CHAPTER TWO

Domestic Debate on National Security and Free Press

United States emerged as a free nation after the defeat of the British forces in the American colonies. The declaration of Independence came in the year 1776, and with the adoption of the Constitution in 1788. (Deans 2004: 40) The Mayflower Pilgrims reached a compact to protect their religious freedom as they set shore for the new World. (Chesterton 2002: 808) Free press tradition was part and parcel of the American thought process of the times. An effort was undertaken to balance between order, liberty, unity and diversity by the political figures like Thomas Jefferson.

The theme of liberty and press freedom, are part of the same discussion in United States. The Puritans in Massachusetts, a group of Christian theologians, were against too much liberty being granted to porters. As an example, the Puritans believed that, “what would remain in the society, lacking an established Church, as an attachment to place and the uncontested leadership of men of merit.”(Chesterton 2004: 560) Most of the American citizens enjoyed more than a semblance of liberty. When, John Peter Zenger, a New York newspaper printer, was jailed in 1734, by the British authorities on the charge of sedition, his attorney won a “not guilty” verdict for him. (Jarrow 2006: 120) The case helped strengthen the cause of freedom of press. Increasingly, rumblings emerged amongst the colonial citizens in America that how people could secure more fundamental freedoms, immunities and privileges equal to any natural born subject of England. (Mcgregor and Cronin 1998:13) Thus, the concept of freedom of press was always ingrained during the colonial times.

Colonial Times and The Free Press

The concept of free press was defeated by the restrictions slapped on the face of the news editors, as newspapers still relied on patronage from the colonial governor and were hesitant to oppose the Government openly. The concept of free press received a blow in many ways and during the colonial times, it was given a back seat as nearly one–fifth of the advertising space in one Georgia newspaper was bought by the colonial government. (Weir 1980: 103) Printers faced either the directives of the governor or the rules of the legislature or even the outbursts of angry patriots. One
North Carolina publisher of the times described the threat, which was faced by the colonial press with the involvement of the concept of national security. "What part is now to act? Continue to keep his press open and be free and always be in danger of corporal punishment or back it up and run the risk of having his brains knocked out by both the sides."

European nations came to the Americas to increase their wealth and broaden their influence over world affairs. The Spanish were among the first Europeans to explore the New World and the first to settle in what is now the United States. In the year 1650, however, England had established a dominant presence on the Atlantic coast. The first colony was founded at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Many of the people who settled in the New World escaped religious persecution. The Pilgrims, arrived in the year 1620. In both Virginia and Massachusetts, the colonists flourished with some assistance from the Native Americans. New World grains, such as corn kept the colonists from starving while, in Virginia, tobacco provided a valuable cash crop. By the early 1700s, enslaved Africans made up a growing percentage of the colonial population. By 1770, more than 2 million people lived and worked in Great Britain’s thirteen North American colonies before the onset of the American revolution.

Pennsylvania received it’s name from it’s founder, William Penn, who was born on October 14th, 1644, in London, England. Pennsylvania is named in the honor of his father. Persecuted in England for his Quaker faith, Penn came to America in the year, 1682, and established Pennsylvania, as a place where people could enjoy freedom of religion. The colony became a haven for minority religious sects from Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, and Great Britain. Penn obtained the land from King Charles II, as payment for a debt owed to his deceased father. These were the beginnings of a reformed western civilization which was embodied by William Penn. It acted as an initiator of the freedoms in Colonial America though under British rule.¹

During Louis XVI's reign in France, the press was censored. No criticism of the King’s policies was allowed. At the onset of the French Revolution, the press was given complete freedom, and introduced harsh critiques of the government. (Johnston

1970:70) Hired by powerful leaders of court factions, the pamphleteers themselves were often down-and-out writers who cared less about politics and more about earning a fast buck. The printers and sellers of pamphlets operated outside the law and had no qualms about spreading rumors, often accompanied by cheap and pornographic pictures. (Carlyle 2004: 40)

The pamphlets were printed secretly and were too plentiful to be discovered by the French government. The graphically illustrated scandal sheets accused the Queen of crimes ranging from “hopeless stupidity”, all the way to adultery, sexual deviance, and treason. Despite the claims of modern scholars to objectivity, these pamphlets continue to shape the historical views of the French Queen, her society, and the aristocracy, just as they did for her contemporaries. Same was the case with the British rule in America, with the leaders finding it difficult to get their words across to the masses. Only did pamphlets like Public Occurrences made the people aware of the British excesses. Another newsletter to appear during the Colonial Times was, the Boston newsletter. (Stephens 2003: 30)

The Newspaper Cataloging Manual, of the Library of Congress, defined a newspaper, as a serial publication designed to be a primary source of written information on current events connected with public affairs, either, local, national or international, which, was not limited to a specific subject matter. However, every kind of newspaper, those that fitted the definition strictly, were periodicals in newspaper format, such as the college, literary, religious, or "temperance newspapers." Those newspapers, which, did not seem to fit the either category, including advertising, campaign, church fair, or price-current newspapers, too, were of some importance. During the Colonial times, the voices against unpopular British policies were relatively stifled. Geographically, the Colonial newspapers encompassed most areas on the North American continent.

**Debates between the Federalists and the Republicans**

The American Revolution undertaken under the leadership of George Washington, was, a planned uprising against the British Colonial rule. The revolution was a precursor element to the French Revolution, though, the ideals were similar to those espoused by the French thinkers like Jean Jacques Rousseau and Garibaldi. “The Frontier spirit,” as always dominated the foreground, so, an oppositional effort
had to come from the mass base of an agrarian America. It did come that way. People responded with a change of attitude with the domestic culture of Assembly and debate getting transformed into a military effort against the British. The Democratic ideals of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," became the driving spirit of the American Revolution. The Republican "Telos" of mass mobilization and an awareness of one's natural rights, much, in the Sophoclean tradition, became the agrarian and the "Frontier" driving force for the people. (Dryfuss 1907: 100)

In the United States, historians and the broader public have, for most of the past two centuries, looked at the American Revolution, as, the first step in the creation of the American nation. They have stressed that the process of nation building epitomized the creation of a republican political regime in each state and the subsequent establishment of a federal system, for the distribution of power between the states and the nation. (Greene 2000:38) The scholars have emphasized the centrality of the drive for national self-realization, which began during the revolutionary era and provided the foundation for an American national identity.

When the Colonies were able to defeat the Britishers, the newspapers began playing an influential role in the ratification of the constitution. Some of the widely distributed articles were by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay, later compiled and titled as the Federalist papers. (Van Carl 1915:192) Originally published as essays in the New York based, Independent Journal, the articles became the most powerful defense of the constitution. On the opposing side, the letters of a Federal farmer, authored by revolutionary War General, Richard Henry Zel, were among the best essays against ratification.

When John Adams succeeded George Washington as the President in the year, 1797, the Federalist Party controlled Congress and the rest of the national government. Adams and the other Federalists believed that their political party was the government. (Duncan 1995: 40) They were largely centralists, as, opposed to the federalist paradigm of the Federalists, who, stood for change and espoused the ideals of the French revolution. The Federalists believed that once the people had elected their political leaders, no one should publicly criticize them much on the lines of Thomas Hobbes’s concept of an authoritarian despot, the “Leviathan.” The Federalist party, led by

Alexander Hamilton, aimed to create a stable and secure nation, safe for business and the wealthy men of property. The opposition Republican Party was bitterly opposed to the Federalists. The Republican party was led by Thomas Jefferson and it tended to represent poor farmers, craftsmen, and the immigrants. The party was referred to as the Republicans or "the Jeffersonians." It was the forerunner of today's Democratic Party. It is the Republicans of today, which, were the Federalists of those times in the United States.

In the realm of foreign affairs, the Federalists detested the French Revolution of 1789, because, it led to mob rule and confiscation of property. The Republicans supported the French Revolution for its democratic ideals. In the year 1794, President Washington negotiated a treaty with England to settle the outstanding differences between the two nations. The resulting improvement in the American-English relations angered the revolutionary French leaders, who were enemies of the English. In the election of 1796, Federalist John Adams, won the most electoral votes to become the President. Republican Thomas Jefferson came in second, which, made him the Vice-President. The 12th Amendment later changed this Election method, requiring separate electoral ballots for the President and the Vice-President. Shortly after becoming the President, Adams sent Diplomats to France to normalize the bad feelings.

The three French representatives, called as, X, Y, and Z, met secretly with the American Diplomats and demanded $10 million in bribes to the French government to begin negotiations. When the Americans refused, "Mr. X" threatened the United States with the "power and violence of France." News of the "XYZ Affair" enraged most American citizens. (Stinchcombe 1980:18) Many Federalists immediately called for war against France. President Adams, however, only proposed war preparations and a land tax to pay for them. (Jefferson and Mayo 1970:15) On the defensive, Republicans spoke out against the "war fever." Neither the United States nor France ever declared war. The Federalists increasingly accused Jefferson and the Republicans, of being a traitorous "French Party." A leading Federalist newspaper proclaimed to the nation that, "He that is not for us, is against us." This refrain was often repeated by President George Bush in the 21st century.

