CHAPTER THREE
United States Media and Its Portrayal of Persian Gulf War-I

United States media has played an informative role in the dissemination and interpretation of incidents and in the nature of reporting done on them. United States media has the distinction of acting as a true safety valve for a young republic, as it was discovering it’s moorings in the twentieth century. The media serves as a “true fourth estate” which, was the name given to the media by Edmund Burke, a European philosopher. Since then, the various newspapers, satellite and network television outlets have attempted to live true to “the social responsibility theory,” which was in currency in the twentieth century. The chapter examines the portrayal of Persian Gulf War-I and the attendant debates in the US. The discussions focus on the patriotic fervor of the media and the coverage of the American war during the “Operation Desert Storm.” The news coverage by the Cable News Network is also probed to analyze the war coverage. Finally, the chapter argues that the media coverage of the war was also an ideological one which supported the rightness of US intervention.

Media has seen the peony press days, (when news used to be hawked by riders on horsebacks from river banks) to the days of the populist press (when, newspapers and magazines took up the function of muckraking and exposing the failings of the Government in charge), to the present day times of investigative and objective reporting. The fourth estate has been serving both it’s profit reaping motives and a well defined social responsibility objective. Foreign reporting and the coverage of international issues, have, always been a sidelined work in the media of some countries. In India, very few trained reporters are engaged in covering international “situations” and conflicts as they develop inside the country. Too much of “Gatekeeping” persists, which prevents much international news to form the offering of prominent national dailies and television networks. The situation is far different

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1 Edmund Burke, an eminent Political Philosopher in England derived the word “Fourth Estate” by looking into the seating and ideological arrangement in the French Assembly in the post Bastille phase. The people sitting on the right of the General De’ Estates were called as the First and Second Estate being constituted by the Nobility and the Clergy. The people sitting on the left of the “General” were called as the Third Estate, which was constituted by the commoners in France, and the reporters and members of intelligentsia were given the epithet of the Fourth Estate.
with the US media, be it the national dailies or the network television channels. “Gate keeping”;² is a trend in the newsrooms of the newspapers and television channels which prevents a specific variety of news and information from being disseminated to the audiences. In Indian newsrooms, Gate keeping is the name given to space constraints (in the case of print medium) and time constraints (in the case of electronic media) which prevents important news from percolating down from the partisan newsrooms and editorial boards. It has been observed that the media producers give a short shrift to international news and “situations” developing internationally. In the United States media have not been averse to devoting large resources and the best trained of their correspondents in reporting war situations and conflicts as they develop all across the world.

Media has multiple functions to perform in order to live up to the task of being a vigilante. War reporting involves an objective of depicting the nature of freedoms being provided by the various countries in order to create order. The countries of Al-Salvador and Gautemala in Latin America were cast as purveyors of good deeds and their policies were not reported by the mainstream media. These are some of the glaring incidents of media being partisan in reporting events. Mainstream media also lent an air of legitimacy to the government war efforts in various international situations starting from the Spanish war in the year, 1888. Media portrays the other side of the story too, where, it brings to light the collateral damage suffered by the civilians and the excesses committed on war correspondents. Correspondents suffer casualties, but, the duty of the administration is to provide them with security during coverage, which was prevalent in both the World Wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It was the Vietnam War, which foresaw a complete change in the dynamics of the way media operated in Saigon and Ho Chi Minh City. Media persons were allowed complete access to the battlefront in the Red River Delta region and the Mekong delta. Events and subsequent media reportage turned sour when people like Walter Cronkite, belonging to the Public Broadcasting System news reports, began airing the footage of dead Vietnam citizens, along with reels of US soldiers setting the hutments to fire with their Zippo lighters.

² 2002 Convention Paper Abstracts, Newspaper Division, Association For Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Columbia, April 29, 2007. Gatekeeping refers to a process of selecting good and relevant news away from the bad and irrelevant news in order to subscribe to the Policy of the newspaper or the publication.
Reporting Foreign Policy

Foreign Policy reportage is a very significant segment of coverage in the international realm. Foreign Policy is run and decided by the external affairs and strategic affairs specialists in the Government. The Department of State, earlier the OSS (office of strategic affairs) and the Department of Defense are responsible for making important foreign policy decisions with the attendant secretaries in consultation with the President, the national security Advisor and the members of the National Security Council.

Reporting on international "situations" and war efforts requires specialized training and expertise which is promptly provided by American news organizations of all kinds, the print and electronic media. Among various international reporting situations, the international summits, business conferences, and bilateral meetings of the political heads of various nation states and sports events have been prominently covered. These events are pre-planned and correspondents have advance information about them, so, they are in a position to chalk out a well defined strategy for the sake of covering these big events. The real challenge emerges when news correspondents are entrusted with the task of covering and reporting international conflicts, military mobilizations and United Nations sponsored peace keeping operations and other brokered peace missions between the parties in a conflict. Media has served as a mode of international diplomacy.

When all diplomatic contacts were severed between the US and the Iraqi Government during the Persian Gulf War, then, it was left to the reporting of CNN, to serve as a communicator between the two Governments. When Peter Arnett went to interview an Iraqi officer, he witnessed a senior Iraqi functionary forming his policy opinions by following an American official speak in a news conference. The universal nature of media's impact is all pervasive, as media reports and seasoned correspondents in prime news channels, help evolve foreign policy responses in developing international situations. The UN operation in Lebanon was carried out in the aftermath of incisive reporting and analysis by CNN, and other US broadcasters. US and other contributing Western nations framed their responses on the basis of the unfolding events via television broadcasts. In a way, in today's world of immediacy, foreign policy making depends on the media coverage of crisis and conflict situations.
Foreign policy making has a deep impact on framing public opinion among the people. Public opinion is a barometer of public support or dissatisfaction with the conditions and policy initiatives of the Government in the sphere of foreign policy making and its implementation. Foreign policy decisions might lead to rapprochement with rival nations or they might lead to further aggravation of conflicts. US media serves as a sieve for popular views on the street on the lines of the Arab street opinion. Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War in the year 1991, is a prime example of how an adverse and critical fringe of public opinion was built in the nation after the war started returning US casualties in large numbers. In the case of Vietnam, till the Plieku and Tonkin Resolutions in 1965, the war went in a favorable direction for the American military advisors and the Diem Government of South Vietnam. During the second half of the President Johnson’s tenure, reports and footage of a hard pressed military started emerging. Beginning with the visit of the US Ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge to Saigon to report on the developments in Vietnam to the various Helicopter massacres in the Vietnam mountains, the facade of an imminent American victory began to get exposed.

The Flower children and Hippie movement also created an impetus for exposing the plight of wounded and psychologically scarred Vietnam veterans. The anti-race movement along with the Black Church teachings created an anti-war sentiment among the people who had become aware through the media about the rising cost of the war in the South East Asia. An adverse public opinion was created among the people, as, they witnessed a blood bath in Vietnam, in the name of containing communism. The Pentagon Paper exposes during the time of President Nixon also led to the exposes in the Washington Post and New York Times for which Katherine Graham of Washington Post was riled by the White House Press Secretary.

The flaws in the Vietnam planning were there to be seen by all. The Watergate scandal involving the illicit seepage of funds for political purposes raised further eyebrows. Complete distrust in the establishment crept into the American way of life. The domestic media with its muckraking and investigative reporting, played a helpful role in exposing the lacunae and corruption in the country. The Latin American policy of US Government invited a lot of criticism in the US media. It finally took a “New World Order” initiated by President George Bush junior in 1991, which helped get rid the Vietnam syndrome, through a pro-war coverage by the media. Media in the realm
of foreign policy making thus plays a great role in disseminating information, news and views critical of the Governmental policies. The media generated activism could stir a gathering storm of public outrage against the Government if the decision is not liked by the ruled. Public opinion is thus cemented by media coverage on the issues of international importance.

**Public Opinion as a Faction in Media Reporting**

Various American Polls such as Gallup polls and the polls carried out by the network television with newspapers have been the barometers of changes in public opinion. Surveys by news oriented and research oriented organizations such as Media Research Center, Pew Press Center, Shorenstein Center of Press and Media and others like the Columbia School of Journalism, have a far reaching impact in gauging public unrest on issues of significance in the realm of foreign policy decision making. **Public Opinion surveys assess widespread public opinion.** An agency administers a survey to a sample group of people via a written questionnaire or through interviews in person, by phone, or by electronic media. The limited sample of people is considered representative of a larger group.

It has been found that **Survey results show public positions or reactions to agency actions** and gather information for use in the process. For instance, in a series of formal surveys, voters in the Puget Sound region (Seattle, Washington) were asked to comment as to how they would vote on various possible elements in a regional transit system. In an informal survey, the Ohio Department of Transportation (DOT) attached a questionnaire to its draft statewide transportation plan, *Access Ohio*, to solicit comments from reviewers. During preparation of Oregon's transportation plan, public opinion surveys were made available in the policy element draft and at public meetings.

