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Abstract

The modern relationship between the military and the media has ranged from frictional to heated, to fiery. A recent trend to improve this relationship has been to embed journalists in military units. Some military commanders express concern about operational security and object that the logistics and coordination required to support and protect embedded reporters is not worth the small benefit. Some journalists too, call into question the objectivity of reporters who are reliant on their military subjects for support and protection. From a Canadian Forces (CF) perspective, the media is actually a force multiplier during operations. The media can help gain and maintain public support for CF operations. In a theatre of operations, media can help to improve relations with local civilians. Media coverage can also help achieve information superiority against an enemy or belligerents who would wish to discredit CF operations. Embedding journalists in deployed military units is appropriate for the CF. This research paper examines CF policies on Information Operations (IO) and Public Affairs (PA) in conjunction with those of Canada's major allies. It examines the key aspects of each profession, highlighting the differences and similarities between the two. The case for embedding journalists in CF units on deployed operations is, citing recent successes and failures. Finally, recommendations to mitigate the risks of embedding journalists are provided.

There can be few professions more ready to misunderstand each other than journalists and soldiers.

- Major S.F. Crozier, Assistant Editor of *The Field*¹

Introduction

The media has reported on military conflict since the first British journalists traveled to the battlefields of the Crimean War in 1854. William Howard Russell was one of those journalists whose, “dispatches via telegraph from the Crimea remain his most enduring legacy as, for the first time, he brought the realities of war, both good and bad, home to readers. Thus he helped to diminish the distance between the home front and remote battle fields.”² Despite the long distances involved and the inevitable delays in stories reaching England, the British public wanted to know what was happening to their husbands and sons in foreign lands. To the astonishment of the government, the British public was outraged at the reports of the carnage of warfare and the conditions that had to be endured.

Edwin Godkin, another correspondent of the Crimean War era, recorded that the appearance of journalists on the battlefield, “led to an official awakening in the official mind. It brought home to the War Office that the public had something to say about the conduct of wars and that they are not the concern exclusively of sovereigns and statesmen.”³ No person or organization likes to have mistakes publicized. Crimean War reporting was significantly less favourable for the British Army and Government whose

¹ Young, Peter R. *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War*. Report prepared for the International Defence Media Association. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1992. 44.

² Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. “William Howard Russell,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._H._Russell; Internet; accessed 10 April 2005.

³ Young, *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War...*, 13.

glorious past wars had traditionally been recounted in stories of great dash and valour. The reaction was to blame the media, an approach that formed the crucible from which the modern relationship between the military and the media was forged. That relationship has ranged from frictional to heated, to fiery.

The friction comes from opposing yet similar roles. A military fights on behalf of the public and believes it should be left to fight those battles as it sees fit. Meanwhile the media feels that it has the best interests of the public in mind. The media further believes that by exposing a public institution like the military to closer scrutiny, the public is better informed and in a better position to compel that institution to change. When a country goes to war, its people want news of loved ones and to know the risk of potential sacrifice. The media serves as a conduit between the public and the military.

In a perfect world, the media would provide the public with fair and balanced reporting about a conflict and the military's role in it. However, military operations rely on secrecy and media scrutiny could jeopardize success. Today, the average person can be better informed on issues than ever before. Current news is available in many forms including, print, radio, television and computer based media. People can access news as it happens and from various sources in order to form their opinions. Demand for news results in fierce competition among media outlets to report the news first before their competitors. For ongoing stories such as military deployments, the media seeks out means and opportunities to provide the public with a fresh perspective in order to maintain audience interest in the issue.

Despite an increase in the role of the media during military operations of the past half century, the relationship between the military and the media has only improved slightly. For example, during World War II the relationship was reasonably cordial, but during American operations in Grenada and Panama it was quite antagonistic.