3 Ibid
One of the developments of the times, was the emergence of Thomas Jefferson as the American President, who, emerged as an unprecedented votary of the ideals of free press. Free press became the ideal which was popularized by Thomas Jefferson. (Jefferson 1987 : 80) Thomas Jefferson said that, if, he were allowed a choice between a Government without newspapers and another system, in which newspapers existed without a Government, then, he would opt for the second option. Roger Griswold, a republican challenger to the Federalist Government, was attuned to the hegemonic tendencies of the Federalist government. This was exemplified by the passage of the Sedition Act curbing the freedom of press. He wrote to his brother about the "discordant parties which agitated the government." Indeed, Griswold thought that partisan virulence had the potential to destroy the Union and contended that "either the government must yield to a convulsion or the party which opposes it's measures, must, be subdued. It is idle to expect that a government can exist under the pressure of such internal disorder, and, we are certainly approaching a crisis that might strengthen or put an end to the Union." (Brian 1999: 12) Griswold's comments echoed the sentiments of many Americans, who, perceived partisanship as a great threat to the American republic.  

As modern onlookers may forget, Americans, did not accept the idea of a two-party republic because nowhere did the constitution sanction a system of "legitimate opposition" to the incumbent government. Moreover, most Americans associated the concept of "political parties" with faction and anarchy, particularly, with the unruly parties that had defied the Parliament in England and had sparked the seventeenth-century civil war there. Finally, the Congressional conflict between Matthew Lyon and Roger Griswold exposed to the nation, the potential threat of an opposition party and the hollowness of the double party system in a post-revolution America.

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6 Ibid
The First Amendment: Constitutional Context

During the framing of the US constitution, creative and well intentioned questions as to what was the definitive meaning of the term free press and how should a guarantee for free press be enshrined in the constitution, were sought to be addressed. It also aimed at what are the limitations and checks on the free press which stimulated a public debate that resulted in the formulation of the First Amendment. The First Amendment was meant to ensure the practice of democracy by finding the truth and making the Government accountable. Media provided a forum through which individuals expressed opinions even while it informed the citizens about Government action. The amendment reads:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." (Farber 2002: 34)

The First Amendment gave the press, the right to publish news, information and opinions without the government's interference. This also meant that people had the right to publish their own newspapers, newsletters, magazines, etc. The tragedy of September 11th brought with it a change in the conscience of America, a change that was actually a return to the intentions that of the framers of the constitution held to. This change, though reappearing as the direct result of a horrific act, is a return to God. In the time, following the attacks people were free and were even encouraged, to engage in public displays of their belief and trust in a Supreme Being. Prayer and faith were the call of the day. (Abrams 2005: 35)

Pentagon Papers comprised of the details where the Nixon administration tried to stop the New York Times and The Washington Post from publishing leaked portions of an official history of Vietnam decision making. Pentagon Papers then moved on to efforts by the states to prosecute journalists for publishing certain classes of truthful information. In another opinion, James Madison perceived the freedom of the press to be useful as a means against tyranny along with mobilizing popular resistance. He never imagined a more than significant role for the free press in a republic, because in that form of government the most common tyrant is a majority of the people themselves. A media scholar, Floyd Abrams observed, "He believed that the way to imbibe stability and the rights of the minority is efficient institutional design"
informed by the object lessons of history. Madison doubted the effectiveness of an eloquent declaration of rights, which he dismissively labeled as a “parchment barrier.” The principal safeguards, as he viewed the matter, were devices to prevent the concentration and consolidation of governmental authority. These included the separation of powers, federalism, and what he termed as the “extended sphere,” by which Madison meant a territorial jurisdiction large enough to encompass a multiplicity of interests, passions, and ideologies that would keep each other in check. The conventional wisdom of his day held that smaller units of government provide a greater safeguard for minority rights.

Political changes which were brought out immediately prior to and during the revolutionary war, altered the role of the press in political life. The newspaper became a useful tool in mobilizing public opinion during the course of the American revolution by spreading a critique of the British colonial rule and their repressive and retrograde measures in local governance in United States. John Adams believed that the radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments and affections of the people was the real American revolution. Some historians suggested that the press played a significant role in affecting that radical change. (Davidson 1941: 245)

The Sedition Act of 1798

The American constitution bears acts like the “Sedition act” and the “Libel act”, which can attract legal proceeding against newspapers if their content invites charges from people and institutions or are found to be defamatory in any respect for the individual affected or the institute concerned. (Stone 2005: 40) The Sedition Act categorically mentioned in its text that if any person “shall write, print, utter or publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered or published, or shall knowingly and willingly assist in writing, printing, uttering or publishing any false, scandalous and writing or writings against the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress of the United States, or the President of the United States, with intent to defame the said government, then such person, can be convicted before any court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof, shall be punished by

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8 Ibid
a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, and by imprisonment not exceeding two years.”

In the 1790s, a number of Americans feared that the democratic excesses of the French Revolution would be exported to the United States. They believed that French agents were plotting the destruction of the American constitution and the eventual overthrow of President Adam’s administration. Rumors abounded in Philadelphia, that, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, planned to assist a French invasion force, that, was sailing across the Atlantic. Some expected that a guillotine would be set up to deal with patriotic Americans. In this environment, President John Adams and the Federalists pushed for legislation to secure the home front in the face of invasion and that would also, they hoped, secure Federalist political control. Federalists belonged to a group of politicians and thinkers in United States who, were interested in sustaining central dominance over state rights and were always suspicious of the state autonomy that, were enshrined in the constitutional convention of 1787. (Williams 2004: 13)

It was found by a Congressional Committee of the times that, the Sedition act cannot be unconstitutional. The Act made nothing penal which was penal before, but, it was merely declaratory of the “common law”. It is useful to make the common law more generally known and more easily understood. The Act, indeed, is so far from having extended the law and the power of the Court that it abridged both, and enlarged instead of abridging the liberty of press. According to Common Law and libels against Government must be punished with fine and imprisonment by the Court. The Act limited the fine to two thousand dollars and imprisonment to two years. The act also allowed the accused party to give the truth in evidence for its justification, which by common law, was forbidden. (Thomas 1998: 651)

Republicans vehemently criticized the Sedition law and President Jefferson refused to enforce it after his first inaugural in the year, 1801. President Jefferson had been deeply offended by the assault on freedom of speech and press and he promptly

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10 “Texts of Alien and Sedition Acts” (Online:Web), Accessed on 26 May, 2007, URL: http://americanhistory.about.com/cs/johnadams/g/alienacts.htm. These acts were passed during John Adams time as president in response to criticisms against the government and specifically the Federalists.
impeached Samuel Chase, a Justice of the Supreme Court, who had been especially severe in his attacks upon offenders under the Sedition Act. Their failure to convict Justice Chase by a narrow margin was not due to a lack of zeal on their part but because of the Federalist strength in the Senate where the trial was being held.

**Freedom of Press**

Alex De Tocqueville, who toured United States, described that in United States, there is hardly any hamlet which does not have a newspaper of it’s own. By the year, 1830, the figure was one copy for every fifteen persons. (Ketcham 2003: 70) The press was viewed as possessing enormous influence over public affairs including the discussions over the country’s foreign policy and the issue of national security. In the words of Charles Dickens, “The American press has it’s evil eye on every house and it’s black hand in every appointment in the state from the President in the state, to a postman. (Dickens 1907: 245)

During the Jacksonian era, the new pattern of vituperative and personal attacks on political leaders of all hues had the effect of diminishing the social difference, which the common people accorded to their leaders. A political scientist, Richard Dubin, has termed the press of the times as a “great leveler”, due, to it’s role in helping to de-sanctify the public office. (Rubin 1981: 46) The fallibility of the political leaders was dually established and the issues of national and domestic interest were brought to the fore and the discussions and debates on issues such as national security, emanated in the American public sphere.

In the year 1872, the Congress discontinued political patronage to the American press in the form of the subsidies. The Congress noted that, “It was questionable whether the dominant political party should aid those newspapers which, reflect it’s partisan views instead of being mirrors of public opinion.” (Smith 1990: 211) “The Civil war” served as an impetus for the acceptance of journalism and free press as an independent and full fledged profession. Issues of national security and national interest became vitals of the newspaper industry as large metropolitan newspapers allocated significant financial resources for war coverage in the United States. They viewed the conflict as an opportunity to prove the value of the press and the ideal of “freedom of press.” The New York Herald, one of the most aggressive newspapers in war reporting, spent half a million in war coverage and employed more
than forty war correspondents in the field at during the civil war. (Edwin and Emery 1984: 200)

The widespread adoption of the “Telegraph” gave journalists the ability to report military engagements as they were taking place. Thus, it provided the public with information which was initially available only to the leaders in the United States. Many issues that emerged during the coverage of this conflict still confront the Media. As the war continued, the professional war correspondents appeared and the reporting of the war and other issues of national security improved in the United States.