In another finding, **Scientific surveys give broadly applicable results.** The Puget Sound surveys mentioned above, were based on a random sample of voters carefully chosen to be statistically representative of all voters. Informal surveys tend to bring responses from a self-selected group of people like those who are more personally interested in specific transportation issues, than, the population at large. Informal surveys can be designed to reach a broader group than those who attend public meetings. (Lindsay 1994 : 415)
Surveys can accurately report on what people know or want to know. Surveys test whether a plan or plan element is acceptable to the public as it is being developed. There are various types of public opinion polls in forming views on external and foreign developments. (William Croft 2001: 50) In a poll conducted by the, Global Policy.org, a non governmental organization, called as, "Public Opinion in Iraq: Following Abu-Gharib Revelations", several new facts came to the forefront. The Poll was carried out on 14\textsuperscript{th}-23\textsuperscript{rd} May, 2004, and it undertook respondents from Baghdad, Basrah, Mosul, Hillah, Diwanyiyah and Baqubah. Several revelations came to the forefront with chief among them being the idea that apart from the issue of terminating terrorist outfits, the common people attach primary importance to local security concerns.\(^3\)

Gallup asked the following question frequently: “Do you think, the US made a mistake by sending troops to fight in Vietnam?” If some one answered the question in negative, then, it was assumed that they supported the war. Every time, people under 30 were more likely to say no than people between 30-49, who, in turn were more likely to say no than people who were 50 and older. The two exceptions, were within sampling errors. (The numbers for those who agreed that the war had been a mistake are, essentially a mirror image of those who did not. Those with no opinion started at about 20 per cent and declined as the war went on, though there were always more in the oldest group.) \(^4\)

There are several beliefs about war. Women, were more dovish than men, and blacks were more dovish than whites. All the patterns were also found in the public opinion surveys, during the Korean War and World War-II. The science of polling, is young and there was no credible data before World War II. There is every reason to believe that, in nearly all wars, young men are more hawkish than older women.

The percentage of Americans with a “great deal” of confidence in Congress is at 14%, the lowest in Gallup’s history and the lowest of any of the 16 institutions tested in a year’s confidence in any institutional survey. It is also, one of the lowest confidence ratings for any institution, tested, over the last three decades with regard to

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the both the foreign policy and domestic decisions of the Government. American’s confidence in the military has always been relatively high, even in the mid-1970’s after the Vietnam War. The military has been near or at the top preference, of the list of institutions tested in each Gallup survey, since the year 1987. The high point for the military 85%, expressing a great deal of confidence came in March 1991, after the first Persian Gulf War when the United States swiftly achieved its goal of driving Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Even with this high point, confidence in the military has been nearly as high at several times since september 11th, 2001. The military’s current 69% confidence rating is the lowest for the military, since 9/11.5

Gallup’s annual update on America’s confidence in institutions showed that confidence ratings are generally down across the board compared with other years. The public’s confidence ratings in several institutions, including the Congress, were now at an all-time low point in Gallup’s history of this measure. These low ratings reflected the generally sour mood of the public at this time. Various other polls, that are carried out, between Network Television and National dailies are as follows: Times /CNN Polls, Washington Post/ ABC Polls, New York Times/ CBS, etc. In one of the NPR, that is, National Public Radio Polls, reporter Mara Liasson, reported that the Persian Gulf War-I, did not create much of a cleavage in public opinion polls. As Operation Desert Storm, progressed, popular support for the war was increasing as the military buildup progressed, which, was reverse of the public preferences in the Gulf War-II, of 2003. The polls showed an all out supportive public opinion in the Persian Gulf War-I.

The media generally wait until a major political figure or established “expert” speaks against a specific policy and that view gains certain credibility as marked by opinion polls or publication in “respected” newspapers or journals. Unfortunately, the crisis of democracy in the United States is such that the Democratic party has largely supported the conservative policies of the past decade and the party leaders are extremely cautious and slow to criticize foreign policy actions, especially potentially popular military actions. The crisis of liberalism is so deep in the U.S. that establishment liberals are afraid of being called “soft” on foreign aggression, and thus often support policies that their better instincts should lead them to oppose. Thus,

5 “Americans Confidence at an all time Low,” (Online : Web) Accessed on 23 June, 2007, URL: http://www.galluppoll.com/content/?ci=27946
several Public Opinion Polls have expressed dissatisfaction with the negligent attitude of the Democratic Party during the Persian Gulf War-I. Other pools conducted by agencies such as *Village Voice*, *The Nation*, *In These Times*, *Z Magazine*, etc portrayed a different picture. (Agee 1990: 60) which showed the negativity of the people towards the first Persian Gulf War. David Halberstam commented that "the Persian Gulf War was a war leaving little trace when it was over it was over. It did not leave much of a trace."(Halberstam 2003: 50) However, the war left a lot of traces with the initial Public Opinion siding with the Government of United States.

The history of war reporting in the US goes back to the times of George Kendall who covered the Crimean war. (Copeland 2001: 268) His reporting blamed the British Government for the neglect of the wounded soldiers. In the American-Spanish War, William Randolph Hearst, a media magnate in the 1890’s, was blamed with the triggering of the war. It was one of his newspapers, which declared war on Spain, with the headline, “USS Maine sinks due to a Spanish torpedo.” This created a war sentiment in the country. He is also renowned to have conveyed to one of his reporters on the front, “You furnish the news about the war, and, I will provide you with the war to report on”. In the history of war reporting, Edward C. Murrow, during one of his many Radio Broadcasts, created a sentiment in the homeland to intervene militarily in the favor of the Allied fighting units.

War reporting through the World Wars, Korean War, Vietnam War and the American intrusions in Nicaragua, Iran, Iran, Panama and Grenada, had, it’s own peculiarities and different military-media equations changed the whole discourse of these wars. War coverage tilted general public opinion in the favor of one or the other involved parties. Katherine Graham, the proprietor of *Washington Post* commented, that, “We live in a dirty and dangerous world. There are some things the general public does not need to know about and should not. I believe democracy flourishes when the Government can take legitimate steps to keep it’s secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows”. (Graham 1998: 40)

The Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 came as a watershed in international politics in more ways than one. It was for the first time, that, the Cold war gladiators, United States and Russia, were joined to fight a common enemy in the form of an invading Iraq. The decades long cold war had ended and the erstwhile satellite states of Eastern Europe had shed their taboo for the liberal and western ideals of open trade and liberal
practices. The media coverage too portrayed the same sentiment. The oil debate was another significant part of the media coverage, apart, from the vile portrayal of Saddam’s character. (Koopman 2003: 50) What followed was the glorification about the success and impenetrability of precision guided weaponry of the Army. Newspapers like the New York Times and Washington Post, did not openly question the rationale to “liberate” Kuwait, an American ally, but, it was hinted in a few editorials and op-eds, that the urge to establish a dominance over the oil rich fields of Middle East has always been a western dream. The dynamics of “Operation Desert Storm”,6 cannot rule out the oil factor in the media perception.

When the Gulf War-I began, the most powerful images of hitherto US involvement in a large scale foreign war were those of tortured power in the movie The Deer Hunter (1979), the futility of death and destruction in Vietnam as portrayed in Oliver Stone’s, Platoon (1986) and the larger than life Rambo amidst an inept, bureaucratically foreign U.S. military in the First Blood, (1982). These cinematically constructed images of the war did not inspire to prepare for another, “rally-around-the-flag phenomenon” for the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. The immediate task of the media was to erase the bad memories of the past and extricate the American “psyche” out of a time hardened “Vietnam Syndrome”. Their agenda was to sell the war as the vindication of the country’s spirit of adventurism and international democratization. It aimed to create a pro-war fervor in the countries which would set the most determined anti-war activist of the times of Vietnam war on a path of self doubt. (Jeffords and Rabinowitz 1998: 8) The institutional war efforts portrayed by the media “as broader ideological moves” redefined US identity and strength in a post cold war world. The country’s affluence and dominance faced erosion in the face of the rise of the rogue states, terrorism, European and Japanese economic ascendency.”

The Persian Gulf War was different from all previous media coverage, as, it argued more for the “triumphant technology” rather than for the war itself. The images in the coverage comprised of Patriot missiles being launched and jet fighters taking off. Other images comprised of radio feedback of smart bombs and traces of bomb fire atop the Baghdad skyline in the “live” reportages of Bernard Shaw of CNN. (Lynn 1933: 389) This coverage turned the war into a “living room war” where the

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technology turned the war into the excitability of a super bowl showdown in the country. The Media, particularly the news scavenging reporters were ridiculed for all they did. When it came to paddying the conflict, “Saturday Night Live,” in its very first episode after the hostilities broke, chose not the Iraqis but the American reporters who daily televised press conferences and were largely ignorant of military operations and objectives. (Neuman 1993: 212)

Michael Crichton, the author of “Jurassic Park”, proclaimed the new state of reporting as the “Media Saurus”, a fossil animal due for extinction. Critiques like Howard Kurtz of The Washington Post, lamented the “media circus”. Politicians cursed the media grown cynicism, as sort of “Gotcha Journalism” designed less to extract information from government officials, than, to skewer them for their words, deeds and intentions. Another facet of the media was to be truthful in reportage, but, withhold other side’s point of view from being entertained. The fourth and the most productive aspect is to be truthful in reportage, with the attendant losses and gains which the media found difficult to adhere to in the face of the institutional pressures. (Gillin 2001: 19)

In one of the much discussed incidents of Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, media covered the war with a lot of gusto and enquiry and set the tone of the coverage, as, it exposed Saddam Hussein for what he was and the acts he had perpetrated on the Iraqi people and the Kurds. The Kuwaiti Ambassador’s daughter was the original source which exposed the Iraqis. It was the incident, in which the invading Iraqi forces entered a Government Hospital and removed the young babies from their incubators in Kuwait that caught the eye of the media. The informer was deliberately presented as a nurse and had not been in Kuwait for years. An observer has commented,” As always a dead baby story in war always finds in mass circulation.”

Alternative media attempted to expose the Kuwaiti ambassador’s daughter’s charge and tried to expose it as a mainstream media generated hoax. Reports from the front also influenced public attitude towards war readiness. Early on, such human-interest stories had swayed audiences and much the same effect was affected by the coverage in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, too. There were two major themes which were visible in the war coverage. First, that it was a valiantly waged war.

