16 rifles...plus they're armed with a .50-caliber machine gun and the Mark 19, a weapon that fires grenades at a rate of up to 472 per minute.

Bowman also shares some more Marine jargon with his readers, noting that the tracks are called "pigs" because of their purported resemblance to the animals.

By the time Bowman's April 6 story, "Iraqis Cheer as Marines Near Baghdad," the end of Hussein's regime was in sight. Bowman describes the warm welcome afforded the Marines by the apparently grateful Iraqi civilians. He writes

residents stood in front of their homes or in their dusty fields and waved, smiling broadly under the hot sun. Perhaps that is the only safe way to greet a conquering army, but the Marines said they felt the friendliness of the Iraqi people was genuine.

Here Bowman acknowledges that such behavior may be induced more by fear than actual affection, but this suggestion is outweighed by the several descriptions of Iraqis smiling, waving and talking to the Marines.

The final Bowman story in this study, "U.S. Marines Bask in Baghdad's Cheer," was published on April 10 and continues the theme of the earlier story: Iraqis are pleased

that the Marines have arrived. They are “cheering, clapping and laughing” and besiege the advancing Marines with flowers and cigarettes. The Marines, in turn, express surprise at the positive reception they have received. Bowman’s description of their surprise suggests a misapprehension on their part (and perhaps Bowman’s as well) that the Iraqi civilians would be allied with the opposing forces. That they are not indicates that the Iraqis really want the Americans in their country, as several of them tell Bowman.

The most unusual part of this story is Bowman’s use of the first person towards the end, when he relates interviews he conducts with several Iraqis. This abandonment of the traditional third-person narrative suggests Bowman may have become personally involved with the Marines and their mission. Interestingly, only one Iraqi man is identified by name, though Bowman spoke to at least three others. This suggests that Bowman may see the Iraqis as more or less interchangeable.

In some ways, Bowman’s articles were among the most nuanced and least pro-military of any included in this study. He alone made reference to the tensions between the Army and the Marines and the threat of friendly fire. His stories also attempt to place the war in a larger political context, making several references to the Bush administration’s claims of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Yet Bowman does not explore the possibility that weapons will not be found. The Iraqis described in his articles are portrayed as potential allies rather than threats but the collective portrait he creates of them is not particularly sophisticated.

John Koopman

San Francisco Chronicle reporter John Koopman was also embedded with elements of the 1st Marines. One of his first stories, “Baghdad Blasted; Battlescene:

Marines Take Basra's Airport," ran on March 22. In it, Koopman quotes a Marine lieutenant: "'It's kind of like game day,' said 1st Lt. Eric Gentrup of San Jose. 'We made the team, and we practiced and practiced and practiced. This is our Super Bowl.'" This quote makes explicit the idea of war as competition hinted at in other stories. Although the story doesn't feature the comparison of body counts and destroyed vehicles that are so suggestive of sports coverage, Koopman does note that "the U.S. and U.K. forces that had been detailed for the attack might be outnumbered 6- or 8-1." The comparison suggests the coalition forces are in this respect, at least, the "underdog" and therefore more deserving of support in this contest.

On March 25, Koopman's story "Reporter's Notebook; Traveling through a lunar landscape; Poor people line the road asking for a handout" was published. Unlike the earlier story, which focused mainly on the Marines' early battlefield engagements, this story details the Marines' interaction with Iraqi civilians on the way to Baghdad. A Marine officer notes that many of the impoverished citizens they encounter are "Marsh Arabs," persecuted by Hussein. This is one of the few references to the sectarian and tribal divisions in Iraq that would later become painfully apparent.