When it comes to governmental information, a government distinguishes that which material are available to the public what has to be protected from disclosure to the public based on the classification of information as sensitive, classified or secret. Many governments are also subject to sunshine laws or freedom of information legislation that are used to define the ambit of national interest. The American Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a law ensuring public access to US government records. FOIA carries a presumption of disclosure and the burden is on the government of the United States. Upon written request, agencies of the United States government are required to disclose those records, unless they can be lawfully withheld from disclosure under one of nine specific exemptions in the FOIA. This right of access is ultimately enforceable in federal courts in the United States.11

The stress on both constitutional and inherent rights of American citizens and the added assertion of government subservience to the individual, make it essential for the government to release information to the public. However, the sensitivity of some government information and private interests clash with this public liberty. Therefore, the Congress attempted to enact a “Freedom of Information Act” in 1966 that would effectively deal with requests for government records, consistent with the belief that the people have the “right to know” about them. The Privacy Act of 1974, additionally covers government documents which covered the individuals.

However, it is in the exemptions to the solicitation of information under these acts that problems and discrepancies arise. The nine exemptions to the FOIA and the ten exemptions to the Privacy Act, addressed issues of sensitivity and personal rights.

Many citizens, over the course of the years, have felt cheated by these exemptions. They contend that persistent government action on many levels is geared towards exploiting these exception-clauses of the acts in order to withhold information which, in reality, does not uphold a national or constitutional right, but, personal or political biases. (Blanton 2002: 58)

The forms of cases against the government were many, and still continue. The major defendants in these cases have been the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC), but the President has often been involved in the proceedings. The scopes of the acts are large, however, and encompasses, even ancillary roles in murder cases. Civil liberties by a conceptual understanding mean freedoms that shield the individual from the Government. Civil liberties set limits for the government so that it would not abuse its power and interfere with the lives of its citizens. Basic civil liberties include freedom of “Assembly, Freedom of religion, and Freedom of Speech.” There are also the rights of due process, to a fair trial and to privacy. Many of the World’s Democracies, such as the United States, have bills of rights or similar constitutional documents that enumerate and seek to guarantee civil liberties. Other states have enacted similar laws through a variety of legal means, including signing and ratifying or otherwise giving effect to key conventions such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It can be said that the protection of civil liberties is a paramount responsibility of all democratic states, unlike the situation in authoritarian states.

The existence of these claimed civil liberties is a matter of dispute, as are the extent of most civil liberties. (Darmer and Rosenbaum 2004: 60) Controversial examples include debates concerning reproductive rights, same-sex marriage, and possession of guns in the context of United States. Another matter of debate is the suspension or alteration of certain civil liberties in times of war or state of emergency, including whether and to what extent this should occur. Here-in, lies the object of “national security” and how civil liberties suffer at the hands of governmental

regulations. For instance in case of the War Power Act\textsuperscript{13} of United States, the U.S President has unprecedented powers to declare war and continue it. (Yoo 2002: 40)

\textbf{Sedition: A New Definition of Free Speech and Press}

\textit{Sedition}\textsuperscript{14} is defined as an "incitement of discontent or rebellion against a government." The Alien and the Sedition Acts provoked a debate between the Republican and the Federalist state legislatures over the issues of freedom of speech and the press. In a resolution, James Madison argued that the Sedition Act attacked the "right of freely examining public characters and measures, and of free communication among the people." In a heavily Federalist Massachusetts, state legislators responded that a sedition law was "wise and necessary", to defend against secret attacks by foreign or domestic enemies. The Federalists in Congress issued a report accepting the old English common law definition of free speech and press. It argued that the First Amendment only stopped the government from censoring beforehand any speeches or writings. The government, argued that the Federalists, should be able to protect itself from false and malicious words.

Challenging this view, Congressman, John Nichols, a Republican from Virginia, challenged this Federalist view.\textsuperscript{15} He asserted that Americans must have a free flow of information to elect leaders and to judge them once they were in office. Nichols asked why government, which should be critically examined for its policies and decisions, should have the power to punish speakers and the press for informing the voters.

In the end, the people settled this debate in 1800, by electing Thomas Jefferson as the President and returned a Republican majority to the Congress. In his inaugural address, Jefferson confirmed the new definition of free speech and press as the right of Americans "to think freely and to speak and write what they think." Thomas Jefferson has gone on record to comment that, "I have lent myself willingly as the subject of a great experiment ... to demonstrate the falsehood of the pretext that


\textsuperscript{15} The US Constitution Online, (Online : Web), Accessed on 26 May, 2007, URL: http://www.usconstitution.net/consttop_faf.html

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freedom of the press is incompatible with an orderly government.” Earlier President John Adams\textsuperscript{16} supported the Sedition Act, which was a low point for individual rights in the early years of the Republic.

The “Kentucky Resolution”, passed by the Republicans against the Federalist Government, opposed the Sedition Act. (Warfield 1887: 70) In addition to this general principle and expressed declaration, another provision had been made by one of the amendments to the constitution, which expressly declared, the people’s freedoms under the rubric of the First Amendment. Thereby, under the same words, the freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press: insomuch, that whatever violated either, throws down the sanctuary which covers the others. Libels, falsehood, defamation, and false religion, are withheld from the cognizance of federal tribunals. Therefore, the act of Congress of the United States, passed on the 14th day of July, 1798, instituted “An Act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States,” which does abridge the freedom of the press.\textsuperscript{17}

Freedom of Speech is the same as freedom of expression, except that the clause relating to speech protects oral communication and the phrase relating to the press embraces written ones. When we speak of the press, most people, including journalists, count only the press, but the liberty of the press also includes periodicals and other publications. The press in its historic connotation comprehends every sort of publication which affords a vehicle of information and opinion. (Bollinger 1991: 63)

The history of American media involves an examination of the print tradition that provided the genesis for the eventual growth and evolution of United States media. While the term media is plural, the historical path taken by the print tradition in Colonial America is an interesting one, with the newspapers being the only means of communication between various revolutionaries of American Independence. The role played by newspapers as several studies have pointed out, remains as one of the enduring features of the American freedom struggle. US media was unique in its private sector orientation. The relations of the US media with the Government varied from the acknowledged support to periods of hostility.


Free Press and National Security

There remained an unshakeable faith in the role of free press and the media in the United States. "The Republic" and the culture of self doubt inculcated in the American way of life through the tradition of true Calvinism remained the guiding ethos of the American society in the post-revolution era. (Hollifield 2003: 201)

The emergent American synthesis is interesting because the framers of the Constitution had not been evangelicals and many commentators have associated revolutionary republicanism with skepticism in religion. Nineteenth-century American evangelicals themselves expressed surprise, when, the disestablishment of religion fostered, rather, than inhibited the spread of their gospel. In theological terms, it was surprising that revivalists, who, preached surrender to God’s powerful spirit should in fact empower their listeners to take charge of their own lives. Thus, American evangelical tradition paved the way for a free, liberal and open pattern of life and undertook various tasks for the American citizens. (Noll 1980: 70)

The importance of religion was accepted as being associated with the progress of the American Republic. This understanding can serve as a foundation for the great American debate, involving liberty, progressivism and the free spirit of the individual citizens. To this is linked the limitations of the national security concerns, which impinges upon the free ethos of the American republic on the eve of the American revolution. The framers of the Constitution kept the questions of free press and freedom of expression in their designs while going about their tasks. (Wright and Lidsky 2004: 10)

The founding fathers also meant to address the concern with the potential growth of an authoritarian government. Thus, along with the creation of the three separate and well defined branches of Government, one extra constitutional element was the fourth Pillar of the Government in the form of the Free Press, or the, "Fourth Estate." (Carlyle 1841: 20) Even before the American war of Independence, the newspapers played a role of an informant, judge, and critique of the politics of the day. Right from the days of the revolutionary press, in the days when the incidents like the Boston Tea Party took place, press, in any form or shape, (Melinda 2004: 150) has played a significant role in the unfolding of the events in the American history. (Marvin 1991: 60)
Newspaper Reporting: A Historical Perspective

If World history is recalled, Julius Caesar recruited soldiers, who reported their own battles. Thucydides was a military officer and his "History of the Peloponnesian War" was informed by his experience in command of the Greek fleet at Thasos in 424 B.C. and his defeat by the Spartan General, Brasidas. The professional war correspondent, did not arrive on the scene until the Crimean War. War correspondents like William "Billy" Howard Russell of The Times of London, Edwin Lawrence Godkin of the London Daily News and G.L. Gruneisen of the Morning Post, deserve a mention. One can safely conclude that our appetite for news of war, has been served by "amateurs correspondents" from time immemorial, in various modes and forms.18 The Government too allowed unarmed war correspondents in the name of promoting Democracy as it meant that once on the battlefield, the journalists would wave the country’s flag. This heady sentiment changed as soon as the casualties started mounting. Thus, there arose a conflict between war reporting and governmental restrictions right from the time of the Civil War, which has continued till the times of the Persian Gulf wars.