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against the World's fourth largest army with highly trained elite and murderous Republican guards. Second, the war provided a golden opportunity to the Military Industrial Complex (MIC) of United States, to test its high tech digital and electronic war equipments. (Frank 1999: 272)

The so-called smart bombs, and, precision bombs were hitting chosen targets. Strict censorship was imposed upon the reporters who covered the war and the war correspondents were discarded to the “designated pools” by the Pentagon authorities to systematize the operation of the press on the war front in Kuwait and Iraq. The American public generally supported strict and stringent censorship measures during the Persian Gulf War-I. One survey found that a majority, of nearly 2 to 1, that military censorship is more important than the media’s freedom and ability to report important news. A number of news organizations including The Nation magazine, Village Voice and Harper’s, sued the Defense Department in a US District Court in New York for imposing unconstitutional restriction during the Gulf Conflict. The suit was dismissed. The Pentagon press guidelines were later revised. After eight months of negotiations, the principle of “independent” reporting, was endorsed and pools were limited. Pentagon still asserted that stories must pass a “security review”, which, is still censorship with a censored name. (Rosenteil 1991: 19) Media, metaphorically speaking enabled citizens to identify their participation as being only in the technological world and not being responsible for the production of a “death world.” Media restrained audiences from seeing unpleasant images that they would not like to include in their cultural and day to day experience.

The Coverage of New York Times and Washington Post

Within the first few days of the outbreak of the Persian Gulf War-I, it was evident to most viewers that this war was going to be different from previous wars. Well trained air crews and high technology systems, were already achieving impressive results. Most media observers involved with the media coverage of the Persian Gulf War-I, realized that that the newspapers and other media were “very slow” in comprehending and understanding, what, was going on in the initial days of the Operation Desert Storm. From fifteen years, to the outbreak of the Persian Gulf

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War-I, many members of the media had written articles or delivered radio or television commentaries that were quite critical of the Department of Defense. Even various *New York Times* articles of the time criticized the censorship and restrictions imposed upon the media by the Pentagon bureaucracy. Several *New York Times* editorials attacked the slowness of the decision making process, inter service and intra service rivalries, weakness in the procedures of the system and the “gold plating” of the development programs. (Browne 2001: 56)

During the progression of the war, dramatic strike cameras pictures were exhibited early in the war that vividly demonstrated how a single precision guided weapon destroyed the Iraqi Army headquarters in Baghdad. Perhaps even more dramatically, some satellite network channels displayed, how, a two thousand pound bomb was dropped through an air shaft in the top of the building. (Newwell 2007: 210) Curiously however, some newspapers, in the mainstream newspapers such as, *New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, failed to acknowledge this performance of the sophisticated American weaponry. One of the commonly followed lines by these newspapers was that sophistication in weaponry led to complexity, complexity to unreliability and unreliability finally led to breakdowns. These articles argued that the high-technology systems might be working in the short term, but, they would not work in the longer run. (Aspin and Dickinson 1992: 93)

One of the best examples of the analysis of a news report was a report by R.W. Apple Jr, in the January 23, 1991, issue of the *New York Times*. One week after the war commenced, the author asserted that greater complexity meant more problems. General Perry M. Smith of the American Army, in the Middle East, criticized the same news report in *New York Times* and asserted that some members of the press were missing out on a prominent part of the Persian Gulf War Story. According to the Army General, *New York Times*, seemed to be blinded by many critical articles of the past. Similar to Apple Jr, most of the prominent newspapers failed to note that the new weaponry had been highly successful during the initial phase of the Persian Gulf War and the weaponry was performing rather well in the face of rough weather conditions in Iraq and Kuwait. (Dunningam and Bay 1992: 512)

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General M. Smith, was taken aback at the want of appreciation being displayed in the reports and editorials of *New York Times*. The General personally registered his complaint with Max Frankel, the then executive editor of *New York Times*. According to media observers *New York Times*, was missing out on two main frames of the Gulf War. One was the reliability of the high-technology and the other, was the accuracy of war reporting in Saudi Arabia. On the second issue, *New York Times*, published several articles that seemed to imply, General Schwarkopf, as cooking the “numbers” and overstating the results of the air campaign. (Hallion 1992: 112) A number of reporters and editorialists assumed that Schwarkopf and his staff were following the pattern of false reporting that could be traced back to the Vietnam war.

There was an immense deal of gate keeping, which prevented General Perry M. Smith, from contributing an article in the editorial section of *New York Times*. In the article which he wrote for the newspaper, the editorial board had objections with the comments which he had made about General Scwarczkpof and how he ran the war, in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. The point made by the editorial staff, was, that General Scharwczkpof, was providing the media with coverage, which was, out of a regular concern for maintaining the integrity of the Government, in the wake of allegations of going for an “overkill”. *The New York Times* defended the Pentagon releases, as, is evident by a comment by one member of the Times editorial board, “Isn’t the point that after Vietnam, they aren’t going to get to get caught cooking the Books? I don’t want to gainsay the General’s integrity, but that’s not the point. The main thing is that they know after Vietnam, that, they have to maintain their credibility. The story will eventually get out. It’s a pragmatic and not a moral issue with the General.” (Smith 1998: 26)

Reviewing the precise content analysis of editorials and op-eds one comes across the individual import of these editorials and op-eds. Some *New York Times* reports in the year 2007 have reported a Sarine Plume inflammation in the brains of the Persian Gulf War veterans. This was propagated by the New York Times, as, a major irritant leading up to the Gulf War syndrome. The Gulf War Syndrome is a disease which cripples the war veterans due to inhalation of toxicogins and stress.
created due to the Operation Desert Storm.\textsuperscript{10} Joseph C. Wilson, wrote an editorial in which he exposed some lies of the Government. His truthfulness cannot be counted out as he is one of the Government. He has commented, "For 23 years, from 1976 to 1998, I was a career foreign service officer and ambassador. In 1990, as chargé d'affaires in Baghdad, I was the last American diplomat to meet with Saddam Hussein. (I was also a forceful advocate for his removal from Kuwait.)"(Wilson 2003: 12)

A war can be lost because public opinion turns against its continued prosecution. The \textit{New York Times} – the self-described "newspaper of record"– is among the world's most influential opinion makers. In the year, 1991, by arguing that cease-fire violations nullified UN protection, \textit{The Times} affirmed the right of a victorious party to resume hostilities at it's sole discretion, if the party it defeated. Ten years later, \textit{The Times} reversed its stance, asserting that the nation should not go to war without the approval of the United Nations. \textit{The Times} implicitly argued that going to war with the approval of a multilateral institution took precedence over the use of military force to expeditiously eliminate the threat posed by Iraq's WMD's.\textsuperscript{11}

At no time in 1990, did \textit{The Times} express any doubts regarding the credibility of intelligence information pertaining to WMD's. Throughout this period, the paper's editors insisted on an aggressive UN-directed inspection regime, which, was their preferred means to disarm Saddam's Iraq. They frequently made note of Saddam's efforts to thwart the inspectors, and insisted that Iraq must fully cooperate before the sanctions implemented at the end of the Gulf War should be lifted. \textit{The Times'} objective was the elimination of Iraq's WMD, and, not regime change. Bringing democracy to Iraq, was not a topic in it's editorials. Still, in one of it's editorials, which appeared, in February, 1991, \textit{New York Times}, informed the people about the Arab resentment and protestations and about the bombing and air raids in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq. (Haberman 1991: 12) One excerpt reads, "Flags were at half-staff and tempers in full cry in many Arab nations today, as people took to the streets to grieve for Iraq's civilian dead and to damn the United States for what they called a


deliberate massacre of women and children. Protests swept across several countries, including ...” The New York Times, in January 16, 1991, took the risk of depicting Arab resentment of American involvement speaks volumes about the bipartisan nature of the coverage.

Once Operation Desert Shield had begun, it became apparent through the media that the events in the Middle East, had repercussions in the whole region. In an editorial in January 1991, New York Times, reported that tensions escalated between Sudan and Egypt. Egypt was part of the coalition supporting Kuwait and Sudan was pro-Saddam. The news report commented, “Egypt said today that, it’s air force had conducted military exercises near its southern border with the Sudan in a move aimed at warning its neighbour, which, is allied with Iraq, against any attempts to station Iraqi planes or missiles there. The announcement, published on the front page of the Government-owned newspaper “Al Ahram” this morning, came after repeated warnings from President Hosni Mubarak, that, he would attack the Sudan immediately if Egypt found any proof of an Iraqi transfer of weapon.”(Ibrahim 1991: 12) A few of the New York Times editorials were critical of the Gulf War “media pools” which restricted the movement of the journalists to the actual battlefield.