The other theme of this story is the daily routine of the Marines. Koopman details their hygiene and eating habits, paying particular attention to the protocol for smoking cigarettes. Although most of these marines don't smoke, Koopman notes that "they're also not allowed to smoke at night, for security reasons. Officers like to remind the troops how Russian soldiers serving in Chechnya are killed by sniper shots to the head or neck." The comparison here suggests that the marines' foes are every bit as brutal as those Chechen fighters, who are also Muslims. Perhaps not coincidentally, the Chechen

separatists have been linked with al-Qaeda. In the run-up to the Iraq war, President Bush attempted several times to establish a connection between Hussein's regime and that terrorist organization (Kull, Ramsay & Lewis, 2004)

Koopman's March 29 story, "Baghdad Hammered," returns to the hard news style of the first story. It repeats the expected ratio of Iraqi to American troops and notes that the Marines cheer at the mention of these odds. Here again is the image of the Americans as eager fighters, hungering for a chance to prove their prowess. As Koopman writes, "These Marines wanted the battle. They had trained for it, prepared for it. They wanted it." Koopman, however, does not merely propagate this theme, he wants to explore it. He writes, "the allure of combat is a hard phenomenon for most civilians to understand and even for some in the military to fathom. But for some people, it's a primeval need, or desire, to prove oneself as a man. As a warrior." While acknowledging that the thirst for battle may be foreign to the civilian mind, Koopman describes it as a "primeval need," something innate and biological rather than learned or inherited from external factors.

On April 2, the *Chronicle* published "U.S. Launches Drive Toward Baghdad," Koopman's account of the 1st Marines' assault on the town of Diwaniya. Koopman portrays the preparations for the advance in exacting detail, noting the high degree of organization and coordination required. He describes "columns of armored vehicles line the road, backpacks hung outside to make room for the Marines within," conveying both the immense size and power of the unit. Koopman is in fact uncharacteristically blunt about the mismatched nature of the conflict:

It's really not a fair fight. The Iraqis are poorly equipped and poorly trained. They come at the Americans with AK-47s and RPGs, maybe an occasional mortar. The Marines respond with tank fire and 155mm artillery rounds. They just blow the hell out of everything.

The casual use of a mild oath (“hell”) is still unusual in daily newspaper stories and its use here emphasizes the immense firepower the Marines wield.

On April 4, however, Koopman’s story is headlined “Marines: Unit Loses One of Its Own in Kut Firefight.” Although Koopman notes that “Poorly armed and facing overwhelming firepower, about a dozen Iraqi soldiers and irregular fighters died where they stood,” at least one Marine was killed in the fight for the village of Kut. The Marine’s death was his unit’s first, and Koopman observes that “shock of the corporal’s death was doubled because he had seemed all right when he was first evacuated.” That the Marines would be shocked that one of their own might fall in battle illustrates the confidence—or hubris—that the Americans’ size and power have engendered in the troops and perhaps Koopman as well.

The next day Koopman’s story leads with another grim note: Fellow journalist Michael Kelly was killed when the Humvee he was riding in rolled into a canal. Koopman uses the incident to begin a larger discussion about a danger many readers might not have considered: traffic. Driving in Iraq is a dangerous business, as Koopman makes clear. There are enormous convoys moving toward Baghdad, often driving at night without using their headlights. Koopman’s description of “thousands of vehicles” moving down Iraq’s dusty roads again reinforces the size of the invasion force. The mention of the night-vision goggles that American drivers use to navigate the roads at night is another reminder of the technological advantages available to the Americans.

The story also includes a description of an Iraqi-born American who has returned to his home country to assist the American military as a translator. The unnamed translator says he has returned to help his countrymen be “free.” Yet he would not choose

to stay in Iraq, saying “I like my freedom too much.” The implication here is that even with the assistance of the Americans, Iraq’s citizens will never be truly free.

On April 6, the *Chronicle* published Koopman’s story, “Odd Building Mystifies Marine Division.” The article describes the Marines’ discovery of an unusual facility outside of Baghdad. Koopman writes that the area was “designated as a ‘sensitive site’ — military code words for places where Iraqis might have been storing or working on chemical or biological weapons.” Yet the Marines find no evidence of weapons production. Nonetheless, Koopman continues to suggest that the building is somehow connected to some illicit purpose, noting that “it seemed fishy,” and it is “a piece in the larger puzzle of research that went on in Iraq.”