By the year, 1854, the British army had experienced close to forty years of relative peace. Consequently, there were few battle-hardened veterans among the British forces in the Crimea. During this time, drastic measures were taken to reduce the cost of supporting a standing army. Most of the British army’s commanding officers last saw action during the Napoleonic Wars, in particular, at Waterloo (1815). The Crimean War (1853-1856) was fought primarily on the southern tip of the Crimea, a Peninsula extending into the Black Sea, barely connected to Ukraine. It was the location of Russia's great naval base at Sevastopol, the destruction of which was the primary objective of Great Britain and France. In addition, Great Britain and France maintained a naval presence in the Baltic Sea, which forced Russia to divert troops from Crimea for the defense of St. Petersburg.19

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An Eminent war correspondent, William Howard Russell,\footnote{"My Diary North and South", (Online : Web), Accessed on 28 May , 2007, URL: http://books.google.co.in/books?id=8DMnTGWpaoEC&dq. The Book is an account of how Howard Russell was transported to the battlefront in Crimea and Sevastopol where-in he went on to cover and report the Crimean War and the British war effort.} is considered to be one of the first war correspondents in the history of war reporting. He criticized the official conduct of the war. His accounts of the difficulties in a soldier’s life in Balaklava, struck a responsive chord with readers on the home front. Thomas Agnew,\footnote{Ibid} of the publishing house, Thomas Agnew & Sons, sensed a commercial opportunity to exploit. He sent a photographer to the Crimea to provide evidence that would mitigate the negative reports appearing in the newspapers. Also, he was invited to dine with Prime Minister Palmerston, in Great Britain, to discuss military strategy as he had witnessed the war at it’s closest and worst. Through his reports, he was evocatively able to portray the hardships faced by the soldiers on the battlefront.

Another photographer of the era, Roger Fennon, was designated as the official war photographer. He was not permitted to picture scenes and situations which were not palatable to the Government of Britain. This tactic may have given him access to information and views that were otherwise not to be reported to artists and war correspondents, like William Howard Russell, who was critical of the British government’s leadership and military officer’s handling of the war. In any case, while, personally witnessing the horror of war, Fennon chose not to portray it.

**The Period Press in the Times of the Civil War**

This trend of freedom of press, was taken over by the US press of the 1860’s, during the Civil war between the years, 1860-1864. The Civil war was a landmark occurrence which was fought between the industrialists in the North, “The Yankees” and the Southern Agrarian interests, which stood for their cotton plantations and support of slavery\cite{MM1911} Slavery as we know, had further divided the American firmament into the “abolitionists” and the “anti-abolitionists” with Abraham Lincoln taking up the case for abolishing slavery. *Virginia* formed the aggregation point, where, the main army of the secessionists and the main army of the Union, confronted each other. In the north-west highlands of Virginia, the number of slaves was around 15,000, whilst, the twenty times as large free population consisted
mostly of free farmers. The eastern lowlands of Virginia, on the other hand, counted well-over, half a million slaves. Raising Negroes and the sale of the Negroes to the Southern states formed the principal source of income of these lowlands. (Marx 1861: 40)

The soldiers, who survived the Civil War, were able to give a honest reportage of the war effort by the Unionists and the Southern Confederacy. Soldiers wrote about the military strategy, the grief and pillage caused to the towns and their populations along with the casualties caused and the medical help available for the wounded soldiers. (Bonner 2006: 100) The Presidential Secretary, William O. Stoddard, wrote his own dispatches about his Civil War experience which was mixed in nature. (Burlingame 2002: 100) He was appointed, “Secretary to the President to sign land patent” on July 15th, 1861. He worked as an editor of the Central Illinois Gazette, serving first in the Interior Department in the US Government. One of his original responsibilities, was, to prepare a digest of newspaper articles.

One of the reported incidents of an attempted assassination of President Lincoln is very well recorded in the memoirs of the US government. The Presidential Secretary related, “We were talking war and the future, when I picked up a carbine that stood in a corner and began to put Ellsworth through the manual of arms. As I did so, my orders brought him close to the south window. His movements had the precision of a machine. When the order came to take aim, the carbine went forward recklessly through a pane of glass, and I ordered him to shoulder arms. When the others came in, we had a story to tell them of an assassin among the bushes out yonder who had doubtlessly mistaken Ellsworth or me for the President, and had attempted the assassination.”22 The war had been elaborately covered by historians like, James McPherson, who, in Crossroads of Freedom, painted a masterful account of this pivotal battle, the events that led up to it, and it’s aftermath. (Mcperson 2002: 100)

War correspondents for different newspapers covered the war through various means. They sent their messengers on horsebacks from the unfolding battles to the nearest towns on Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. The earlier half of the war Confederates made extensive gains under the leadership of Robert E. Lee, before the

battle of “Antitiem” in the year, 1862. There were governmental restrictions on the coverage which was slow and tedious in the Union territory as Washington still had a unified government. With the opening shots of the American Civil War at Fort Sumter, South Carolina on April 12, 1861, the coverage of major battles and small skirmishes appeared in the nation’s newspapers. The “Telegraph” facilitated rapid transmission of stories to the urban news centers. Visual images became available from commercial photographers.\(^{23}\) The government and the military, in the North and the South, attempted to control this coverage in a variety of ways. Battlefield reporters faced censorship, intimidation, official delays and a number of restraints. Press freedoms were thoroughly stifled. Resourceful photographers and journalists, found a way to get their images and stories through to a public, but they starved for news about the civil war. Photography which had begun in 1840’s, served as a major eye opener for the public in the urban centers during the civil war.

The graphic portrayals often invited the vitriolic attack of the government. The number of casualties suffered in the battle of Antitiem crossed 6,000 which, was twice the casualties in the D-Day landings in Normandy in June, 1944 during the World War-II. Still, photographs helped promote the initial theme of press freedoms. Sometimes, the editors tagged the reports and photographs with the rejoinders like, “The sentiment in the picturization is grotesque”.(Chandler 2002: 17)

Since the end of the Cold War, when the era of rapid industrialization crept in, the press received its new patrons. In 1870’s, the US Congress had discontinued subsidies to newspapers as they were becoming partisan in coverage. Still, the upcoming Business houses, the rail road corporations, etc became the new purveyors of press in United States. The period witnessed a wide range of reform movements at the local, state, and national levels addressing issues as diverse as railroad, corporate regulation child labor restriction, adult probation, and systematic city planning campaigns against alcohol and direct election of US senators, to name but a few. Press too reported on the Anti-Trust violations of the Corporate Houses who were on their way to ascendancy. Big Business better understood as the late 19\(^{th}\) century industrialization of United States, modernized the press productions and communications in general. The tempo of business was quickened too by the

\(^{23}\) “From the Civil War to the Iraq War- Hostile Fire Front and Rear” (Online : Web), Accessed on 28 May, 2007, URL: http://www.digitaljournalist.org/issue0304/pcox.html
invention of the typewriter in 1867, the adding machine in 1888, and the cash register in 1897. The linotype composing machine, invented in 1886, the rotary press, and paper-folding machinery made it possible to print 240,000 eight-page newspapers in an hour.\textsuperscript{24}

**The Spanish War of 1886: The Media Reportage**

The question of national security resurfaced strongly with the USS Maine incident in the year 1898, when this American battleship was attacked by Spanish forces and one of the headlines in a Hearst newspaper declared rhetorically, “USS Maine sunk by a Spanish Torpedo,” without proper evidence of the Spanish attack. The incident was propagated as a national security threat, which could have national ramifications. (Toole 1898: 150) It was a war started by newspapers, in order to firm up the number of copies of the newspapers. The report created frenzy and the Government declared a war against Spain, much on the line of a “spectator sport spirit” of the Persian Gulf wars. Historians believe that the incident was used as a reason to go to war with Spain to end the conflict with the Cuban rebels and to set Cuba free from the Spanish control. Since several decades, investigation has established two theories into the wreckage. The first theory is that the USS Maine was destroyed by a submarine mine and the second theory suggested that the ship was destroyed by an internal incident, such as a coal bunker catching fire during the Spanish war. The New York Journal, on the morning of February 16, 1898 stated that “Crisis At Hand Cabinet in Session; Growing Belief in Spanish Treachery” and the paper reported that over 400 sailors died when actually only 260 had died.