Historically, The Times, had led an anti-monarchist revolution that occurred in Iraq in 1958, on the front page of the 1958 as, “West to Keep out of Iraq, unless oil is threatened.” (Earl 1958: 14) The message from the State Department, under John Foster Dulles was clear, “under your country is our oil. The oilmen are allergic to nationalist movements that might ruin their concessions.” It pointed out that President George Bush was an oilman while Saddam Hussein was a nationalist. This was how The Times published the news of the country’s foreign policy in the Middle East, during the cold war. Even after the war had ended, it still remained prominent, as, new frontiers like Haiti and Somalia had been discovered by the media. In one of its editorials in New York Times in 1996, Erich Schmitt, came up with this observation, “Five years after the end of the Persian Gulf war, the television correspondents whose familiar faces brought the 43-day conflict into living rooms across the country hold varied memories from and find myriad lessons in a war that propelled them in different directions afterward.” (Schmitt 1992: 14)

Among the newspapers, The Washington Post, exposed the lies and the doublespeak of the Government in the year, 1991. In one of the reports by Associated
Press, news writers wrote as follows: "It made stars of Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell. It gave luster to CNN, which proved perfectly suited for the hour-after-hour, "you-are-there" narrative. A decade ago, television coverage of Operation Desert Storm rallied a newsgathering effort whose responsiveness was unknown during the Vietnam War. This was a new kind of war coverage that, due to the satellite technology, and it delivered images of fighting as it happened live. “Instead of in the living rooms,” recalls CNN veteran Bernard Shaw, “it was in people’s faces.” (Moore 2001: 12)

The Washington Post, known to be a part of the liberal media had earlier been troubled by several White House officials for the printing of the Pentagon Papers. Now surprisingly enough observers call The Washington Post as “a neo-conservative” paper. The newspaper excelled in a bipartisan and critical coverage of the war. The Washington Post, provided critical and realistic coverage of the war effort, as is evident from its battle of the Khafji report. Here a few stranded Marines were rescued by a reluctant Saudi and Qatari infantry and an armored contingent. The write up reads, “The government of President Saddam Hussein had hailed the brief capture of Khafji by Iraqi troops as the beginning of the storm that will blow on the Arabian Desert. Marine commanders explained that the Saudi forces had the responsibility for the defense of the border area around Khafji, a town of 45,000 people, on the Persian Gulf, about six miles south of the Kuwait frontier. The town has been largely abandoned since the war began January 17 and it’s buildings were defended by a token garrison of Saudi marines. These forces retreated beyond the city limits, when, the Iraqi tanks entered the town. (Murphy and Gugliotta 1991)

If reporting the country’s military technology is one way of supporting conservatism, then, the first editorial of The Washington Post on Operation Desert Storm agreed to the charge by the Liberals. One of the segments of The Washington Post reportage conveyed the initial tilt of the newspaper, “The jets took off in pairs and disappeared in red dots as they gained altitude. “It is absolutely awesome,” said Davies, the base chief maintenance officer. “I mean, the ground shook. You felt it.” In a late January report filed from the oil fields of Iraq, The Post, noted that Iraq was intentionally increasing the oil pollution in the Gulf. The blame of all environmental degradation went to the Iraqis. One excerpt from the concerned new report went on to observe, “Iraq fed the lengthening slick by pumping more crude oil into the gulf from
the sea island supertanker terminal, which was, about 10 miles off the Kuwaiti coast, the American officials said. The United States and allied nations searched for a way to stop the flow and contain the oil, that, reportedly was seen as far as 70 miles south of the source. Part of the oil near the terminal was burning, sending a huge cloud of smoke over the eastern gulf toward Iran, but, the officials reported that the fire had grown smaller during the day.” (Balz 1991)

Apart from the war coverage involving weaponry, the activities of Falcons, Eagles and Strike Eagles of the F-16 category, were too recorded diligently. *The Washington Post*, efficiently covered the diplomatic efforts, which, were being carried on during the war. The diplomacy being carried on during the Operation Desert Storm, was reported with great élan and in a detailed manner. One such editorial read, “The United States and the Soviet Union, in a joint statement on the Persian Gulf War last night, told Iraq that hostilities could end "if Iraq would make an unequivocal commitment to pull out of Kuwait and take immediate, concrete steps leading to compliance with the United Nations resolutions.” (Atkinson and Hoffman 1991) *The Washington Post*, in the month of February, 1991, increased the objectivity and the quality of it’s reportage.

In the end of February, 1991, the US administration increased its diatribe on the image of Saddam Hussein who was compared with Adolph Hitler. The military defeat of the dictator, was to be converted into a complete “Regime” change, so, that Saddam could not attain the status of a demi-God. One excerpt from *The Post* editorial read, “According to administration officials, Bush’s strategy is based on a calculation by leaders of the coalition fighting Iraq, that, Saddam may remain in power for some time after hostilities end and, that they must deny him any opportunity to turn his military defeat into a political victory. Since the early days of the gulf crisis, Bush has often personalized his criticism of Saddam, comparing him to Hitler. Officials observed that President Bush was following an “endgame strategy” which was designed to make Saddam, commit political suicide by admitting his errors, and finally discrediting himself”. (Hoffman 1991)

Most of the coverage concentrated on the sphere of strategic planning, by, the Defense Department and Pentagon. Even the human interest stories concentrated on military equipment, the accuracy of new weapons and the lighter side of the soldiers and their newly tested weapons in Iraq and Kuwait. One editorial depicted the
discussion which engrossed some of the weapons experts in the establishment. A segment of one such light editorial contends, “From Army laboratories and depots around the United States, came a number of suggestions, such as stripping hundreds of thousands of feet of special reflective tape across military vehicles or giving soldiers chemical lights to use as infrared beacons. That wasn't enough for the army. It wanted paint a special kind of paint for tanks, trucks and other vehicles, that, would emit distinctive infrared rays detectable by sensors inside the cockpit of allied fighters.” (Weiser 1991) The utility of infra-red cover for the armoured vehicles, figured a lot into newspaper discussions and discussion boards. During the end of the war, headlines like, “US aims to destroy the core of Iraq’s military”, “Allies Meet Little Resistance, Captured Thousands of POW’s”, “From early on Bush Committed to Ground Assault,” largely marked the coverage of Washington Post.

In New York Times and The Washington Post, a headline each day and a few articles dealt with the war, but, the front pages of both the newspapers, did not reflect that a major war of great international consequence was underway. Apart from praising American technological superiority, The New York Times, highlighted the diplomatic measures undertaken by the government, to protect any attack on it’s foreign nationals on the lines of the November 4th, 1979 “Hostage Crisis” in Iran. One editorial in the newspaper read as follows “Across East Africa, the United States has moved to ward off terrorist attacks as a result of the Persian Gulf War. After incidents of violence and threats by Muslims sympathetic to Iraq, Washington closed it’s embassy in the Sudan, evacuated officials in Tanzania and increased precautions in Uganda and Kenya.” (Perlez 1991) In fact, it was quite common for three of the front page articles out of ten articles in The Times, to be about the Persian Gulf War-I.

A significant aspect of The Times reporting, was a “heavy reliance on group think”, that is, the pattern to quote other New York Times correspondents rather than other outside experts. The two newspapers in New York and Washington, could never grasp the Gulf War as a very important story. (Hedges 1991: 45) It took them a while to adapt and cover the war story well. Still, a content analysis of New York Times editorials and articles of those times during the Persian Gulf War-I reveals that it relied heavily on Foud Ajami for political commentary and expertise who is a Lebanese born academic, whose hawkish views made him the media’s favorite Arab-American pundit. US strategy and policy in the region operated on three assumptions:
1. The need for access to reasonably priced oil,

2. The need to ensure that no hostile force controls the region and it's oil supplies and intimidates other states to coerce supplier states into taking actions inimical to consuming nations,

3. A commitment to use force if necessary to protect and further these interests. (Russel 1991: 50)

He served to “explain” Arab culture for the United States with such comments as: “We get lost in the twisted alleyways of the Middle Eastern Bazzar”. He dismissed Arab opposition to the war, referring to “the Palestinian mobs” and “some gullible souls.……….demonstrating in Algeria.” The New York Times, also, continued with it’s pro-war strain and declared Foud Ajami, to be the best commentator available on the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. Noted columnist, William Saffire, in one of his editorials in New York Times, called Ajami to be the best commentator of the war, “for the amazing way he reads the Arabic mind”. (Ajami 1991) Foud Ajami commented that “We went over there to do what had to be done we went over there to thwart a despot.”

The media’s thumb rule was to support the war, while to be anti-war was to carry a bias against the cause of national security. The mainstream newspapers12 carried forward the clash of civilizations theme when they said that Westerners are the progeny of the new testament, where, you turn the other check and let bygones be bygones and forget misdeeds of others while the people of Middle East are the people of the old testament, where, the norm is that of asking for an eye for an eye and carry on the universalistic vendetta themes in their personal lives. The Post’s, policy as enumerated by it’s editorial page editor, Meg Greenfield, in her Newsweek column was that, “If the capacity of the American political system to function effectively is not itself soon to become a victim of the crisis………. a few premises ( will have) have to be accepted.”

The first of these premises is that just about everybody engaged in the argument hoped to prevent the war.” (Greenfield 1991) In the coverage of New York Times, a prophetic rallying cry was provided by the newspaper pieces. In reports and

articles, anti-terrorism experts\textsuperscript{13} from the Bush Administration issued warnings of foreign attacks in the form of small and destructive misadventures in the homeland. Billie Vincent, one such member of President Bush's anti-terrorism task force, prophetically called for an increased security cover at the national airports. He wrote an op-ed piece, "Improve Airline bomb detection". (Vincent 1991) The truth is that there is little history of foreigners committing organized political violence in the country. There is a long tradition of governments using the specter of such violence for political ends, as in the "Libyan hit squads" which stalked President Reagan in 1981. In one of the \textit{New York Times} editorials, there was a refrain during the buildup of forces as a prelude to Operation Desert Storm. There was a smug comment in one of its editorials about the Soviet peace effort to prevent war in the Middle East. The comment in the editorial contended, "The same question can be asked about peace that is reasonable to ask about ground war: What's the rush?" Saddam Hussein was constantly presented as a "madman hell bent upon war who was impossible to negotiate with." (Vincent 1991)

The media including the \textit{Washington Post}, pressed upon the necessity of war and to "humiliate" Saddam Hussien in order to rein in the dictator. In one of his pieces appearing in \textit{New York Times}, columnist, Leslie Gelb, presented an original explanation of why such a "humiliation" of Saddam was necessary. The piece stated "If he were to survive as a war hero, he would be like a giant starship emitting undeflectable death rays". (Gelb 1991) Both \textit{New York Times} and \textit{Washington Post}, in a random and general content analysis went on to espouse clearly defined pro-war sentiment and egged on the Bush administration towards a war to liberate a suffering ally. In these newspapers, there was a weapons fetishism, which took over the media. Journalists began to revere American weaponry.