Koopman also describes the destruction wrought upon the landscape by the Marines. He writes, “Iraqi soldiers still lay in the median of the divided highway leading to town. A dog was gnawing on one of the bodies until a Marine shot the animal.” He goes on to mention the “stench of death” that permeates the area, using the second-person form of address to emphasize the horror of the scene. There is also more Marine jargon, in this case “recon by fire:” firing on structures to drive out any enemies.

Koopman displays no small amount of wit and sensitivity in his portrayals of the marines, particularly when he describes the deaths of Kelly and one of the marines. Nonetheless, his descriptions of the troops still fall into the familiar category of the battle-ready warrior. The conflicted feelings of soldiers and marines found in other reporters’ articles are not in evidence here. The March 29 article in particular suggests that Koopman himself is somewhat enamored of the idea of the marines’ “primeval need” to fight.

Ravi Nessman

Associated Press reporter Ravi Nessman was embedded with elements of the 1st Marines as they traveled from southwestern Iraq toward Baghdad. One of his early stories was filed from the town of Az Zubayr on March 22. Nessman's writing style is relatively unadorned compared to the other writers in this study; in this story he eschews the more literary affectations and relates the facts in a relatively straightforward fashion. In this particular story, Nessman uses relatively few direct quotes. Instead he seems to rely on his own firsthand experience to describe the scene of the battle for his audience.

Nessman does talk to an Iraqi civilian, one of the few to be used as a named source in the stories in this study. This Iraqi, Sham Mohammad, tells Nessman that "We were tired and troubled by Saddam Hussein," echoing the claims of many American military officers that Hussein's regime had little or no popular support. Nessman also uses Mohammad to confirm something told to him by an American officer. This is unique among the articles in this study. The other reporters simply reported the claims of the military without attempts at independent confirmation.

Another Nessman story from March 28 begins with the blunt proclamation: "Lance Cpl. Jack Self is killing people for the first time in his life." The story, which is largely a profile of Cpl. Self, continues the theme of the American soldier as reluctant combatant. Self is portrayed as uneasy about the blurry line between enemy and civilian in the battlefield and concerned about what he might be forced to do. Nessman quotes Self: "I hope there's nobody in that building when I destroy it," he said. "Unless they are soldiers. Then I'll kill them. That's what I am here for."

Nessman writes that Iraqis in civilian clothes have attacked other Marine units, and the Marines have begun to view all of the Iraqis with suspicion. Self refuses to respond to a waving Iraqi family for fear that they are part of a trap. Here again is the blurring of the line between civilian and combatant that is present in so many other of the stories in this study. The Iraqis are a foreign “other” whose true motivations remain inscrutable to the American troops—who only want to aid them.

On March 30, as the Army and the Marines found their progress toward Baghdad slowed by unexpectedly stiff resistance, Nessman sums up the feelings of the troops in his story “Marines Frustrated at Slow Forward Pace.” In it Nessman describes the Marines as men of action and daring, unaccustomed to the waiting they are forced to endure as their missions are canceled and they seem to sink into a stalemate. The marines “spend their days doing crossword puzzles, reading a year-old men’s magazine, cleaning themselves with sanitary wipes or napping in sleeping hole.” Far from the action, these troops are seen as eager to complete their mission.

Nessman’s April 1 story details another problem facing the Marines: a tobacco shortage. Nessman writes

Cigarettes are smoked at every possible break and the doors of many Humvees are streaked brown from the spurts of tobacco-filled spit that shoot out of the windows every few minutes. Tobacco helps relieve boredom, relax or stay awake for long nights, the troops say.

He notes that cigarettes have been a part of the American soldier’s equipment since at least the Civil War. The historical connection here provides a link to esteemed soldiers of wars past. The story also illustrates how the Marines maintain a connection to home even when they are far away.

On April 2, Nessman writes about the Marines’ experiences in the town of

Numaniyah. The Iraqi Army soldiers here have shed their uniforms and donned civilian clothes in an effort to blend in with the rest of the populace. Nessman again uses very few direct or indirect quotes, instead simply describing the events that he witnesses. He mentions several weapon caches discovered by the Marines, as well as gas masks “still sealed in plastic and a display showing what to do in the event of a chemical or biological attack,” again raising the specter of Iraq’s possible weapons of mass destruction.