In the year 1910, a US Congressional inspection team concluded that the wreck had been caused by an external explosion which split the ship into two.\textsuperscript{25} The slogan created by a national interest friendly press, “Remember the Maine,” became an all time rallying cry in the United States. This incident can be construed as a support being given to “Militarism.” William Randolph Hearst’s letter to his correspondent saying, “You give me the photographs, I will give you the War” was, a testimony to the rise in the influence of the press in making important foreign policy

\textsuperscript{24} "Message To Congress", (Online : Web), Accessed on 28 May, 2008, URL: http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/H/1934uk/chap6.html

decisions. The corporate influence on themes of national security was being felt and the ideals of freedom of press were being misused for commercial gains in a fast industrializing United States. The theme of national security kept on being a favorite selling point for the press with the Cuban incident being a significant pointer.

The Issue of Press Freedoms During the First and Second World Wars

President Woodrow Wilson developed a program of progressive reform and asserted international leadership in building a new world order. In the year 1917, he proclaimed an American entry into World War-I, as a crusade to make the world “safe for democracy.” President Wilson’s approach was similar to Thomas Jefferson in the support of self determination and openly arrived at international covenants. His “Fourteen Points” were a guideline for international freedoms including freedom of speech. One report prepared by the US press journalist, Harry Hansen, reminded the American people of the larger-than-life portrayal of the “American messianic zeal”, to become the Supreme power of the land. The report stated that, “It is a long and narrow room, more like a corridor than a salon. The delegates ascended the marble staircase and passed through what at one time were the apartments of Marie Antoinette to the Salon de la Pail and the Hall of Peace.

The World War-II witnessed a further development in the realm of national security where, the Nazi threat to a democratic and liberal world was felt at its gravest. US media, now bolstered by its newly spawned Radio transmissions since 1921, proved to be a boon for enlisting support amongst the people. President Roosevelt’s “Fireside chats,” made the people aware about the developments of war and the general condition of the nation. (Buhite 1992:70) There was no television, no satellites and no information superhighway to spread the news, when Hitler invaded Poland. During those times, CBS was the only radio network that remained in Europe, when the war broke out. Edward R. Murrow, CBS’s overseas news director, not only invented the modern, on-the-scene broadcast journalism from the streets of London, but he also recruited a team of reporters that covered the war from capitals and


battlefields across Europe, North Africa and Asia. Edward C. Murrow's comment on his arrival to London to cover the "Battle over Britain," conveyed a lot of details. (Bernstein and Lubertozzi 1967: 121) He commented that earlier he doubted the national spirit of Britain, as a myth created by it's historians. When the war ensued, it became apparent that national concerns could be important for the Britishers. This observation reflected the tilt of the author, who became popular with his riveting portrayals of fighter plane gunship battles.28

The U S Press and the Macrythism phenomenon

The anti- Nazi and pro-Democracy movement of the US Administration was, replaced by a maniacal anti-Communist sentiment in the US press and the government. The fear of a communist encirclement all around liberal democratic countries was not far fetched as incidents like the Berlin Airlift and the takeover of Hungary showcased. "McCarthyism" was created as a theme to rally an American support against communism which, seemed to have entered the American political culture in the form of its playwrights, Dramatists, Moviemakers and intellectuals. The American Communist Party (CP-USA) was in fact a Soviet franchise as insisted by Joseph McCarthy and officials like Alger Hiss. Victor Perlo, Judith Coplon, Morton Sobell, William Perl, Alfred Sarant, Joel Barr, and Harry Gold, were among the people who were targeted.29 There were purges in the press with "Gate-keeping,"30 being attempted to weed out the anti-establishment stories and curb the views of groups like the "Hollywood ten."

Newspapers such as McCarthy Chicago Tribune and the San Fransisco Examiner, supported the cause of war in the name of national security. The criticisms were voiced from the dailies of Chicago Sun Times, New York Times, Milwaukee Journal and most importantly, the Christian Science Monitor. Mary Baker Eddy, who founded the Christian Science Monitor in 1908 established the credo of the newspaper, "The object of the Monitor is to injure no man, but to bless all mankind".

28 Ibid
30 Gate-keeping is a phenomenon which entails a strict eye by the Editors of the newspapers as they attempt and keep a strict check on what appears on the newsprint and, what, disappears from the happenings of the day. There is a partisan and political check kept on the content of the newspapers and the Satellite networks.
This idea went against the American policy of smearing men in the name of rooting out the communists in the government. The freedom of speech was curbed which went against the Bill of Rights of the American constitution. In the name of consolidating against an international threat, witch-hunting was carried out.

The Vietnam war offended the media, the most when the war correspondents like William Halberstam exposed the Saigon intervention by the United Stats Government. The rising casualties and the Television images of American soldiers burning the Vietnamese hutments with their dreaded Zippo lighters, became a rallying point for an anti-war movement, which earned the media, the epithet of being anti-establishment and unpatriotic. It was here that a country may win all the battles, and, yet still lose the war on the home-front. A country as rich and powerful as United States, became the biggest loser with one of the world’s smallest and poorest countries. The American Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, in the year 1964, with only two dissenting votes and turned it’s back on it’s South Vietnamese ally, the Diem Government of South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese Government launched a full-scale conventional invasion only eight years later. These were the national security themes which were discussed and dissected in great detail by the mainstream media.

The Age of Counter Culture and the American Press

Free press has always been a hallmark of United States and the country has boasted of a tradition of freedom of expression in more ways than one. The impeachment of President Richard Nixon along with the release of the Pentagon papers pointed at the ways, in which press was muzzled in the seventies and it formed an important stepping stone to national debate on free press. The proprietors of the Washington Post and New York Times, were castigated and blackmailed by the American Government. The manner in which, Vice President, Spiro. T. Agnew pejoratively referred to the American press as “The naterrating nabobs of negativism,” is another instance, which formed the foundation for a debate on the theme of free press. (Paulsen 2004: 40)

The American age of disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the authorities had begun in the University campuses in United States. The increase in the popularity of the flower children and Timothy Leary variants of American youth, led to an
increment in the anti-war activism of the day. Reminiscing about late 1940's, in his 1964 autobiography, Malcolm X, referred to the word *hippy* as a term for African Americans, used to describe a specific type of white man who “acted more as a Negro than Negroes.” The term *hipster* was coined by Harry Gibson in 1940, and it was used by the “American Beat” generation during the 1940s and 1950s to describe jazz and swing music performers. The word evolved to describe bohemian counterculture. In the year, 1963, a popular, British band, The Swinging Blue Jeans released the song “Hippy Hippy Shake”, which rose to the number two in the British charts and in the American charts, too. This song was originally recorded in the year, 1959, by Chan Romero.31

The relation of hippies with the United States, as “Flower Children,” originated with Allen Ginsberg. In the year 1965, he encouraged organizers of Berkeley’s Vietnam Day protest movement to deploy “stacks of flowers” during their peace march, as a way of pacifying hostile counter-demonstrators and the police. (Gurvis 2006:80) The idea reappeared one year later at what was perhaps the first outdoor, San Francisco’s, Love Pageant rally, which, was held in the Golden Gate Park. A flyer announcing the event encouraged those planning to attend to bring “flowers, feathers, beads, flags, incense and costumes.”32

The whole movement reached a more expansive plane with the Vietnamese incursion of the American government failing miserably and the international community harped on the American intervention in Vietnam. Then, there was a consequential dismemberment of the sense of pride which the Americans had in their way of life.

**The Pentagon Papers**

Another path breaking development was the release of Pentagon Papers by a US functionary, Daniel Ellsberg, who let out portions of the report to *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. It led to a legal feud between Katherine Graham of Washington Post and President Richard Nixon. The Pentagon Papers critiqued the military strategy of the US Defense Department which led to the Vietnamese embarrassment. (Purse

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32 Ibid
Thus, national security became a matter of private concern with the people being kept uninformed about the failures of the nation's foreign policy making. This ushered the times of national security and investigative press, which, culminated with the efforts of journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in *Washington Post*, who unearthed the robbery at the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate building. Theodore White, commented in his work, *Making of the President* that no great policy and no foreign policy decision or social reform can succeed unless press, makes up the public mind. (Olmysted 1996: 11) Just four months after Richard Nixon's resignation, *New York Times* reporter Seymour Hersh, unearthed a new case of government abuse of power. The expose was that the CIA had launched a domestic spying program of Orwellian proportions against American dissidents during the Vietnam War. The country's best investigative journalists and the members of Congress quickly mobilized to probe a scandal that seemed certain to unsettle the foundations of this secret government.