\textit{The Los Angeles Times}, provided the most balanced newspaper coverage during the early stages of the war and the excellent coverage and analysis were sustained throughout. Unlike the coverage of \textit{New York Times}, \textit{Los Angeles Times} understood very early, that a major war was being fought and it promptly devoted a lot of energy and resources to cover the conflict in the Middle East. From the very beginning, the newspaper published several articles. Everyday, the front page featured

substantive, and well researched articles that covered the war comprehensively. The best way to get into the insides of the Gulf war would be to look for its coverage of the Persian Gulf War-I then the coverage of New York Times and Washington Post. Los Angeles Times attempted to criticize the imminent usage of nuclear weapons by the government in a very logical manner, in one of its editorials by political commentator, Robert C. Roth. (Roth 1991) Los Angeles Times, also provided a faithful critique of the media becoming an arbiter of international politics, during crisis time. Los Angeles Times questioned the rationale of the existence of US troops in Kuwait, if Saddam Hussein decided to free Kuwait. The report appeared in August, 1990. (Cohen 1991: 145)

In 1992, in a series of articles in the Los Angeles Times political commentator Murray Waas, documented how, President Bush himself actively promoted US trade with Iraq and helped block attempts to criticize Iraq or impose sanctions on it. Classified documents were obtained to show that President Bush, first, as Vice President and then as the President, intervened repeatedly, to, obtain special assistance for Saddam Hussein, as well as access to hi-tech equipment that was critical to Iraq’s quest for nuclear and chemical arms. In another startling observation by the Los Angeles Times author, on July 31, 1990, with 100,000 Iraqi troops massed at the Kuwait border, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly went to the Capitol Hill and testified against ending loan guarantees to Iraq. (Wass 1991)

It may be pointed out that the Los Angeles Times, has shown itself to be honest to the objective of neutral and value free reporting. In one of it’s news reports in the year 1993, it exposed the internal support from President Bush administration that helped Iraq to build it’s war machine. A segment from the news report in Los Angeles Times portrayed the clandestine US support for the Iraqi Regime during the Iran-Iraq war. “In the fall of 1989, at a time when Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was only nine months away, President Bush signed a top-secret National Security Decision directive ordering for closer ties with Baghdad and opened the way for a $1 billion in new aid, according to classified documents and interviews.” (Franz 1993)

USA Today also did comprehensive reporting (Jacqueline 1991:58) throughout the war, with lots of expanded coverage and graphic depictions of various weapons systems, tactics and strategies. A daily column was inaugurated early in the war that provided concise commentary on a certain daily issue by knowledgeable military and
regional experts. This column was quite helpful to a reader interested in following the war. The reporter, Dennis Cauchon, called military experts to get ideas on both the hottest issues and whom he might contact to obtain some insights and “meaningful quotes”.

Thus, USA Today offered a new model as far as newspaper coverage of issues such as war was concerned. These issues might be very complex and cannot be fully explained away by utilizing merely the written words and photographs. US News and World Report too, did a commendable job on its issue of February 11th, 1990. Michael Dugan, the former Chief of Staff of Air Force, authored the story of how the first few days of the air campaign were conducted. It was well written and described each point with precision. Equally impressive was the article written about General Sczwarkopf and his military strategy. There had been numerous articles written on Schwarzkopf, by many journalists before the war began but his depth, intellect, humor and commitment to integrity was rarely discussed. Finally, the editorial written by David Gergen, was a thoughtful piece that touched the heart as well as the intellect of the readers. (Griffin and Lee 1995)

Time magazine, did a good job of covering the war but Newsweek was a major disappointment. On March 18th, 1990, issue, Newsweek highlighted the “secret history of the war”. This article was full of errors as was noted by General William Perry. For instance, Newsweek, was of the opinion that the chief of the staff of the army in United States is the final commander of the American troops. Israel negotiated with the United States while in actuality the Israeli bombers were airborne and ready to strike Iraq. Aviation week, and Marine Corps Gazette deserved special mention for their excellent coverage while editors of Air force magazine were unable to move fast enough to get topical stories on the war published until long after Kuwait was liberated. As the war progressed the print media’s coverage improved. It was surprising though that prestigious newspapers and magazines, did not do too well in covering the military and other aspects of war from day one, of the initiation of hostilities. It was not in the print media however where the biggest controversy emerged in the coverage of the war but in the visual media there were hundreds of journalists reporting on the war and the reporter who received the most attention was Peter Arnett. (Sidney 1991)
Visual Portrayal of Gulf War-I

Despite numerous commentaries on Persian Gulf War-I there has been little systematic analysis of the visual depiction of the war. A study reported the findings of the visual content analysis of 1,104 war related pictures, which, appeared in *Time, Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*, during the “Desert Storm”. The analysis indicated that a limited range of images, with a special emphasis on cataloguing military weaponry and technology, dominated the pictorial coverage. Moreover, the scarcity of pictures depicting ongoing events in Gulf contradicted the impression of first hand media coverage. Nearly all reviews of the Gulf war coverage recognized that media were driven by a desire for images. There has been a great deal of commentary concerning the unprecedented role played by CNN, in establishing an aura of “live coverage”. (Ridney 1991) Television, created the impression that the conflict would unfold before the audiences on the screen, and prompted expectations for continuous visual coverage that to a large extent were not realized. Several scholarly articles, reports and books, since the Gulf war, have, examined the implications of impromptu Gulf war reporting for issues of information control and journalistic and editorial practice. The best analysis at least implicitly examined the visual components of media reporting and a few provide perceptive discussions of media visualizations of the war. (Kellner 1992)

According to a study by Michael Griffin, the three magazines: *Time, Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*, offered a week by week compendium of war news and featured prominently scaled, colored photographs from the war zone, through their reports. As news magazines hit the stands once a week, they served as a kind of news digest- compressing, recapitulating and ever critiquing the television and newspaper reports of the previous week. In the case of Persian Gulf War-I, the photographs and graphic representations in these magazines served an interlinked function, of offering a set of visual highlights, that, reiterated the news images of each week’s events.

A picture of soldiers in battle gear struggling over a sand dune14 might be a photograph taken during the continuation of actual combat in Saudi Arabia or Iraq.

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might be a shot of soldiers engaged in training exercises in military bases in southern California. Often, photos accompanying reports of the ground war appeared to be pictures of US soldiers moving against Iraqi troops, but, information in the text or the small print in the caption, identified the picture, as a file photo from an earlier military exercise. A central question, which emerges is that whether the photo journalist coverage in the US Press, was, characterized more by candid, on-the-scene visual reporting of events or by pre-existing or symbolic representation of nations, political actors and military power. Were the photographs meant for the consideration of breaking news, by specific events unfolding in the Gulf, or do they represent the kind of generic conventional illustration that might have been taken at a number of locations. These questions relate directly to the current epistemological debates about the reliability of “photo journalistic records” and to a growing concern for understanding the role of visual communication in media literacy. (Messaris:1994)

The question in this type of study, raised the point that do photographs provide reliable first hand information about specific places and current events, or, do they more often serve as symbols of enduring concepts, the desert, Arab culture, the President, American military technology, etc. Gauging the frequency of combat pictures, also, provides a means of checking journalist’s complaints about military censorship and limited access to war zones, which, is a generally bandied about complain in the “Pools” of the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 and “Embeds” of the Persian Gulf War of 2003.(Moy and Reynolds: 1994: 19)

The Governmental Control over the Gulf War Coverage

The issue of how editorials and news reports created an “image war” in the context of the Persian Gulf War-I, has, been discussed so far. The nature of war coverage has always been dependent on the freedom of movement and story creation, which, the war correspondents and unilaterals in rare cases are endowed with by the Governmental agencies in the case of the US administration.

It has been a case with the US administration that they have never been able to emerge out of the “Vietnam syndrome” which refers to a sentiment that a negative surge in public opinion prompted by the mainstream media’s reportage, was, primarily responsible for the eventual defeat of the US forces in the South East Asian theater. The reporters of the mainstream media began comically referring to the
doctored and delimiting Governmental press releases as “Five O’ Clock Follies”, as the Pentagon officials released the day’s news about operations undertaken and casualties borne, by the American forces. During those times, it was easier to manage the media as the wars were “reel time wars” and did not have the speed and immediacy of the “real time wars”, which featured enthralling and captivating real time coverage of Panama, Grenada and the Persian Gulf War-I.

Republican, Dick Cheney from Wyoming, had sponsored a resolution for a decade and had declared August 4th, 1985, as the “freedom of the press day.” The same Dick Cheney, presided over a Defense Department that seemed determined to keep reporters at bay, away from the real action in the battlefield, like, he had done in Panama. The earlier operations in Nicaragua, were also secret in nature, which, were shielded from the media. The National Security Archive, obtained the hand-written notebooks of Oliver North, the National Security Council aide; who, helped run the contra war and other Reagan administration covert operations, through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, filed in 1989.15

Democratic Vice Presidential nominee, Senator Joseph Lieberman, had taken a leading role in prominent legislative battles, that, left free speech advocates uncomfortable. Dick Cheney had to follow the lead of Senator Lieberman. Once he arrived at Pentagon, he was forced to the forefront and he was quickly involved in mapping media strategy for coverage of the country’s missions.16 According to a post-invasion review of media coverage of the Panama invasion,” the “pool” of reporters was called in too late and arrived, late to cover the decisive US assault on Panama, in December, 1989.(Stanley: 2007) The pool was further diverted to a confined area, rather, than being allowed to the field, and, when the reporters did get to the scene of action, they encountered heavy restrictions on interviews, photographs, logistical nightmares and malfunctioning transmission equipment.