The next day Nessman reported on a meeting between the Marines and the leaders of Numaniyah. The leaders remained unnamed because, Nessman says, they still fear the long reach of Hussein’s regime. One man even refuses to remove a portrait of the Iraqi leader from the wall (a marine does it instead). Nessman describes the meeting with little comment or analysis, mostly describing the back-and-forth between the two groups. The negotiations involve such matters as transportation, security and utilities. This is one of the few stories describing a prolonged interaction between the Americans and the Iraqis.

However, by April 6 Nessman is describing the Marines’ investigation of a suspected terrorist training camp in Salman Pak. He quotes Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks at U.S. Central Command in Qatar, who says “the work being done by some of those people we captured, their inferences about the type of training they received, all these things give us the impression that there is terrorist training that was conducted at Salman Pak.” This is a rare comment from a senior commander in a story from an embedded reporter. Most of the writers in this study spoke only to enlisted men and field officers. Brooks’ comment in this story adds gravitas to the military’s claims about terrorist training.

The final story by Nessman in this study ran on April 8. Headlined “Marine snipers and machine guns face morning of uncoordinated attacks,” the article details the

Marines' efforts to finish off the remaining elements of resistance as the Hussein regime enters its final days. The Marines are portrayed as having the decisive advantage in these encounters, largely due to their more advanced technology. A night-vision scope allows a Marine sniper to kill two suspected Iraqi fighters before they even realize he's there. The Iraqis, by contrast, are armed only with Kalashnikovs or perhaps RPGs. These weapons are not much use against the Marines, as evidenced by this fact in the first paragraph: "well over a dozen Iraqis were dead and many more were wounded, without a single U.S. Marine injury."

As mentioned earlier, Nessman's writing style is less literary than that of the other reporters in this study. His portrayal of the Iraqis, however, is far more sophisticated. Iraqi civilians appear in many of Nessman's stories, and his April 3 account of a meeting between the Marines and tribal leaders gives far more space to the Iraqis' own words. Nessman's profile of Cpl. Self is also noteworthy for the manner in which it explores one marine's conflicted feelings about the violent duty he has been called to do.

Chapter 4: Comparing the Coverage

The embedding program used by the Pentagon in the second Iraq war was an experiment designed to accommodate both the military's need for control and the media's desire for access. A relatively recent phenomenon, embedding has not been studied extensively. The question of whether the embedding process itself affects journalists' coverage of the war is an important one for journalists and media critics to ponder. This study seeks to answer this question by analyzing a selection of stories from six print reporters embedded with Army and Marine units during the major combat operations phase of the war (March 19 to April 10, 2003). Only the actual stories were studied, not design or photography.

Evidence of Social Penetration

This study anticipated that the coverage produced by embedded reporters would be largely favorable to the military because the embedding process itself makes the reporters de facto members of the units they cover. That hypothesis was borne out by the results discussed here. The American military in general, and individual service members in particular, were displayed in a positive light throughout the time period covered by the articles in question. This positive tone made evident by several traits that recur throughout many of the articles.

Framing

The articles studied comported with the findings of Pfau's (2004) quantitative study of stories produced by embedded reporters. Like those articles, many of these stories were anecdotal in nature and framed as personal narratives of individual soldiers and marines. The larger political context and significance of the war is missing from

many of these articles. The job of providing a larger overview was usually left to Washington reporters or correspondents based at the U.S. military's media headquarters in Qatar. The embedded reporters instead wrote mostly human interest stories about their units' daily experiences. These human interest stories covered a range of topics, sometimes with little connection to the actual war. Nessman's April 1 story is given over entirely to a tobacco shortage plaguing his Marine unit. "It's been two weeks since they left they relative luxury of their camp in Kuwait and their supplies of cigarettes and chewing tobacco are running out," he writes. "They are rationing their precious supplies, and even begging smokes from local farmers." The story carries the vague dateline of "In Central Iraq" and provides no information about the Marines' mission or the progress of the war.