The issue of national security again resurfaced in President Jimmy Carter's movement against human rights abuses and during the controversial Iran Contra affair and the Latin American incursions of the American establishment. In their coverage of elections in El Salvador, scholars like Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, charged the US media of being handmaidens of the US foreign-policy makers. They blamed that the US media during these elections, relied, on massive publicity for the US Democratic support which was a "right issue agenda" for them while cleverly ignoring the "wrong ones". (Herman 1985: 137) In his work, "Rogue States", Naom Chomsky enumerated on the characteristics of the so-called American Empire, as, it is understood by him. Here, he exposed the political hypocrisy of the mainstream media, while covering the US incursions into Latin American countries, to oust communist regimes and support the rebels. (Chomsky 2000: 62)

The media do contest and raise questions about government policy, but they do so almost exclusively within the framework determined by the essentially shared interests of state-corporate power. Divisions among elites are reflected in media debate, but departure from their self created notions is not to be found often. It is true that the incumbent state managers commonly set the media agenda. But, if policy fails, or is perceived to be harmful to national interests, the media will often
"contradict government policy" and utilize different means to achieve goals that remain beyond question.

The political scientist, Jack Spence, discovered that Central America was virtually ignored until American influence faced a challenge in the year 1978 onwards. From 1969 through 1977, the Television networks devoted a total of one hour to Nicaragua, all on the 1972’s devastating earthquake. They ignored the 1972 election in El Salvador, when the apparent victory of Duarte-Ungo, was overturned by blatant fraud and intervention by the US clients in Nicaragua and Guatemala, guaranteeing the military rule that continued until the present.

In the first six months of 1986, Spence observed that the all important theme of “access to land and land ownership” in Nicaragua received one sentence of coverage in the 181 articles, and the controversial agrarian policy was not given adequate coverage of El Salvador. Similarly, the Nicaraguan issues such as the effects of the war on Nicaragua, the Sandinista programs, and the public support were not present in the news stories and other coverage.” Most of the themes emanated from the White House and imposed the Reagan administration’s ideas without much analysis, including the pictorials about freedom fighters who, were forced to fight with only “boots and bandages” against technologically advanced Soviet armaments and Cuban-piloted helicopters.

The last echo on the theme of national security and press freedoms came through the Persian Gulf wars of 1991 and 2003, which, were both the so called US humanitarian interventions to contain the Iraqi Regime led by Saddam Hussein. The Sidle Commission, which was instituted in the year of 1983, came up with a plethora of proposals to contain press censorship manipulation by the Government. Hugh Hefner, too petitioned against the US government, to contain the curbs on US press. The Sidle Commission34 or “the Chairman’s Panel on Media-Military Relations,” was constituted by seven military and six media personages. One of the key recommendations of the Commission was to constitute a “national pool” of fifteen journalists to cover the military operations undertaken by the United States. The


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national pool comprised of representatives of the national media. Television networks and news agencies were included, but, local newspapers such as *The New York Times* or the foreign press remained the pariahs in the whole system.

Another recommendation of the Commission maintained that the media was to be trained in military matters and would cover operations on a rotation basis. The US media agreed to the containment of journalists, barring the foreign press. As the wars of 1992 and the Kosovo intervention in 1999 showcase, the “pooling” of correspondents on the warfront produced doctored reports. It was only to a certain extent, by the reports and dispatches of David Bloom and Dan Rather of CBS, that the reporting became objective as compared to earlier standards. Some of “the Unilaterals,” (Hedges 1991: 37) or the independent reporters, perished at the hands of misdirected and uncontrolled US fire in Iraq. Still, they succeeded in sending some of the most authentic reports from the battlefield. The issue of military media relations, still remains a grey area which needs to be sorted out if press freedoms and the neutrality of the Fourth Estate have to be maintained. National security has been promoted by the correspondents through sensationalism and the techniques of make-believe in order to manufacture consent in the favor of the war effort.

National security refers to the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation-state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy.(Sarkesian 2002: 85) Measures taken to ensure national security include:

- Diplomacy being used to get the support of the allies and delineate threats
- Utilizing economic power to facilitate or coerce cooperation
- Keeping effective armed forces
- Undertaking civil defense and emergency preparedness measures (including anti-terrorism legislation)
- Ensuring the resilience and redundancy of critical infrastructure
- Utilizing intelligence services to detect and avoid espionage, and to defray threats to state information
- Utilizing secret police to protect the nation from domestic dangers (Lott 2004: 25)
The National Security Act of 1947, was signed by President Harry S. Truman. The Act reorganized the United States’ armed forces, foreign policy, and the intelligence community apparatus in the aftermath of World War-II. The majority of the provisions of the Act took effect on 18 September 1947, the day after the Senate confirmed James V. Forrestal, as the first Secretary of Defense in the United States. It was an attempt to bring about uniformity in the homeland security organization of the United States administration. This meant that all the security Departments of United States were brought under one umbrella in order to meet challenges to the homeland security of the order of the Pearl Harbor fiasco which, forcibly involved United States into World War-II. The concerns of national security have always been prime for the United States. Still, it received a new organizational oeuvre by the National Security Act of 1947. The act was even more pertinent in the context of the rising recalcitrance of the Soviet Union and its clearly reflected desire to carve out a new block for itself which was located to the east of the Churchillian “Iron Curtain”.

National security concerns are of prime importance in the minds of the reporting journalists and the readers alike. National security is a very sensitive theme and one such section of press coverage which has been diligently and closely followed by the people and media studies scholars all across the Globe. National security and defense matters have always been ticklish issues, which have been commented upon in the American press from the early times. United States media has a tradition of being under fetters and under the clamp of being under “a responsibility”. This responsibility refers to the service which the American media does by letting its reports and views fall in tandem with the nationally accepted approaches of “national interest” and “national security” which, are often in news in the United States. The spin that US mainstream media offers on these issues is very plane and straight and everything is simplified to the basics.

The whole situation can be ascribed to be that of the “imperial overarch”. (Chase 2002: 4) American involvement in Philippines at the turn of the century along with its engagements in South Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East have, led to the image of an international and global hegemon being slapped in the face. The American regime does not regard itself as one but the American over indulgence in other people’s affairs has won it more enemies than friends.
United States press has been reporting events and American engagements abroad with great fanfare and with relentless support for the troops which are engaged in war games in various countries. United States media has often played the role of a drummer for the American GI’s who, are sent into lands as far off as Afghanistan and Iraq. The US media has followed the line of the American Regime and the White house and many a times accepted the rationales given by the White House to go to war. (Valantin 2007: 60)

The streak of Yellow journalism has found a clearly pronounced manifestation in the coverage of the Persian Gulf wars of 1991 and 2003. (Campbell 2001: 40) Yellow journalism is an amalgamation of all the elements in news where, a deliberate attempt is made by the newspapers and the various network channels to add a hint of glory and messianic zeal to the American war effort, down the ages with the current situation in Iraq, culminating with the capture of Saddam Hussein in the battle for Iraq in the year 2003. In the tradition of free press, the first amendment does not say anything about the “press responsibility”. Freedom necessarily contains within itself the possibility of irresponsibility. (Gunther 2002: 40)

It’s a mean sense of freedom in which, a mere failure of responsibility brings a jail term or fine, if standards of responsibility are uniform and designed to prevent rather than punish failures and are set by some higher authority. (Wicker 1979: 254) Still, one facet of this debate brings to the fore, an observation that would the imposition of the standards of responsibility on the press make it progress towards the uniformity of presentation and away from diversity.

The Coverage of Network Television and National Security

Free press in United States, is present in the form of the monopolized corporate world and has acted in shades of Yellow Journalism to impart a messianic zeal to the American Government’s effort in Iraq and other conflict zones of the world. A few weeks before the hostilities broke out in the Gulf, a National Broadcasting Corporation producer found himself in a Baghdad office. When he was officially received, he walked into the Iraqi’s minister’s office to catch the Iraqi official watching CNN’s, Larry King Live. (McDougal 1991)

The story might be apocryphal but, the fact that mainstream media had event managed both the Persian Gulf wars of 1991 and 2003, is very clear. The free press,
as, they are called, went into a propagandized portrayal of the Persian Gulf wars of 1991 and 2003. The stories that emanated from the Persian Gulf were, replete with acts of bravery by the American soldiers and their allies, but, the gist always pointed towards supporting the American War effort on the pretext of searching out the WMD’s to make the world and American homeland a better and safer place. American media or the free press, has always relished the fact that most of what the world sees, reads and hears is a product of the services of news media of United States and the Western world. (Jeffords and Rabinowitz 1974: 155)

The Cable News Network, was not set up as an international broadcaster, but, it only assumed the role by an accident of technology. Before, the Persian Gulf War-I, it was a plain profit reaping company rooted in politics, business and culture of the country. Moreover, as fate would have it’s way, CNN, began to air the footages of war in the news holes in a round-the-clock information service. It provided special access to newsmakers like Saddam Hussien, Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein’ belonging to Jordan. Then, as time progressed, this “ad-hocism” became popular worldwide, and the news holes of CNN, became the most sought after Persian Gulf war news bytes. (Weiner 1991: 281)