More than two hours after the ground assault began, Dick Cheney, went before television cameras at the Pentagon, to announce that to protect the troops, regular


briefings in Washington and in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, would be suspended until further notice. An article in the *New York Times*, described the action as, “the latest, and most possibly troubling example of Defense Secretary Dick Cheney to control the flow of information from Washington”. The following morning, when, it became clear that the ground war was going at a good pace so the Government, removed, the media blackout from the Persian Gulf War of 1990. Howell Raines, the editor of *New York Times*, commented in Washington Post, “It was because they had good news to report, and it was in their interest to report it. The mechanism is to block out bad news and to keep good news in the forefront.”

According to Frank Aukofer, the bureau chief for *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, took the press itself to task for going along with the combat pools. He suggested that the major news media, were, more interested in protecting their own interests than furthering the freedom of press in the war zone. He wrote, “The Pentagon did a masterful job of controlling the press through the combat pools. It soon became obvious that the only way anyone could officially cover the war would be through one of the pools—a violation of the often-stated principle that the pools were to be temporary arrangements”. (Randall 1991) As the military buildup continued, the Pentagon regularized its coverage rules, that, only restricted coverage to combat pools with military escorts at all times, but, it also required prior security review of the pool reports before their release. Despite media protest, these rules were in place in early January 1991, when the Gulf war officially began. (Zelizer 1992: 66) Those were the rules that remained in place through early March, when the conflict ended. Though Fred S. Hoffman, reported all kinds of malignancies in the management of media during the Persian Gulf War-I, still, he discounted irregularities that he might commit in other responsibilities. In his report, he commented, “From what I have heard, and my impression from working with Cheney, apart from the crisis situation, he was pretty savvy in the day to day functioning of Pentagon. I wouldn’t expect that as a Vice President.......he would go down the same track that he did during Operation Desert Storm and Panama. I don’t get that feeling.”

The Oil Debate in the Media

Oil has remains a factor in the relationship between the Western World and the Middle East nations. Middle East, is not rich in other raw materials, but, oil is one
raw material which keeps the foreign exchange flowing in these oil rich nations who rely single-handedly on the rich supply of oil and natural gas from their numerous oil and natural gas fields spread over in the umpteen Desert wastes and the sea shores. According to estimates, Iraq is the second largest producer of crude oil in the world, including the Middle East. Oil has been it’s major source of foreign exchange earnings which have funded it’s development, war costs and progress as a nation in the past. Oil is also referred to as the “Black Gold” in the parlance of geo political analysts and economists, as, black is the color in which it emerges out from the wells and fields and then it is purified and exported across the World. (Koopman 1991) Iraq and Kuwait the country it invaded are no exception to the oil rich Middle East kingdoms such as Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Iraq ranks only second to Saudi Arabia for it’s oil resources, and was the world’s second largest oil exporter, before the Iraq-Iran war broke out in the year 1980. The US has always been a key importer of Iraqi oil. Even under the UN sanctions, US companies imported 750,000 barrels per day (bpd) from Iraq, until, the end of 2002. Based on current estimates, Iraqi oil estimates are around 115 billion barrels, equivalent to the total oil reserves of U.S, Canada, Mexico, China, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the whole of Asia. It was hoped as part of the strategizing during the Persian Gulf War-I, that, Iraq would produce a great quantity of oil once Saddam Hussein was ousted from power. The expectations of the policy makers were, that, apart from producing 300,000-400,000 barrels a day for domestic consumption, the Iraqi authorities were producing around 600,000-700,000 barrels a day for consumption by the domestic population. Iraqi oil revenues after the Persian Gulf War, were, to be channeled into a trust fund which was to be managed by the victorious United States and United Kingdom. (Walt and Mearsheimer 2003: 3)

Sending troops to the Persian Gulf was not cheap for United States. Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, estimated that the cost of sending extra troops to the Gulf and keeping them there, would total $17.7 billion by the end of September, 1991. (Rasky 1990: A9) That is in addition to the regular spending to protect the Gulf, Southwest Asia, and Northwest Africa, which are estimated at, $46 billion in fiscal year 1990. (Ravel 1990: 225) US military costs would have been much higher in money and lives if the shooting started. Some experts believed those costs would have reached $1 billion a day. It was argued that the added military spending does not
guarantee success. It guarantees a continued US presence in the Persian Gulf. (Atkinson 1990: A12) It was well covered in the mainstream newspapers in United States, especially, in The Washington Post and New York Times. Media commentators and media, agreed to a certain extent that the US army, and administration would be incurring a great cost to themselves, both financially and politically by intervening in Iraq. The impact of the American intervention, in the Persian Gulf in 1990-91, included the influence and repercussions on the people, as a result of the invasion of Iraq. (Arley 1990) The calculations as to what will be the resultant cost to the Americans per barrel of gasoline, and how the US financial administration would cope with it, in the face of eminent shortages of oil imports from the Gulf and the Middle East, also appeared quite frequently in the mainstream media.

On July 25, 1990, the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, invited the United States Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie (Glaspie 1991) for a last high level talk between Iraq and United States, before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2nd August,1990. The meeting was a kind of interview by the US ambassador, Glaspie, in order to illicit out a dilatory stand from Saddam Hussein and to convey the wish of the American President and the administration, that, they wanted to avoid a conflict at all costs. The New York Times, reported this secret meeting only in September 1991, when the transcript of the meeting was released to the newspaper in September by ABC. The State Department, has never commented on the meaning and conclusions that could have been drawn from this rendezvous between the Iraqi head of State and the American ambassador to Iraq.

President Saddam replied cordially to all the questions asked to him. Saddam Hussein complained against the Kuwaiti stand and the talked in detail about the oil price hike which was planned by OPEC. (Glaspie: 1991) He contended that he was against any such price hike. “The United States wants to secure the flow of oil. This is understandable and known. It must not deploy methods which the United States says it disapproves of, that is, flexing muscles and pressure.” These were the comments of President Saddam Hussein when he admitted understanding the American oil policy. US mainstream media, was able to report the admissions of Saddam Hussein and his “secret” diplomatic parleys with the U.S. ambassador in Iraq. The ambassador

purportedly wrote off the $40 billion debt which Iraq owed to the Arab nations, as a consequence of the Iran-Iraq war. As he commented, in New York Times, "Iraq came out of the war burdened with $40 billion debts, excluding the aid given by Arab states. Some of these people consider that it to be a debt although, they knew that, without Iraq they would not have had these sums and the future of the region would have been entirely different. We began to face the policy of the drop in the price of oil." In one of the exchanges which took place between President Saddam Hussein and the American Ambassador, April Glaspie the following interesting observations emerged.

Ambassador: Mr. President, not only do I want to say that President Bush wanted better and deeper relations with Iraq, but, he also wants an Iraqi contribution to peace and prosperity in the Middle East. President Bush is an intelligent man. He is not going to declare an economic war against Iraq.

Saddam Hussein: You are right. It is true what you say that we do not want higher prices for oil. I would ask you to examine the possibility of not charging too high a price for oil. We do not want high prices for oil. I remind you that in, 1974, I gave Tariq Aziz, the idea for an article, he wrote which criticized the policy of keeping oil prices high. It was the first Arab article which expressed this view.

Thus The Times depicted that President Hussein, knew the importance of the oil factor as a factor behind United States military strategy and that powerful geopolitical interests were fueling the American war drive.

The Cable News Network Factor

In recent years, observers of international affairs have raised the concern that media have expanded their ability to affect the conduct of US diplomacy and foreign policy. Dubbed as the “CNN effect” (or “CNN curve” or “CNN factor”), the impact of these new global real-time media is typically regarded as substantial, if not profound. (Hess 2002) Two key factors have joined to bring this about. One is the end of the cold war. With its passing, the United States lacks an evident rationale in fashioning its foreign policy. (Schelensigner 1995) The other factor is technological. Advances in communication technology have created a capacity to broadcast live

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from anywhere on Earth. As a result, the vacuum left by the end of the cold war, has been filled by a foreign policy of media-specified crisis management.

While William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer’s *World* may have created the climate for war with Spain in 1898, the extent, depth, and speed of the new global media have created a new species of effects. (Graziano 1991: 421) It is this global, real-time quality to contemporary media that separates the “CNN effect” from earlier media effects on foreign policy. Exactly, what those effects are, when they are likely to be seen, and even whether they exist at all, is the subject of intense debate.

On the night the Gulf War air attack, a senior officer in the Pentagon Command Center, checked his watch and consulted those planning the air attack on the Iraqi central telecommunications tower: “If the Cruise missile is on target........the reporter will go of the air right about......(he counts down the seconds).......Now!” (Mcnulty 1993: 82) ABC and NBC reports from Baghdad, which were, routed through the Iraqi communications network, went dead. CNN reports, carried over a dedicated telephone circuit to Jordan, which was, installed before the air attacks. For more than two weeks, CNN provided the only American reporting from Iraq. CNN’s coverage of the Gulf War was unique and completely redefined live satellite television news. (Fredland 1992: 2) The Gulf War opened the possibility that new forms of war and diplomacy were being born. “Television imagery transmitted by satellite, is irrevocably altering the ways governments deal with each other, as, it makes traditional diplomacy all but obsolete in times of crisis. Instant access from the battlefield to the conference table, has enormous political implications, both good and bad.” (Mazzar and Ederington 1993: 11) The television coverage of the Gulf War, created a phenomenon, that has come to be termed as the “CNN War”.