A recent trend to improve the relationship between the military and the media has been to embed journalists in military units. This innovative way to report on the military has been gaining popularity in the past decade in most Western militaries. Embedding journalists is not without opposition. Some military commanders express concern about operational security. They also complain that the logistics and coordination required to support and protect embedded reporters is not worth the small benefit provided by this increased coverage. Some journalists too, call into question the objectivity of reporters who are embedded in military units. They are convinced that reporters who are reliant on their military subjects for support and protection will be less inclined to report incidents that may place the military in an unfavourable light.

From a Canadian Forces (CF) perspective, despite misgivings about security and balanced reporting, the media is actually a force multiplier during operations. At home, the media can help gain and maintain public support for CF operations. In a theatre of operations where the CF is deployed, the media can help to improve relations with local civilians. Media coverage can also help achieve information superiority against an enemy or belligerents who would wish to discredit CF operations. These benefits far

outweigh the potential risks associated with embedding journalists and as such, embedding journalists is appropriate for the CF.

In support of this thesis, CF policies on Information Operations (IO) and Public Affairs (PA) will be examined in conjunction with those of key allies. This research paper will then examine the key aspects of each profession, highlighting the differences and similarities between the two. The case for embedding journalists in CF units on deployed operations will then be argued, citing recent successes and failures. Finally, recommendations to mitigate the risks of embedding journalists will be provided.

Information Operations and Public Affairs Policies

War, perhaps more than any other time, brings the public right to know and the public interest into conflict. Does the public have the right to know every battle, every decision, every casualty, immediately? Or does operational security limit this right? It obviously must, and the real question is by how much?⁴

With the end of the twentieth century, the role of the media in military affairs can no longer be treated as a side issue. In fact in many cases involving Western militaries, the behavior of the media will help determine the success or failure of operations.⁵ In order to be successful, a military must not only be well-trained, well-equipped and capable of defeating its enemy on the battlefield, but it must also garner public understanding and support for its operations. Lack of public support can be a critical vulnerability to a military operation that could have consequences as great as those generated by faulty equipment or incompetent leadership. The difficulty in generating

⁴ Young, *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War...*, 9.

⁵ Stephen Badsey, "Modern Military Operations and the Media," Report prepared for the Strategic and Combat Studies Institute: The Occasional no. 8. (Sandhurst: 1994): 4.

public support is that it has many facets that at different times may be equally as important to the military operation. The military needs to foster support nationally within its home country, within the greater world community, within the theatre of operations and even with its own military members. Any element of this public support may become crucial to the operation's success necessitating that all components of public support be developed concurrently. To accomplish this, today's militaries must establish comprehensive and credible Information Operations (IO) and Public Affairs (PA) policies. These policies and their intent must be known by all military commanders and their subordinates. IO and PA plans that achieve the goal of gaining and maintaining public support for military operations must be developed for both garrison and deployed operations.

Information Operations are defined in CF doctrine as "actions taken in support of national objectives which influence decision makers by affecting other's information while exploiting and protecting one's own information."⁶ There are two main categories of IO, offensive and defensive. Offensive IO targets the adversary's decision-makers in support of overall military objectives using various capabilities. PA is a component of IO that ensures the accurate and timely flow of information to both the public and the CF. PA activities are intended to promote a favourable attitude about an operation or mission and keep both audiences informed about developments. PA activities can influence the adversary's perception about CF intentions, capabilities and vulnerabilities. The doctrine is unequivocal that PA activities will not be used as a military deception capability to

⁶ Department of National Defence. B-GG-005-004/AF-010. *CF Information Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1998), 1-6.

provide disinformation.⁷ Military commanders need to be provided with clear direction and guidance on how to utilize the diverse PA capabilities. Unfortunately, PA resources in the CF are limited. Therefore, commanders need assistance to maximize the benefits of those scarce resources.