The main lesson, which can be learned from the “CNN blitzkrieg” was that the coverage was a media managed war propaganda similar to the role followed by Fox Television during the Operation Enduring Freedom. The realization that the journalists and broadcasters were promoting a particular form of New World order, began to seep in. American technology not only won the war on the battlefield but also in the drawing rooms and in the heart and minds of the people. As an example, prominent CNN advertisement historicized, the Persian Gulf War, when it had hardly even begun, identifying the war as an event, which already had an “official chronicler.” It was historic in the sense that it was fought, “live,” on the small screen, like, American Football or a basketball game, differentiating it from the Vietnam war, which, was fought on the news film, rather than live on the screens. (Hodge 1991: 100)

Apart from the technicalities and subtleties involved in the CNN’s news coverage, another significant fact of the reportage deserves a mention. The Television news played a key role in “domesticating” dissent by rearticulating political outrage against the war as personal anxiety. The coverage reconfigured the evil to resist as the
need to support the troops who, were on “a divinely ordained mission”. Also, the image of the military families quietly coping with the war turmoil served as a key icon for the manufacturers of appropriate public responses. (Jeffords and Rabinowitz 1995: 155)

Anti-war protest was labeled as a social disease, which was reminiscent of the “Vietnam Syndrome”. (Herring 1991: 28) There was an institutional argument that, the Vietnam debacle occurred because of want of support at the home front and what followed was a racial and gendered mapping of the home front. The discourse of family support for the troops feminized and personalized the home front. The strategy of news reports was to begin with the capsule with statements of ambivalence, anger and opposition to the war on the part of the interviewed family members. The national security concerns came into pre-eminence, which, was hailed by the audiences and the television and network commentators as the ideal step to be taken, in the time of a national crisis as has always been done by the American public. It has been observed that the American public support for war efforts has ironically been very high in the beginning of the conflicts with an American involvement.

The Tony Blair Instance and the National Security Concerns

In June 2003, the US Media and the other western Media outlets erupted with rage at the allegation that Tony Blair had lied to the public and the Parliament into fighting a war that had earlier secretly been agreed with George Bush in september, 2002. Equally outrageus, however, was the stubborn refusal of the media to discuss these issues before senior politicians blew the whistle. The US and the British media rarely challenged the “passionate sincerity” of Prime Minister Tony Blair, about the threat from Iraq as according to the British media, the threat had become a “given”. (Wollacott 2003) The Observer’s, Andrew Rawnsley described how Blair was genuinely disturbed. He stated that, “It would not be going too far to stay petrified about Saddam Hussein’s potential ability to use weapons of Mass destruction.” (Rawnsely 2002)

The BBC correspondent, Laura Trevelyan, declared that Tony Blair passionately believed that Saddam had to be confronted, if the future generations were not to be haunted by western inaction. This was aired by the BBC News on the 14th January, 2003. The editors of the anti war newspaper, “Mirror”, wrote the day after
Blair's crucial 18 March speech to the Parliament that, "Even though the mirror disagrees strongly with Tony Blair over his determination to wage war on Iraq, we, do not question his belief in the rightness of what he is doing." The Daily Telegraph's editors wrote that, "Any fair minded person who listened to the debate...must have surely concluded that Mr. Blair was right and his opponents were out-rightly wrong." Free press and it's arguments about the rationale of going to war, became questionable. The media tended to be slightly critical at best and the various loopholes in the Tony Blair's case for helping the Americans and President Bush's own cause for war, went more or less unquestioned in the longer run.

Various strategic and international affairs analysts pointed out repeatedly and critiqued the Allied case for going to war with Iraq including the American exercise the search for Osama Bin Laden. Former chief UNSCOM weapons inspector, Scott Ritter, has long insisted that Iraq was fundamentally disarmed between 1991 and 1998, with 90-95 percent of its WMD's eliminated by December 1998. As far as the remaining capacity is concerned, Scott Ritter wrote that, "It doesn't even constitute a weapons programme. It constituted bits and pieces of a weapons programme, which doesn't amount to much, but, is still prohibited." (Ritter and Williams 2002: 24)

Responding to Colin Powell's, 5th February speech to the United Nations, Ritter stated that, "He just hits you with circumstantial evidence, and he confuses people, and he lied, he lied to the people, he misled people...The Powell presentation is not evidence...It is a very confusing presentation. What does it mean? What does it represent? How does it all link up? It doesn't link up at all". (Romey 2003) Crucially, Ritter pointed out that any attempt to reconstitute the Weapons of Mass destruction programme would have been immediately detected in the year following 1991, as the weapons inspectors and other prying international eyes were always on the prowl. It was reported in the American media and other western media, that, Iraq is only known to have produced liquid bulk Anthrax that too, the product had a shelf life of around three years. The last known batch of liquid Anthrax was produced in 1991 at a state owned factory which was blown up in the year 1996.

In that spirit, the US mainstream media, were, indeed prejudiced about the war in Iraq in spring 2003, and the bias and the prejudice determined the news coverage. The media watch group, FAIR, conducted a study of the 1,617 on-camera sources, who, appeared on the evening newscasts of six US television networks, during the
three weeks beginning with the start of the war on 20th of March. Nearly two thirds of all sources were pro-war, while 71 percent of US guests favored the war. Anti-war voices were only ten percent of all voices, but, only 6 percent of non-Iraqi sources and only 3 percent of American sources. Thus, viewers were more than six times, as likely to see pro-war sources as compared to one which was anti-war, counting only US guests, the ratio increases to 25 to 1. (Aniley 2003)

Less than one percent of the American sources, were anti-war on Dan Rather’s,36 flagship programme, The CBS Evening News, during the war’s first three weeks. Meanwhile as FAIR’s researchers commented, public television’s PBS News Hour program hosted by Jim Lehrer, also, had a relatively low percentage of anti-war voices. Once the war began, the major network studios, were virtually off limits to the American opponents of war.37

All the major American satellite networks sanitized their war coverage, which was being broadcast on the cable networks. The enthusiasm for war, was rabid on Fox News Channel. After a pre-war makeover, the trend was the same with MSNBC. At the other end of the narrow cable news spectrum, CNN was busy with it’s rhetorical pro-war coverage. The incident of Jessica Parker Lynch, is a pointer in the direction of how media catered to the people’s baser tastes and forgot about the ideal of “objectivity.”38

However, an April, Washington Post report of Jessica Lynch, confronting an advancing “enemy” until the ammunition ran out, sustaining bullet and knife wounds in the process, was dropped from subsequent accounts. The Iraqi medical staff reported no bullet or stab wounds, and that report was confirmed by the Army hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. Later that day, there were conflicting reports that she had been shot. (Wilkinson 2003) Pentagon spokesman, Bryan Whitman, said that any claims that the facts of Private Lynch’s rescue were misrepresented by the US military were “devoid of all facts and were absolutely ridiculous.”39

37 Ibid
The media coverage amounted to “Maneachism”, which, is a media technique of drawing absolute stereotypes of “Good” and “Bad” and differentiating them, so, that the people begin to differentiate between “Us” and “Them”. (Soros 2006) The noted historian, David Fromkin, author of, *A Peace to End All Peace*, has written that in a world of independent state, a lasting peace cannot be achieved, because, there is nobody to prevent the war. His warning, that, America, is neither strong enough to govern the world nor wise enough to provide political direction for other peoples, has never been more salient. He conjured up a future, which does not arise from the ambitions of traditional nation-states, as has recently been the case, but from terrorist activities that may be linked across borders.

In summation, even in a world, that may never be ready for a global super-state or a world government. This precludes a future concert of powers that witness it in their respective national interests to cooperate over a wide range of issues that afflict mankind. The American Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, warned that a preemptive strike aimed “at prevention, and not merely punishment” awaited those who had opposed America’s will and jeopardized it’s sense of security. Nuclear programs in such countries, as Iran and North Korea and the anti-proliferation effort to curb the spread of nuclear weapons, would surely be shattered. (Fairbank 2002)

Replying to these criticisms, the national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice declared that the way to deter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was to ascertain, that, this “would be met with a devastating response.”(Conason 2002) President Bush also called for the development and deployment of “effective missile defenses,” to protect the nation against sudden attack. While research and deployment of a limited missile defense is clearly in the offing, it would be an historical anomaly, if the United States of America was to develop such a system and then restrict it to a limited defensive capability. If a theater defense can merge into a national defense, other nuclear powers would be right to expect the United States, to deploy a comprehensive defensive devise.