Sociologists suggested that compelling video messages must be crafted into the framework of the television news media. The credible news frame defines the characteristics of believable news stories: reports must have sub-frames, that, are personalized, dramatized, fragmented and normalized. News media like the Cable News Network, focus on a personalized actor story sub-frames: beginnings, action style, plot lines and sub plots, settings and scenery, rising and falling action, major and minor actors with major and minor motives, climax and anti climax, and endings
that close with a chorus interpreting the moral lessons of the Drama. (Washburn 1992: 80) CNN’s news images have been episodic, isolated in time and space from each other, which are unable to represent all aspects and all period of events, falling inside a fragmented and development frame. Images and events speak for themselves in isolation, without context, absent trends or progressions, often without causes to explain effects, lacking a reflection of connectivities and interdependencies.

“True national interests” according to the realpolitik perspective, reflects unemotional, geopolitical realities. If the critics are right, US national interests, may be very difficult to defend in future “CNN wars”. They would reflect a cold, calculated and a negative image of American self interest. The Bush administration was right when it emphasized “the equality of our ideas, values, and leadership” rather than “our” undoubtedly dominant military capabilities. Future CNN wars similar to the Persian Gulf War-I, will require the policymakers to realize that the quality of the country’s ideas and values, is given proper weight in developing public and foreign policy. Those wars will require military leaders to reflect on the human ideas and values in national interests that result in US operations. If American policies fail to reflect a human face, if the cold calculations of political leaders envision no compelling stories of human values. Then in a world of CNN war, the force of public support and the favor of public opinion, for those policies will be questionable at best. The human face of policies, inspired by the media generated images, becomes part of the military arsenal. The force of the stories of ideas and values, becomes the core of US power.

The Peter Arnett story is by far the most significant as, it was a story that developed gradually. (Goodman 1991: 12) When CNN provided coverage of the war, there were three network reporters from Baghdad, whose brave reportage made them attain cult status in the pantheon of war correspondents. Bernard Shaw, John Holliman and Peter Arnett, as well as some support staff provided the war coverage, from the rooftops of the Baghdad Five star hotels and standing by the debris of craters created by the Pentagon’s Patriot missiles and the precision guided weapons. These correspondents were delivering uncensored reports from their hotel suites in Rashid Hotel in downtown Baghdad. Most of the reporters had moved to the civilian bomb

shelter in the basement of the Hotel. The CNN crew remained in a spot where they could closely observe the bombing and the counter anti-aircraft artillery, while, the attacks were taking place. They reported day and night with hardly any stoppage, thus, reporting as best they could, on what they saw and heard.

Peter Arnett was allowed to stay in Iraq with a special permission from President Saddam Hussein. (Tierney 1991) He was able to get this permission for a number of reasons. CNN was well entrenched in Baghdad. The network was considered by the Iraqi Government as the international television network for the whole world. The other news networks were not as well known and nor, were they so well established. Most of them certainly were not welcome in Iraq. Robert Weiner, a CNN producer, was able to persuade the Iraqi authorities that CNN should be allowed to stay. The first controversy occurred when, CNN beamed in a heavily censored report about coalition POW's, yet, CNN did not inform the reportage was censored. Tom Johnson quickly took steps to let viewers know that Arnett was being censored, but, the damage was already done. A second controversy erupted when Americans bombed a factory, which, the Iraqi authorities accused of being a milk factory preparing formulae for infants in Iraq. The charges which Peter Arnett's story directed at the US defense machine, were dangerous. Peter Arnett had pointed that it was surprising that after the bombing, a sign was found in the debris, which said “Milk factory” in English.

Peter Arnett, himself has gone on record and provided his part of the story to make the viewers realize the reality behind the circumstances in the reports filed by him for CNN. (Toner 1991: 14) He commented in March, 1991,

“The reason I stayed in Baghdad, is quite obvious. Reporting is what I do for a living. I made the full commitment to Journalism years ago, and, you might ask that are some stories worth the risk of dying for, then my answer would be a “Yes” and many of my journalist friends have died believing that.” There was no question of CNN staying in Baghdad. It became a question of who would do it, if I resigned myself to covering the Israeli side of the war, which, was an important side of the story but, with less potential drama than the battle fields themselves. Every body in Baghdad, including all journalists left but, CNN stayed in the Iraqi capital. The Iraqis told us that they had found our coverage to be “fair”. My means of communication was a IMMARSAT phone, a suitcase sized world that I had drag out each evening and aim it at the heavens, while dialing into the international desk at CNN headquarters in Atlanta. At my end, we crouched in the chill of the evening.” (Walcott 1992)
Peter Arnett enumerated more stand out points about the CNN coverage of the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. He commented in a chat show in CNN once,

"The Gulf War was the first to be live from both the sides- a unique moment in communications history. We not only had the American coalition side from press briefings and on-the-scene reports in the Gulf itself, but we also had it from the enemy side- the enemy capital in Baghdad." (Arnett 1994: 463)

When asked about his most frightening moment, while, covering the war for CNN, he commented,

"The most frightening moment was during the first hour of the bombing, when, the very high powered explosives destroyed office towers just a few blocks away from our Hotel. The impact of the explosion and the heat, swept through the open windows of our hotel room."

"It feels like the center of hell. It was nerve wracking to remain in the room, but, what motivated us to continue was the opportunity to talk to a worldwide audience about what all we could see and witness alive".

When asked by the anchor, as, to what were his first impressions of Saddam Hussein, Peter Arnett replied,

"I could ask him anything I wanted. He was dressed impeccably as a Chief of State in a dark blue suit and floral tie. (Macfadden 1991)At the end of the interview, he insisted on posing for pictures and had those pictures delivered to me in an official folder several hours later. Let’s face it, this was a city at war, so, he was very polite to do that. One other memory is that while Saddam Hussein was very genial and I thought, he gave interesting responses to my many questions. I challenged Saddam Hussein about his human rights record. I asked him, if the whole confrontation hadn’t been a mistake. At the end of the interview, when he had left, the cabinet officials attempted to take the video away from me. I argued with them and took the cassettes back to the Hotel, which, we then fed via satellite to CNN headquarters in Atlanta. I won the battle of the tapes”.

When asked about any present day thoughts about the role of Media and CNN in the Gulf war he commented that, “The final thoughts concern CNN’s and the media role in the Gulf war.” (Alter 1991)

The bombing of Baghdad and the ground war that followed were the first time, when the coverage was live. The spectacle of the Gulf War persuaded CNN and other television organizations to cover successive events in the same way. What was

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20 Peter Arnett went live with the CNN anchor from McLean, Virginia on Television programme recorded on Tuesday, January 16, 2001. The transcripts of the interview with Peter Arnett are sourced from: (Online :Web) Accessed on 1 December, 2007, URL: http://edition.cnn.com/chat/transcripts/2001/01/16/Arnett/
witnessed was, a cultural phenomenon of a "Mediathon" approach to news and information.

The media and military interface also forms an interesting aspect in the war, with the American observers taking note of the inter establishment troubles apart from the CNN feeds. (Adde 1991) Explosions and the acrid smell of war still haunt the CNN anchor Bernard Shaw. Mr. Bernard Shaw, CNN's main anchor in Washington, was one of the three CNN correspondents who broadcasted the first sight of allied bombing in the year, 1991. (Wines 1991) Bernard Shaw said that he had never listened to those tapes, partly, because of the painful memories that they would stir. "I am still rattled by certain exploding sounds and smells, specially that acrid smell of electrical equipment burning". For many ambitious young correspondents, the Gulf war represented a big break- and their first taste of constraints imposed by the pentagon press.21

Reporting the Gulf war from Saudi Arabia and Baghdad, whetted an appetite for conflict that has made Christian Amanpour, the most visible war correspondent of her generation. CNN set the standards for Gulf war reporting. One of the CNN's reporters, Wolf Blitzer, benefited immensely from the Gulf War of 1990-91. He said, "I do have an unusual name. I did not make it up for the Gulf war. People still come to me and remind me that I was so brave during the reporting of the Gulf War." Wolf Blitzer, used to reply that, "Look, I did not go to Iraq, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. I was merely standing in front of a map in Pentagon." (Schmitt 1996)

Media as an Accelerant

One of the potential effects of global media is the shortening of response time for decision making. Decisions are made in haste, sometimes, dangerously so. Policymakers "decry the absence of quiet time to deliberate choices and reach private agreements, to mold the public's understanding."(Hoge1994) "Instantaneous reporting of events," remarked, State Department Spokesperson, Nicholas Burns, "often demands instant analysis by governments . . . In our day, as events unfold half a world away, it is not unusual for CNN State Department correspondent Steve Hurst, to ask me for a reaction before we've had a chance to receive a more detailed report

from the embassy and consider other options.” (Burns 1996: 14) Former Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, highlighted this understanding of the CNN effect.

Accelerant media shortens decision-making and the required response time. During the time of war, live and global television offered potential security-intelligence risks. Media may also be a force multiplier with a method of sending signals. Evident in most foreign policy issues to receive media attention, are, certain impediments. There are two types of impediments are: emotional and grisly coverage, may undermine morale. Government attempts to sanitize war emphasis on video game war, limits access to the battlefield. Global and real-time media, constitute a threat to operational security. Emotional and compelling coverage of atrocities reorder foreign policy priorities like in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti.