The current CF policy⁸ states that the role of Public Affairs is “to promote understanding and awareness among Canadians of the role, mandate and activities of the CF, and the contributions of the CF to Canadian society and the international community.”⁹ This public understanding of how the CF makes a difference at home and abroad, leads to public confidence. Public confidence will vary depending on the ability of the CF to achieve its mandate in a manner that is open, transparent, and consistent with Canadian values and expectations.¹⁰ Noted Chinese military philosopher Sun Tzu recognized the need for national unity as far back as 500 B.C. His writings emphasize the importance of national unity and cohesiveness in supporting successful military operations.¹¹

A more contemporary example can be found in the Royal Australian Air Force Air Power Manual that states, “a high national morale is, therefore, the most valuable asset a nation can possess: it provides the foundation of its power to deter aggression and

⁷ Department of National Defence. *CF Information Operations*..., 2-1 – 2-5.

⁸ Current CF policy on Public Affairs is found in Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 2008-0 *Public Affairs Policy*.

⁹ Department of National Defence. Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 2008-0 *Public Affairs Policy*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1998), 2.

¹⁰ Department of National Defence. *Public Affairs Policy*..., 5.

¹¹ Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu The Art of War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 39.

if necessary accept the consequences of war.”¹² In a Canadian context, this means that all levels of the CF must play a role in contributing to the openness and transparency required to attain high national morale. The riskier the operation, the greater the need for public confidence and support.

There are six PA regulations that fall under the CF PA policy. These regulations govern PA accountability, media relations, issue and crisis management, PA and CF operations, PA planning and Internet publishing. The regulations governing PA and CF operations state that PA must be fully integrated into the decision-making process for policy development, service delivery and military operations.¹³ The regulations emphasize that the key priority of any CF operation is to achieve its mission, while balancing the demand from the public for information about the operation. Finding the delicate balance in these circumstances is the challenge of PA personnel who serve as advisors to commanders. PA policy directs that Public Affairs officers must be involved in the military planning, and decision making of CF operations. There are two operating principles that must be at the forefront when executing any PA plan as part of a CF operation. These are the safety of CF personnel and operational security of a mission. Keeping these principles in mind, all PA activities should be as open and transparent as possible in order to achieve the ultimate goal of informing the public about CF operations and ultimately gaining their support.¹⁴

¹² Young, *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War...*, 10.

¹³ Department of National Defence. DAOD 2008-4 *Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1998), 3.

¹⁴ Department of National Defence. Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 2008-4 *Public Affairs, Military Doctrine and Canadian Forces Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1998), 2-5.

Canada's close NATO allies, the UK and US, have adopted approaches similar to the CF with respect to military-media relations. British Defence Doctrine outlines a three-prong approach to dealing with what it terms Media Operations. First, it highlights that in the information age, reports on events may be broadcast almost immediately after they occur, stressing the importance of getting it right the first time. The doctrine places greater pressure on the military to release as much accurate information as possible as quickly as possible, subject only to operational security, making a case for effective and efficient Public Affairs capabilities. Regardless of such constraints, the safety of military personnel must always be paramount. Secondly, the doctrine stresses the importance of keeping the personnel serving on operations informed as they too will have access to media reports. An ill or misinformed soldier can have a negative impact on operations, especially if the information he receives causes him to lose faith in his leaders or question the validity of his mission. Finally, the doctrine stresses the crucial role that media operations can take in persuading third parties, specifically the greater world community, that the actions being taken are justifiable and to counter the effects of information operations conducted by the enemy or its allies.¹⁵

The same themes run through the British doctrine as do in the CF doctrine, media operations as a means to garner public support, openness and transparency. Additionally, British doctrine includes the potential impact PA activities can have on a military's own personnel. Maintenance of morale is a principle of war for the CF. There are many ways

¹⁵ United Kingdom. Ministry of Defence. Joint Warfare Publication (JWP) 0-01 *British Defence Doctrine*. (London: MOD, 1997), 4.17.

to raise and maintain morale, and in the information age, media coverage of soldiers in action is one that should not be underestimated. Embedding journalists in military units is one way achieve PA success in these areas. There is nothing more open and transparent than having embedded journalists who see everything a unit does.