In the absence of actual news from the battlefield, some journalists wrote mostly flattering profiles of individual soldiers and marines. Myers' April 1 profile of Sergeant Raichle is a representative example. Myers begins the article with Sgt. Raichle's admission that she and other intelligence analysts underestimated the ferocity of the Iraqi resistance. Yet he goes on to describe Raichle's fears about living in a war zone:

No one has shot at her yet, which counts for something. But that is why the fear—the uncertainty, really—of combat remains. In some ways, it has gotten worse.

There have been the constant skirmishes within miles of the brigade's camps, and the car bomb that killed four of the brigade's soldiers on Saturday.

Here Myers offers his audience one soldier's view of the action without providing any larger context for the events he describes. Whether Raichle's impressions of the war are representative of other soldiers' is unknown.

Critics of the embedding program singled out this emphasis on the personal over the political as one reason the system was inherently flawed (Schechter, 2003).

Embedded journalists could only report on what happened to their assigned units, which might or might not have been representative of the larger context of the war. Moreover, what was true for one unit might not be true for the others. Readers of these stories therefore had a very narrow view of how the war progressed.

Sourcing

Because the embedded reporters spent all of their time in the field with the soldiers and marines, they relied almost exclusively on enlisted men and field officers for information. When describing general combat operations the reporters typically used officers to provide their quotes. The journalists relied upon enlisted men and women when describing daily routines or writing personal narratives. Officers are rarely the subjects of profiles; indeed, few personal details are revealed about them. By contrast, almost every story that quotes an enlisted man or woman includes his or her home town. These added details serve to humanize the soldiers on the front lines whereas their commanding officers remain somewhat distant figures of authority.

The quotes themselves frequently reinforce the troops' determination to complete their mission, which they view as the destruction of Hussein's regime and the "liberation" of the Iraqi people. A first lieutenant in Koopman's March 22 story says, "it's kind of like game day... We made the team, and we practiced and practiced and practiced. This is our Super Bowl." A private in Bowman's March 25 story is quoted as saying, "coming all the way here, it feels good. But we're only halfway to finishing. It will all pay off." Finally, Nessman quotes a Marine lance corporal: "I'm going to do what I am told, without any

doubt.” All of these quotes, mostly from enlisted men and low-ranking field officers project an air confidence about the American mission in Iraq. Soldiers and marines were given careful instructions about how to deal with the media, and many of them use similar terms when describing their purpose in the country.

Although all of the sources are confident of their purpose and assured victory, they view their duty differently. Some of the troops seem reluctant to fight, expressing a desire for a quick war. “I was really hoping they wouldn’t fight,” says a sergeant in Myers’ April 1 story. Those sentiments are echoed by a lance corporal says in Harris’ March 25 article: “I just want to go home alive and intact.” Or in Koopman’s March 29 story: “War is not a sport, and there is no joy in taking another human life.” In the context of the stories, these statements suggest not cowardice on the part of the troops but rather a civilized distaste for combat. These men and women, it is made clear, will perform their duty and accomplish their mission, but they hope to do it quickly and with minimal use of force.

Other troops, however, seem quite eager to fight the Iraqis, as evidenced in this quote from Harris’ March 22 article: “I’m disappointed...I think everybody was. I know people were a little nervous, but I know they were ready.” Then there is this quote from Koopman’s March 29 story: “I want to be in a firefight...I swore an oath that I would fight for my country, and that’s what I want to do.” And this one, from Bowman’s March 25 story: “All those years of blood and sweat, and this is what the payoff is...we’re ready boys.” The enthusiasm espoused by these soldiers and marines emphasizes the confidence not only in the rectitude of their cause but also in their inevitable triumph.

There does not appear to be any appreciable difference in the portrayal of the Army or the Marines. Both groups are depicted in mostly positive terms. The absence of senior commanders as sources and the presence of the reluctant warrior/eager killer dichotomy is present in stories about each branch of the military. Whether this represents identical military cultures or the inability of the journalists to discern subtle differences between the two groups is unclear.

The Iraqis themselves are quoted far less frequently than the American troops. This is probably due to the language barrier; the American invasion and subsequent occupation force was and is plagued by a shortage of Arabic speakers. Nothing in any of the reporters' articles indicates that any of them had any understanding of Arabic. Some of the Iraqis speak English, however, and they do appear in some of the stories. Lack of access, especially in the earlier days of the war, could also be a reason.