Before the ground war, there were 25 to 30 pool reporters to cover six Army and two Marine divisions, near the Kuwaiti border. No reporter from The New York Times bureau in Saudi Arabia, was given official access to a “pool slot”, before February 10th. (Apple 1991: 14) Use of officially sanctioned pools, had a well-pronounced effect on the availability of pictures during combat. One prominent editor remarked, “The pictures coming out of pool arrangements are quite ordinary. There are no negative aspects to the war.” Tomorrow’s wars will most likely look more like the conflicts in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, and less like the Gulf war. In such circumstances, journalists will already be in the zone of conflict, making their control far more difficult for military planners. In the long-run, pictures may not matter, as much as context and leadership. The key variable may be the presence of a clearly articulated policy and a public sense that the policy is “worth it.” Colin Powell expressed this point: “They are (the American people) prepared to take casualties. Even if they see them on live television, it, will make them madder. Even if they see them on live television, as long as they believe it’s for a solid purpose, that, is understandable.”

Barrie Rushmore has commented, “They will not understand it, if it can’t be explained, which, is the point I have made consistently over the years. If you can’t explain it to the parents, who, are sending their kids, you had better think twice about it.” (Dunsmore 1996:9) Media scholars suggest that government officials and agencies are becoming more sophisticated in their effort at offering the sort of credible “explanations” referred to by Powell and that in most circumstances they are
assisted in their efforts by the American media. (Manheim 1994) Political scientist, W. Lance Bennett, has found that the media closely “index” their coverage to the contours of official debate and controversy. (Bennett 1989: 361) The levels of criticism directed at government policy rises and falls in accordance with the intensity of criticisms emanating out of other institutionally-based official sources. As Bennett and political scientist Jarol Manheim commented, “As a practical matter, news organizations routinely leave policy framing and issue emphasis to political elites.”

**Geo Political conditions as a factor in War Reporting**

The mainstream media is known to be swayed by various factors, as far as reporting conflicts is concerned. The mainstream media outlets covered and what they chose to show, are some of the factors which bring into play the geo-political factors of the world polity. (Bickerton and Klausner 2002: 102) The prevailing conditions and the amount of public violence, in the Israel-Palestine conflict, is, a major factor in the way, the Israel Palestine conflict and the intermittent conflicts of the order of the Gulf war, have been covered by the media. The relationship between the United States and the oil rich nations of Middle East along, are, some of the factors which determine the true nature of war reporting. The volatility of the Middle East, geopolitics, is a driving factor, determines the partisan and the bipartisan coverage of the media.

These concerns underscore a larger problem. Political turbulence, in the Gulf is endemic access to that region’s oil is precarious and will remain so. Precisely, for this reason, Gulf oil has never been the bargain, it has been advertised to be. The hidden-but-real-cost, is the need to maintain and, if necessary, use military forces to keep oil flowing from the region. That cost is enormous. Maintaining the forces earmarked for Persian Gulf missions, runs, nearly $40 billion per year in peacetime. The current troop deployments cost an additional $1.2 billion to $1.5 billion per month. (Tonleson and Herd 1990) The total cost is nothing compared with the expense that will ensue if the crisis exploded into a war. Some Defense experts estimated that the cost of combat operations could approach $1 billion a day, bringing the total potential cost of “cheap” Gulf oil to more than $600 per barrel. (Atkinson 1990 : A1) There may be the additional cost of thousands of soldiers coming back to the country in body bags.
Apart from the mainstream media induced self doubt in the popular perception, the media outlets were united in their patriotic unfurling of the American flag and it led to a rallying around for a pro-war effort, in the Gulf war. It was only the “oil angle”, where, the various newspaper articles and television reports echoed the paucity of oil and natural gas in mainland. The commentators always harped on a reliance on the Middle East oil by the United States. Scary scenarios were painted, where, a total dominance of the Middle East oil resources by Saddam Hussein was always brought out as a factor behind the American foreign policy. The geo-political factor of oil became a significant factor, in the way the Gulf War which was reported in the mainstream media.

Thus it was clear that, the oil scare was driven by many national dailies as a rationale behind why the US led incursion in the Iraqi Desert was justified as a geo political move to secure the energy rich, oil fields of Middle East. The media in United States, perceived these factors as the guiding themes in representing stories, events, crises and rapprochements, as they happened in the Middle East.

Earlier it was the stress on the Arab-Israeli conflict that skewed Middle East news presentation from the parts of the region that are not contiguous to Israel. Emphasis on the US policy and its role, has skewed news away from the relations of the world to the Middle East. Until the events in Afghanistan and Iran in 1979 and 1980, Middle East news was mostly about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the American role in the region. This preoccupation with just two parts of a much larger whole gave rise to an extreme narrowness of vision, which, in turn accounted for a large number of distortions and mistakes of journalism. (Richiardi 2006: 20) Mohammad Bazzi, was in his Beirut apartment, thumbing through a newspaper, when a friend informed him, that, Hezbollah guerrillas had made a daring raid into Israel, and had kidnapped, two soldiers. In retaliation, Israeli tanks and commandos were headed towards south Lebanon. On July 12th, American journalists had a meager presence in Lebanon. A handful of staffed bureaus, in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Cairo, was all the US newspapers accounted for. The scramble was on to redeploy reporters to the Middle East. Seen in the present day’s context, all the operations of the mainstream media, like, Fox Television and the correspondents of New York Times, were carried out in a frenzied move to get the best of the meaty reporting in Lebanon.
The second focus of the media interest was, that, the United States required little explanation. Americans have a huge economic, political, and military interest in the Middle East. Energy companies do business in most countries of the area and their petroleum equipment is nearly ubiquitous. (Nye Jr 2002: 20) About five-sixths of all US foreign aid goes to four Middle East countries (Turkey, Israel, Egypt, and Pakistan), and to Greece. American institutions of higher learning, are located in Istanbul, Beirut, and Cairo. Huge quantities of US weapons have gone since 1971 to Israel, its neighbors, and the Gulf region. Americans had to take sides with Kuwait in 1990, as, it was an ally state and oil would be put at a ransom, if, the US would not take up a defensive posture, vis-a-vis, the Emirs of Kuwait. (Palmer 1990) The Central Command, was set up in the year, 1980, to coordinate with rapid-strike forces in the Gulf and Indian Ocean areas. Strategic-cooperation agreements were signed with Israel in 1981 and 1983. US Marines and the ships and planes to protect them, were, in Lebanon from 1982 to early 1984.\textsuperscript{22} The Iraqi atrocities and the significance of the Iraqi sway over oil, led to the culmination of the US interests in the strife torn region. (Mickey 1991)

The presence of a home team far away from home, distorts the way US journalists cover the Middle East. They pursue their country's interests in a way that, the Canadian journalists cannot do for Canada. American journalists recognized this bias and were candid about it. Larry Pintak, the Beirut correspondent for CBS News, explained it, most succinctly: "As long as the Marines were in Lebanon, CBS, had to be there. "Problems arise, when, the US angle comes to dominate. Americans find it more interesting to read about themselves than about foreigners. It is easy for them to lose track of the larger question in favor of their country's role.

The US role in the Iraq war and that it caused the United States to be targeted on 9/11 became the chief argument of the study, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy", written by Harvard Kennedy School of Government Professor Stephen Walt, and Mearsheimer where the authors point the finger directly at supporters of Israel, and take care to note that the Bush administration ranks include: fervently pro Israel individuals like Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, I. Lewis ("Scooter") Libby, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and David Wurmser. (Dershowitz 2006) This

study argued that officials consistently advocated policies, favored by Israel and backed by organizations of the Jewish lobby. Such debates led to juxtaposition of these geo-political realities in the way media reports Middle East situations.

The *New York Times*, published almost 2600 words on the Walt / Mearsheimer controversy, without even once hinting at it’s own conflict of interest. The *Times*, was accused by the authors of a pro-Israel “editorial bias.” The questions raised were how can the *Times* write about a controversy which it is a part of, without disclosing this to its readers? Further more how did the *Times* fail to report that the Walt / Mearsheimer paper was littered with false allegations, phony quotations, and bogus references. The main point was that there were serious doubts about the neutrality competence and accuracy of media reporting.

The five filters of the propaganda model stand as a valuable hypotheses. How, the, news is produced; and what the reporters and editors do; or even the direct ways in which publishers; Why owners interfere with stories because they want to focus attention on institutional influences. These institutional forces are only effective as they are channelled through the reporters and editors. While some reporters may be corrupt, often depicted as “errand boys” for the elite, it can be believed that most are honest and often courageous in the performance of their duties. They do not set out to suppress facts, rather, they report reality as they see it through the lens of an internalized elite perspective. In, *Necessary Illusions*, Chomsky argues that the internalization of a business worldview occurs generally among intellectuals, not just among reporters. The thesis suggests, that, not only, the media owners’ class position, but, of columnists and reporters, too, is an important factor in determining the content of reportage and the medium of what is being reported. (Chomsky 2001: 130)

Thus, it may be stated that US media reporting of Gulf war-I was a significant factor in the US intervention. As this chapter shows, the world view of the media owners reporters and columnists coupled with the advances in technology have elevated the media stories of war from mere reporting to instant live coverage. As the detailed content analysis of various newspapers reports show that US policymakers were closely monitoring the “media effect”. As the Gulf war-I proceeded, it was also clear that a new medium, the Satellite TV called the CNN would become a powerful

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depiction of the war which could challenge the US Government portrayal of the conflict. Media reporting has become an indispensable part of understanding US foreign policy itself.