Each of the US Service Arms has developed its own doctrine with respect to Public Affairs. The US Army has recognized Public Affairs as a “critical element in building and sustaining combat power in America’s Army of the 21st Century.”¹⁶ In the document *Vision 2000: Public Affairs in the 21st Century* it has been recognized “that attempts to exclude or control media coverage will be counterproductive to our strategic and operational interests.”¹⁷ The paper stresses that wider and more frequent coverage leads to increased debates. This increased debate allows public opinion to be more rapidly shaped and changed. Ultimately government agencies, private enterprises and special interest groups are all able to have varied effects on military operations by influencing strategic goals, impacting operational objectives and affecting tactical execution.¹⁸ Much like the CF Public Affairs Policy it recognizes that gaining the confidence of the American people and members of the Army community are fundamental to the Army’s ability to function successfully.¹⁹ *Vision 2000* also cautions leaders to not attempt to impose limits and restrictions on media. Such actions will cause

¹⁶ United States. Dept. of the Army. Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. *Vision 2000: Public Affairs into the 21st century*. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, 1994), cover page.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

media to seek other sources of information, often resulting in the publication of speculation and inaccuracies.²⁰ Speculation and inaccurate reports force the military to utilize scarce PA resources to formulate responses and perform damage control with the public, which is not always successful. These resources can be better employed generating positive PA opportunities in liaison with the media. Embedded journalists are at the front and see everything. Under these conditions, speculation and inaccuracy are virtually impossible.

US Air Force Doctrine Document mirrors the US Army Vision 2000 and CF PA doctrine with a few notable additions. Firstly, it stresses how “public affairs operations can communicate US resolve in a manner that provides global influence and deterrence.”²¹ This should not be confused with psychological operations, which should never be conducted under the guise of public affairs operations as such actions could lead to a breakdown in trust between the military and the media. The USAF doctrine emphasizes how “in some situations the release of information can demonstrate US resolve, intimidate a rival government, and deter military conflict.”²²

This stance mirrors the teachings of Sun Tzu, which stressed the use of measures to precede war designed to make war easy to win. These measures included undermining the enemy alliances, frustrating his plans, sowing dissension and nurturing subversion

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹ United States. United States Air Force. *Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5.4 Public Affairs Operations*. (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Air Force, 1999), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 5.

within his population. In this manner the enemy would be defeated without resorting to armed force.²³ If a potential adversary begins to doubt his ability to defeat you and sees his own public support begin to deteriorate, he may choose to reassess his intentions. The best war is the one that is won without the firing of a single shot or the loss of a single life. Should such a situation indeed occur, it could have a significant positive impact on future public support to the military as a whole.

The USAF doctrine further identifies how public affairs operations can be used to reduce the impact of the enemy's information and psychological operations by responding to inaccurate information and instead providing accurate information to the American people. This capability can help defeat the enemy's efforts to diminish national will, degrade morale and shift world opinion away from friendly operations.²⁴ This is a crucial component for which the potential affect should not be underestimated. Successfully counteracting the enemy's activities focused against your national will creates an environment in which you can conduct your own public affairs and military operations more freely. Embedding of journalists in military units is one way of achieving these objectives.

The development of sound Information Operations and Public Affairs policies and doctrine is but the first step in creating positive relationships with the media. The next step needs to be the vigorous application of these same policies and doctrine throughout the organization in training, garrison and operational environments. Despite the positive

²³ Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 39

²⁴ United States Air Force. *Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5.4 Public Affairs ...*, 10.

guidance provided by CF Public Affairs policies, there are still those within the military who are reluctant to recognize the value of Public Affairs operations and their role in daily CF domestic and deployed operations. The positive impact that media relations can have on operations is often underestimated. The military culture of operational security does not easily lend itself to open relationships with the media. Concern about operational security is often cited as a reason to limit media involvement in operations.