Although the Iraqis are sometimes described as appearing wary of the Americans, almost all of their actual quotes express gratitude for their presence. "We are happy, very happy, because I am free now," said a university student in Harris' April 10 article. Bowman describes a similar encounter in his April 10 story, which details the fall of Baghdad: "'Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!' gushed one middle-age Iraqi man, apparently mistaking a helmeted reporter for a Marine." One notable exception is the tribal leader quoted in Nessman's April 3 story: "The American troops just want to protect themselves. They don't care anything for civilians."

Despite the generally effusive praise of the Iraqis for the Americans, their affection is not necessarily reciprocated. This is most clearly evidence in Harris' March 25 article: "'Now I just see every civilian as a potential hostile,' said Cpl. Phillip

Langley, 24, of Festus, Mo. ‘I’m not too damned worried about their safety anymore.’” Later Harris writes: “One sergeant feigned a conversation with a hungry Iraqi who asks, ‘Oh, you have humanitarian rations?’ The sergeant’s reply: ‘No, but I have a bullet for you.’ ‘Now, we’re here to help ourselves.’” Many of the troops are clearly mistrustful of the Iraqis’ intentions. The fact that very few of the individual Iraqis are identified by name contributes to the image of the Iraqis as a shadowy, mysterious and perhaps menacing “other.”

Military Technology

Many of the articles in this study exhibit a particular interest in the weapons and vehicles used by the Army and Marines. Branigin writes in his March 20 story

Wearing protective suits to safeguard them from a feared chemical weapons attack, the soldiers crossed the border in long columns of M1 Abrams tanks, M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, various other armored carriers, Humvees and long trains of support vehicles, including fuel tanker trucks, bridging equipment and huge repair-and-recovery vehicles.

Myers includes a similar list of equipment in his March 21 story describing the 3rd Infantry’s march through the desert:

Two hours later elements of two of the First Marine Division’s combat teams crossed into Iraq at a number of points, Marine officers said. The teams consisted of infantry in amphibious tracked vehicles armed with automatic grenade launchers and .50-caliber machine guns, backed by M1A1 Abrams battle tanks and armored bulldozers.

These repeated references stress the technological superiority of the American military,

especially in comparison to the Iraqi Army and enemy irregulars. These groups were usually only armed with AK-47s and perhaps rocket-propelled grenades, as many of the reporters note. The implication here is that the Iraqis have no hope of resisting the American invasion. However, state-of-the-art military technology is never the only determinant in war. During the Vietnam War the Vietcong successfully used guerilla tactics to overcome their lack of armor or advanced weaponry. In the later stages of the Iraq war, the anti-American insurgents would use similar tactics to frustrate the military's attempts to stabilize the country. At this point, however, the Army and Marines have successfully used their weapons to overcome the resistance, and none of the reporters suggests that the Iraqi resistance will be able to change this state of affairs.

References to Information Controls

Many of the embedded journalists made occasional references to the restrictions placed upon them by the military and how those restrictions affected their coverage. On March 25 Harris wrote, "The 7th Marines are in a different part of southern Iraq — commanders would not permit journalists traveling with them to disclose the exact location." On March 23, Branigin writes about a series of mortar attacks on American units. "Twitty said the location of the incidents could not be identified under ground rules designed to protect U.S. troops as they sweep northward across the Iraqi desert to the southwest of the Euphrates."

Despite these references, the extent of the military's control over the embedded journalists is never made completely clear in the articles. The full set of the Department of the Defense's guidelines for embedded journalists was not widely published and reporters typically only made mention of them when explaining the absence of certain

information in their stories. Readers were therefore mostly unaware to what degree the stories they read were shaped by the military's rules.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The stories written by the embedded print reporters in this study displayed subtle but frequent examples of pro-military bias. The stories they wrote were often anecdotal in nature, focusing on the individual soldier or unit rather than the war as a whole. These stories were often quite positive, focusing upon the troops' personal lives and habits. This trend was apparent from the earliest articles studied but became more pronounced as the war progressed, even though the period of time studied was relatively short. This suggests not only that the journalists had undergone a bonding process with the soldiers and marines they covered but that they also might have been affected by the military's relatively quick success. The fact that it was evident at the beginning of the coverage, however, also suggests the bonding process may have begun even earlier, perhaps during the boot camp that embedded reporters attended prior to traveling to Iraq.

