Preface

Mass Media has long been the institution in any country that can reach a very large audience rapidly. The term was coined in the 1920’s with the advent of nationwide radio networks and mass circulation newspapers. Media had come to denote the plurality of medium available to send messages and information. Print Media, Broadcast Media and the Internet, form the fundamental segments of Mass Media. Print Media comprises of newspapers, magazines, journals, and various publishing firms. Broadcast Media comprises of segments such as Television, Radio, Music, Film and Internet connectivity, which are witnessing an upswing in the age of information revolution. Internet connectivity has brought a whole new World of knowledge at the click of a mouse. All these taken together form the public Media.

The title of the Thesis is “United State’s Media’s Portrayal of Persian Gulf Conflict I and II”. The Thesis aims at discerning the rationale behind the veracity of the war portrayal undertaken by United State’s Media since the times of the two World Wars, Korean War, Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War I and II. The difference between the coverage by the Print and the Electronic Media has been one of the major focus of the study. to be clearly accounted for.

The chapters focus on the corporate monopoly of a few corporate houses which tend to weave an arc of dominance upon the operation of the executive and the military in the United States. Then the theme of how the US mainstream media acted as an instrument of the US Administration, in order to establish the reason to go to War as enunciated by the US establishment, is examined in great detail. The stress is on the way mainstream media portrayed the Persian Gulf Wars from the years of 1991 and 2003. The war was fought on the American rationale of promoting the liberal ideals of liberty, equality and fundamental freedoms and democracy. The media stressed on their broadcast images premised upon the technological superiority of the United States military as they intervened against the fifth largest, but, the technically obsolete military run by President Saddam Hussein. The main question posed probed was how far was the ideological slant of the US media and the engineering and the management of the mass media by the White House and the Pentagon authorities in order to prepare a public opinion in the favor of war.
These two conflicts present a general pro-war tilt present in media coverage through a content analysis of the editorials, articles and reports which appeared in the mainstream media newspapers like New York Times and Washington Post. The study also focuses on the depiction of the war by the Cable News Network, (CNN) and the American Broadcast Corporation (ABC) and CBS. These media have been selected to study and analyze, the ideological tilt and the expert views present in these media during the Gulf Wars I and II.

The first chapter is titled as “Constitutional Basis and the Growth, Development and the Impact of Mass Media”. The second chapter is titled as, “Domestic Debate on National Security and Free Press”. The third chapter is titled as, “The United State’s Media’s Portrayal of Persian Gulf War-I”. The fourth chapter is titled as “The United State’s Media’s Portrayal of Persian Gulf War-II”.

The first chapter titled as, “Constitutional Basis and the Growth, Development and the Impact of Mass Media”, focuses, on, the First Amendment, which, pinpoints the right of the American citizens, in, the favor of freedom of expression, worship, publication and assemblage. The chapter refers to the origin of the American Press, which, had a varied existence and has attained larger proportions as the development of the American press has been linked to the growth of the American republic from an assemblage of colonies to a vibrant nation. Among the existing newspapers, most of the newspapers played a prominent role in working up to boost the enthusiasm for the American revolution. The pamphlet writing and the “war of words”, which went on in the newspapers, also played a significant role in enthusing the non-patriots in the years leading up to the American revolution.

The Federalist papers, were, rigorously interpreted by the American press with the camps being drawn between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Drafting of the American Constitution in the year 1787 and its subsequent ratification by the thirteen colonies produced heated debate. The Federalists like Alexander Hamilton and John Jay favored the constitution, while the anti-federalists comprised of scholars who wrote under pseudonyms and they were of the view that the constitutional framework was flawed as it led to a tyranny of the Government. There was an inbuilt sentiment in the way America was founded. The press was expected to investigate in the processes of the Government and form questions on the functioning of the political system.
The First chapter also focuses on the important development of the ushering in of cross ownership of a large number of media by a few corporate houses and a dwindling newspaper circulation. This brought the broadcast media into prominence. The trend accelerated after World War-II, and in the year 1990, a total of a 135 corporate groups owned 1,228 daily newspapers, which accounted for about 75 percent of all US dailies. The details of the Military-Media- and Industry complex have been brought to the fore, which, highlight the overgrown and mammoth Media complex which the United States Mainstream Media has turned into. In spite of the serious competition from television after World War-II, more than two-thirds of American adults read a daily newspaper on an average weekday.

The same chapter develops the theme of the top five daily newspapers in United States, by circulation are: the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post. The rise of "New Media", along, with the advent of the medium of "internet", have, been brought to the fore in the context of the Federal Communications Commission, which, was, established as the Media regulating watchdog, by the Federal Communications Act of the year, 1934.

The second chapter titled as, "Domestic Debate on National Security and Free Press", refers to the definitional aspect of the concept of National Security and how the Watergate scandal led to the expose of the Pentagon Papers which were produced in all its incisive light by the Washington Post and the New York Times. The Third chapter titled as, "Corporatisation in war Reporting"

The third Chapter titled as "United State’s Media’s Portrayal of Persian Gulf War-I” refers to the depiction of war in the Gulf during Operation Desert Storm, in the year 1991. The focus in this chapter is on the reporting of the US Foreign Policy goals with the appointment of special correspondents to cover international situations and Conflict. Among various international reporting situations, one can include the international summits, business conferences, and bilateral meetings of the political heads of various nation states and other international sports events.

The process by which the tilt of the domestic public opinion was altered by the mainstream media in order to justify the war effort initiated by President George Bush in 1991 has been the focus of the chapter. The technological dominance of the US military best exemplified by the Patriot Missiles and the advanced jet fighter planes
formed the invincibility frame of the United States’s Mainstream Media. Another frame of reference happened to be the portrayal of the persona of Saddam Hussein who emerged as the tyrant in Iraq laboring under a draconian dictatorship. The dictatorship and the vagaries of the Iraqi Government’s atrocities against the Kurds and its own Iraqi citizens served the common frame of reference through which to vilify and internationalize the facets of Operation Desert Storm.

The fourth chapter titled as “United State’s Media’s Portrayal of Persian Gulf War II”, covers how a pro-war setting with the mainstream newspapers such as New York Times, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, appeared to follow and justify the Government’s line of thinking to intervene in Iraq. Media also discussed the factor of “oil” which emerged as one of the core reasons in order to dominate the Middle East and restricting Iraqi control of oil rich nations in the Middle East. The presentation by Secretary Colin Powell’s to the United Nations on the need to use force formed a significant theme for mainstream media discussions. The chapter further focuses on newspaper articles as they appeared in the two newspapers of Washington Post and New York Times and the prominent Satellite Network channels such as CNN, ABC and CBS. The chapter describes the media take on the rationale for initiating the war on Iraq through “Operation Iraqi Freedom”. It attempts to analyze the significance of the presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Iraqi Government’s linkage with the terrorist outfit, Al-Qaeda, as sufficient reasons cited for attacking Iraq on March 19th, 2003.