Within the mainstream media there are individuals who are skeptical about the military's commitment to improving media-military relations. Some journalists refuse to acknowledge the efforts the military has undertaken to create a more cooperative environment. They see the establishment of PA policies and regulations as window dressing. This clash of cultures and mutual suspicion has existed for many years, but can be overcome when the roots are examined and addressed. "Greater cross institutional openness is critical to improving the relationship between the media and the military."²⁵ In fact, it is necessary to build on the similarities and mutual interests and recognize the differences to create trust and confidence between the media and the military. The results will be fairer coverage by the media and greater access by the media.²⁶ Embedding journalists in military units is a logical way to improve openness, foster good relations and eliminate distrust.

²⁵ Croft, Michael. *Information Warfare: Media-Military Relations in Canada: Workshop Report*. Ottawa: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1999), 1.

²⁶ Willey, Barry E. "The military-media connection: For better or for worse," *Military Review* 78, no. 6 (Dec 98-Feb 99): 14.

The Media Perspective

In order to successfully manage military-media relations one must first clearly understand the media's role in society and where media activities may come into conflict with those of the military. Media has come to be defined as "the group of journalists and others who constitute the communications industry and profession."²⁷

In 2004, the Canadian Forces College held a forum titled, Media Perspective: The Media and Military Relationship. Ms Carol Off, a journalist with considerable experience covering military operations, stated that the role of the media in society was to inform, to investigate and expose, and to take positions.²⁸ To inform, the media transmits information, but not necessarily knowledge about what happens in society. Members of society are then left to choose to seek out additional knowledge to become better informed on the issue. Much of society receives their news coverage by watching the nightly news and by reading the daily paper. Only a small percentage will seek out additional information and opposing views to develop well informed opinions. This limited window to inform the public makes it especially critical that the news is accurate and unbiased, since it may be their only source of information about the military.

The media also serves as a conduit between taxpayers and public institutions, by investigating and reporting on issues. Though investigation by definition implies a

²⁷ Dictionary.com. "Media." <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=media>. Internet accessed 6 March 2005.

²⁸ Ms Carol Off, "Media and the Military - Media Perspective" (lecture, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 2 September 2004).

balanced examination of all sides of an issue, inevitably the bias of the investigator will come into play. If this bias is against the military, it may leave the public ill-informed and reduce public support for the military. Finally, the media gives a voice to other groups in society by taking a position in editorials. These editorials are generally in line with the position of the journalist, the news agency, the publisher and their target audience.

As an institution the CF has a broad role to play in society. It has many members, is responsible for a large amount of the taxpayers money and its operations are often not well understood by society in general. These characteristics make the CF a compelling subject for public interest and in turn media scrutiny. If “war is merely the continuation of policy by other means,”²⁹ as described by 19th Century military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, and the CF is seen as the means to wage such a war, it can be easily understood why the CF is often the subject of media attention. When the media chooses to inform, investigate or edito

nature works on matters that may be confidential and doesn't always welcome the involvement of those it perceives as outsiders. The media perspective is that any institution funded by the taxpayers and whose actions may have diplomatic and economic effects within the country should be open to scrutiny. Ultimately the "essence of successful journalism is publicity, while the essence of successful military operations is secrecy."³⁰ These opposing missions can explain why there is often friction between the military and the media.

Despite these obvious differences, upon closer examination one can identify many similarities between the two professions that bear further study. In 1982, Alan Hooper a former Royal Marine in his book *The Military and the Media* studied the relationship between the military and the media. He examined this relationship through numerous case studies, including Vietnam and Northern Ireland, and explored print media, radio, television and documentaries. His research found thirteen characteristics common to both professions that in fact demonstrate that the military and the media appear to have more in common than is generally accepted.

Members of both groups view themselves as professionals that strive for professional excellence insisting on high standards by its members, which are achieved through dedication and self-discipline. Successful journalists are dedicated to their profession, responsible and display a lot of initiative in their efforts to tell the story. These qualities are valued by the military as well. Ethical standards and practices are generally adhered to by the majority of those in both professions. Both professions deal

³⁰ Badsey, "Modern Military Operations and the Media," ..., 21.