That bonding process can be understood as the logical result of social penetration. Inserted into a regimented social culture in the midst of highly dangerous circumstances, these reporters seem to have rapidly accepted at least some of the military's mores. This acceptance of the military's values and the feelings of camaraderie the journalists experienced for the soldiers and marines, affected the journalists' objectivity in covering the conflict.

Embedding allowed journalists access to the battlefield and the soldiers, but it also effectively hampered their ability to report the larger story of the war. Their primary sources were limited to the troops and officers of their assigned units. Some reporters were able to speak with a few Iraqi civilians, but their ability to do this was largely contingent upon the Iraqis' knowledge of English or the presence of a translator.

Although the Pentagon no longer kept journalists far from the action, as it did during the first Persian Gulf War, it was still able to control the flow of information by keeping journalists dependant upon senior officers and public relations specialists for information about the “big picture.”

Embedded journalists produced a large number of human interest stories, especially during late March and early April, when the American advance toward Baghdad became stalled and many units saw relatively little action. Reporters wrote about the what the troops ate, how they kept clean, what they did to amuse themselves, how they coped with supply shortages and how they interacted with one another. Occasionally a soldier or marine would discuss his or her thoughts on the war, the Iraqis, or their purpose in the country, but these comments were almost never placed in a larger context. Again, these findings echo the earlier, quantitative study performed by Pfau (2004) as well as Geary’s (2004) study of television news stories.

Embedding can also be viewed as an extension of credentialing program used in the first Persian Gulf War and earlier conflicts. As Geary (2004) notes, both are a form of licensing that the military uses to control the flow of information from the battlefield. Because embedding permits journalists to gain a firsthand view of combat, they may consider this system an improvement upon credentialing system. Yet as this study shows, the positive coverage the military receives from embedded reporters indicates that the military is continuing to shape the journalists’ narrative of the conflict.

The fact that the stories produced by embedded journalists frequently coincide with the government’s own version of the war lends further credence to Hallin’s (1986) theory that the press is inclined to buttress, not challenge, the status quo during wartime.

Like many of the newspaper articles studied by Hallin (1986), the stories written by the embedded journalists in this study offered little or no analysis or larger context, relying instead on information from official government and military sources. Again, the embedding journalists may be mistaking their increased access to troops and battlefields for deeper or improved coverage of the war.

Implications for the Future

The relationship between the media and the military changes with each new conflict. Both groups have unique and sometimes conflicting agendas during wartime, and coverage that is produced is always a compromise of sorts between them. The embedding program was created in part to mollify critics of the Pentagon's media operations during the first Persian Gulf War while allowing the military to maintain a modicum of control over the journalists. However, the embedding program did not last very long. The program was officially ended in September 2003, but most embedded reporters left their units shortly after the fall of Baghdad and President Bush's announcement that major combat operations were over. (Some reporters did remain with military units on an ad hoc basis.)

It is difficult to predict how the embedding program might have affected coverage if the initial stages of the war had gone badly for the Americans, or if the program had been continued after Hussein's ouster. With the end of major combat operations, the military's mission shifted to peacekeeping and stabilization. Meanwhile, remnants of the Hussein regime, foreign fighters and domestic terrorists launched an insurgency targeted first at the Americans and then the fledgling Iraqi democratic government. As the Americans' efforts to pacify the country were frustrated by a implacable and protean foe

and daily life in Iraq became increasingly dangerous, many (non-embedded) journalists turned a skeptical eye to the military's claims that it was in control of the situation. In some regards this mirrors the relationship between the press and the military in the waning days of the Vietnam War, when reporters regarded the military with considerable mistrust. There seems to be far less personal animus, however, in part because the military leadership is acutely aware that the media play a vital role in their own mission.