The Press and the International Law Perspective

The media clearly steered clear of discussing international law and the United Nations charter. On the rare occasions, when, the media allowed international law to be addressed, they chose their sources carefully. *The New York Times*, gave space to

Anne-Marie Slaughter, a noted international lawyer, contributed to the New York Times and in one of her published pieces, she described the action of President Bush to circumvent the United Nations as “illegal but profoundly legitimate”. She cited the independent International Commission on Kosovo as stating that while the invasion is formally illegal it was completely legitimate in the eyes of the international community. She utilized the term, “international community” and did not refer to the people of the world, but, referred to a majority of United Nations’ Security Council members.

Then, Ann Marie Slaughter commented that the invasion would be legitimate in retrospect if the Iraqis “welcome” the Americans and if Weapons of Mass Destruction were to be found in the near future. Slaughter, seemed to be satisfied with the pulling down of Saddam’s statue and the images of a street full of cheering Iraqis holding American flags, were broadcast. (Slaughter 2003)

Anne Marie Slaughter argued falsely in the capacity of an international law specialist, that, the United Nations sanctions cannot be a straitjacketed, preventing nations from defending themselves or pursuing what they perceived to be their national security interests. The same implication can stand true for the Nazi Germany’s attack on Poland in the year 1939.

United States media devoted endless reports, commentaries and pictures to reveal the several thousand victims of the 9/11 attacks. The much larger number of dead and seriously injured Iraqis, were, invisible in the United States press and in the memory and the psyche of the American public. As the NBC reporter, Ashleigh Banfield, noted, it was a bloodless war in which, “you did not see what happened
when the mortars landed. A puff of smoke is not what a mortar looks like when it
explodes, believe me.\textsuperscript{40}

The issue of national security turned out to be a very simplistic one for the
press and network television, as, they simplistically painted the enemy as the “other”,
and the American troops as the “do-gooders” with the objective of neutral reportage
of the war on terror. Sensationalism and other gimmicks to shore up support for the
American war effort in Iraq, became the focus of the media portrayals and it led to a
deterioration in the profession of reporting. The human interest stories about the grief
of separated housewives formed the staple material for network newscasts. National
security was appended with the commercialized interest of media corporates and
emotional stories, were conjured up. The audiences too latched on to this media
offering very gullibly. Thus, national security became a prime concern and a
scapegoat for the nation’s media, in order to increase their own TRP ratings.

\textbf{The Media Military Relationship}

Since the earliest of the wars, dating back to the US Spanish conflict, the
American Civil war and the both the world wars, a restriction and a degree of
constraint remained an important characteristic of the various arrangements which the
American Government, the Defense Department and the Pentagon have established
between themselves. Various media depute their representatives, reports, stringers and
war correspondents to cover the various American military engagements. “Everyone
has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold
opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas
through any media and regardless of frontiers.” The United States Government, is a
signatory to international conventions, namely, the United Nations Human Rights
Declaration, which demands it to ascertain a free and unhindered exchange of news,
views and information.

The war coverage has varied a lot during the past conflicts, whether, be it the
conflicts ranging from the Vietnam War,\textsuperscript{41} the Grenada engagement, the Panama and

\textsuperscript{40} “Banfield lashes out at Own Network,”(Online: Web), Accessed on 25 March, 2006, URL:

\textsuperscript{41} “Thirty Years Anniversary: Tonkin Gulf Lie Launched Vietnam War”, (Online : Web), Accessed on
the Noriega case and till the recent Persian Gulf war. Another facet of the military-media interface, needs to be looked into. (Porch 2002: 40) The extent to which the various stringers are able to graphically report the ground zero conditions forms an essential part of the various news items and capsules, which they beam back to their respective headquarters and studios. The elbow room which the various deputed war correspondents get while they intermingle with the soldiers and the vanquished enemies depends a lot on various key factors.

In the 1940s, the nation changed the name of the war department to the Department of Defense. 42 Under the Reagan administration, the M-X missile was renamed as the “the peace keeper”. As media images, had spread a broad based anti-war protest, during the Vietnam war, the US military planners, reached out for public support during the Persian Gulf conflict. Once the Bush Administration declared about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. (“This will not stand,”) then, the administration had a hard sell to undertake in convincing the people that their nation had enough stakes in the conflict. An interesting montage in which Saddam Hussein was shown asking a British child Hostage, Stuart Backwood, that, “did Stuart have his milk today? “chilled public opinion in the western capitals, cementing Saddam’s image as tyrant on the world stage. In the view of observers, the odds would have changed, if Saddam would have been better oriented towards public relations. (Gelpi and Mueller 2006)

Robert Fisk, an alternative media observer, stated in an interview to the Pacific Radio, that, there is no such thing that restrictions, on the media initiated by the American defense establishment in general. According to him, the American journalists were concerned with the Middle East portrayals which conveyed the message, that, the Jews and people from Israel should not be described too critically as it would elicit a very emotional response from the people. This military pressure and a prying establishment defined everything through the chosen adjectives of “alleged” and “reported”. (Miller 2003: 215)

“It goes without saying that if Dwight Eisenhower would have been alive today he had been warning about the dangers of a Military-Industry-Media complex.” This was the statement given Reed Hunt, who was the chairperson of the Federal

Communications Commission (FCC) in the time period between, 1993-1997. The Pentagon papers and Watergate controversies during the Vietnam war provide revealing insights into the political and military pressures on the media in the times of war and crisis. (Garment 2002: 60) Daniel Elsberg, worked on the Pentagon papers, but, when he took the courageous decision to leak them to various media outlets, the television networks would not cover them. Sangfor Unger, noted in his popular book, “The Papers and the Papers”, that, “the network’s reluctance to touch the papers was perhaps the clearest evidence of the extent to which they felt intimidated by the Nixon administration’s attitude towards the press. They knew how it would spark a costly and threatening investigation by the Federal Communications Commission, which controlled their broadcast licenses.”

When questions were asked to the American citizens, about, the media-military relationship, during, the Vietnam war, they came up with the following responses. The first question was: How much of a factor do you think US media coverage was in shaping US public opinion about the Vietnam War? The answer came in groups of four:

- 45% 1. A decisive factor
- 38% 2. A factor but not a decisive factor
- 4% 3. Not at a significant factor
- 13% 4. Not sure

A CNN investigative report, prepared by Peter Arnett, alleged that the US government used lethal nerve gas during a mission to kill American defectors in Laos during the Vietnam War in the year, 1970. (Pogrebin and Barringer 2002: 12) However, after reviewing the findings of a parallel investigation conducted by a Vietnam veteran, Peter Arnett’s CNN report was not found to be credible. At the heart of Arnett’s report, the result of an eight-month investigation based on interviews with

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44 AB-C7 Listens Polls are conducted by Hertz Research of Petaluma, California. The polls are conducted online among Bay Area residents who registered in advance to participate in the ABC7 Listens Polling program. In order to create samples as representative of the entire Bay Area population as possible, the results for each poll are statistically weighted using a variety of demographic factors provided by respondents during the registration process.

200 people, are the claims of Lieutenant Robert Van Buskirk, a platoon leader in “Operation Tailwind”\(^{46}\), who stated that he threw a white phosphorous grenade in order to kill two suspected US army defectors.

Tom Marzullo, who served in the same elite unit as Van Buskirk, pointed out that the lieutenant was stating a different story about that action than he had undertaken in the past. It turned out that Van Buskirk, wrote a book called as, *Operation Tailwind* back in the year, 1983. The book failed to mention the defectors or detail any plans to eliminate them. It would seem to be a strange oversight. Why would Van Buskirk withhold such a juicy morsel from his own book, only to save it for a CNN report 15 years later? More doubt is cast upon Van Buskirk’s account, by the Special Forces S-2 (Intelligence) officer, who planned the raid. He told Marzullo, that, it was designed to interdict the flow of supplies on the Ho Chi Minh trail and to draw North Vietnamese army units away from a Laotian unit in the area.\(^ {47}\)

**International Terrorism and its Media Coverage**

As a concluding remark, international terrorism is the paramount threat, which is posed by the non-state rogue actors of the times. International Terrorism spelt doom for powerful states like United States of America, who can defeat any other great power at their will. The recent dimension of Terrorism called as “Super Terrorism” or “Complex Terrorism,” is the gravest threat to national security in developed western economies (Dixon 2002) The United States, is the chief victim of this new crop of terrorism. “Complex Terrorism” involved the art of using the infrastructure of the targeted state against itself as the jet airliners were utilized against the World Trade Center on september 11th, 2001. The media coverage caused more attacks, and attacks caused more coverage, spiral of death that increased, because of a heightened interest in terrorism since september 11th, 2001.\(^ {48}\)

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The solution to the problem of media coverage during wartime is not government censorship. The answer is for the media to be as cognizant of being manipulated by terrorists, as, they are of playing to racial stereotypes. The media should be made aware of the manipulation by those with a vested interest or anyone else who seeks to make the press it’s “useful idiots.”