Just as the embedding program was created in the aftermath of the first Persian Gulf War, this conflict will inevitably shape the way American journalists cover the next conflict. Given the anecdotal nature of much of the coverage produced by the embedded reporters, it seems likely that some journalists will request not only access to the battlefield and the troops but also greater access to more and different kinds of sources in order to produce a more complete picture of the war. News organizations might seek to place more than one representative in the embedding program. They might also consider greater cooperation between print and broadcast media operations in an effort to marry the depth of the former with the immediacy of the latter. Journalists might also want the ability to move from unit to unit. Such a change would permit reporters to see more of the war, as well as perhaps preclude the kind of intimacy that can affect their objectivity. Journalists and their employers might make an increased investment in translators and language training. Although it would be difficult to make such preparations ahead of time—the next political flashpoint could be almost anywhere on the planet—editors and managers could arrange to send more translators with their reporters as soon as conflict breaks out.

The military, of course, would probably be resistant to any reporting program that would relinquish its near-monopoly on information. However, even a much more liberalized program would still allow the military to create and enforce the kind of ground rules that have governed war correspondents since at least World War I. Journalists could be expelled from the battlefield for disclosing information that genuinely threatens operational security. The problem, of course, is defining what information is dangerous. There is no simple way to answer this question; it seems likely that the media and the military will simply have to arrive at consensus through lengthy and detailed negotiations.

What This Research Means

American journalists adhere to a professional ethos of objectivity: the pursuit of the truth without favor or bias. However, true objectivity is impossible in normal circumstances. During wartime, it becomes even more difficult as the journalist's duty to the truth becomes entangled with feelings of patriotism, concerns about national security and the military's efforts to control or even manipulate the press. Yet it is during war that the media's societal role becomes even more important. The media are often the only effective check on the government at a time when its conduct can have far-reaching implications.

As a recent phenomenon, the embedding program used in the 2003 war against Iraq has been the subject of relatively little scholarly attention. Many media critics and journalists have written about the program but there have been few serious academic studies. Those that have been conducted have been mostly quantitative. Unlike those, this study analyzed print coverage produced by embedded journalists from a qualitative

perspective. It revealed that the six print journalists studied produced stories that were primarily anecdotal in nature and that relied almost exclusively on military personnel for sources. The tone and composition of the articles suggested that the journalists seemed to strongly identify with the soldiers and marines they covered and even adapted their values. Other researchers and journalists should take note of these findings when analyzing how reporters cover future conflicts.

Avenues for Future Research

The findings of this study suggested that the process of social penetration may have begun in the boot camps attended by embedded reporters. Although some reporters described their experiences in these camps in articles they wrote, the camps do not appear to have been the subject of any serious scholarly inquiry. Given that the boot camp experiences may have affected later coverage, they seem an obvious subject for immediate future research.

This study focused upon only a single facet of the military's embedding program: how the stories written by embedded print reporters were affected by the reporters' exposure to the highly regimented military culture. Other studies might analyze how broadcast reporters were affected by the same circumstances. Because television is primarily a visual medium, did the images in the stories reported by broadcast journalists demonstrate the same identification with the military that the print journalists' words did? Geary (2004) addressed this issue, but his study focused on broadcast news networks and did not analyze the coverage produced by cable news operations. Another possible subject for scholarly inquiry is the selection process whereby reporters were assigned to Army and Marine units. The military, not the journalists, determined which unit a

reporter was embedded with. Moreover, not every news organization and journalist who applied to the embedding program was accepted. What were the criteria the military used to make these decisions?

This study has demonstrated that although the embedding process addressed many reporters' criticisms of earlier media strategies used by the military, it was not without its own problems. The same bonding process that allowed journalists to achieve a significant degree of intimacy with the soldiers and marines they covered also affected their objectivity. These concerns will no doubt shape the constantly evolving and often contentious relationship between the American press and the American military. Both groups serve different yet important roles in contemporary American society, and the health of the body politic depends upon the ability of both of them to negotiate an arrangement that allows each to accomplish its mission without compromising that of the other's.

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