with time constraints, requiring decisions on how to translate large volumes of information into a few key facts and/or actions to be made quickly, often with consequences if the wrong decision is made. The decisions within a media environment on what stories are reported are decided by a chain of command, similar to the military. Individual journalists often provide input into decisions, but ultimately do not always control the final product, or even if a story is published or aired. This control rests with a superior, usually an editor. Finally, journalists generally work in teams with cameramen, producers and editors, and must display forward planning and flexibility in the performance of their duties.³¹

Circumstances often conspire to prevent journalists and military personnel from recognizing these similarities. They often only come into contact as a result of some newsworthy military event that attracts media attention and public scrutiny. As often happens, good news is not treated as newsworthy, resulting in a tendency for the military to associate media coverage with only negative reporting or as an exaggeration. Additionally, the military doesn't necessarily see the reporting as balanced or flattering. Due to limited access and the lack of interest that each profession has in the other, it is not surprising that they have not recognized these similarities and continue to have a strained relationship.³² Embedding journalists in military units would provide opportunities to work together and improve mutual respect for each other.

³¹ Alan Hooper, *The Military and the Media*. (Aldershot UK: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1982), 64-68.

³² Hooper. *The Military and the Media*...., 69.

The media as an institution believes strongly in the public's right to know. Anything less is viewed as censorship and an infringement on freedom of speech. Countless examples throughout history can be found where journalists have uncovered stories that the military would rather not have been reported.

A free press reveals when bad leadership exists, when bad equipment exists, when there is a violation of state and international rules (e.g. many times during the Vietnam war), bad training, inadequacies of supply and materiel, troop safety and the status of troop morale. A free press can discover friendly fire casualties, safety issues, for example the attack on a nuclear reactor in Iraq and the attendant fallout from that, or the after effects of the oil well fires.³³

Though these types of incidents are not necessarily condoned by the military, reporting them tends to be viewed as confrontational.

The importance of the media in today's society cannot be underestimated. Often how issues are portrayed in the media can result in change that was never foreseen. On 1 June 1980, the 24 hour-a-day Cable News Network (CNN) joined the media world. CNN has made a significant impact on the industry and on our perceptions of the media. The "CNN effect" is a shorthand way of stating that, in the process of reporting a story, the media forces government and the military to react, thereby influencing the outcome as a player in the process and not just as a reporter of the story itself.³⁴ In this environment senior government officials often start their days with a daily summary of the news clips to determine if any issues need immediate attention. "The Minister of National Defence begins his day by reviewing the news clips. Thus, one could infer that the media rather than policies sets the Minister's agenda and ultimately it is setting the agenda that matters

³³ Young. *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War...*, 13.

³⁴ Warren P. Strobel, *Late Breaking Foreign Policy*, US Inst of Peace Press: Wash, 1997, p. 4.

in the civil-military relationship.”³⁵ This situation would be even more interconnected when a journalist is embedded in a military unit and is in daily contact with commanders on deployed operations.

On the opposing side of the freedom of the press issue is the concern for operational security during military operations. The mere presence of media in a war zone, even more so when journalists are embedded within military units causes concern about operational security for military leaders. Journalists who feel that they are capable of knowing what to report without jeopardizing military operations often disregard this concern, citing paranoia on the part of the military. Paranoia or not, a good military leader cannot afford to discount this concern, as it could ultimately cause the loss of military lives. Current practices within the US military have seen the abolishment of security reviews in favour of issuing clear ground rules to journalists and utilizing security at the source review. This involves reliance on the integrity of embedded journalists who have questions about the security aspects of an operation to refer them to someone within the unit to respond, without ever turning in their final story for review.³⁶ This practice appears to be successful, permitting journalists the autonomy they need to do their jobs.

³⁵ Sunil Ram, “The Big Snafu: The Media and the CF.” *Frontline Magazine*, August 2004, 27.

³⁶ Frank Aukofer and William P. Lawrence, *America’s Team: The Odd Couple – A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military* (Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, 1995), 27.

Today's information rich environment has the potential to result in greater breaches of operational security than any journalist could achieve. A considerable amount of information on military operations can be found on open sources on the Internet. Commercial satellite imagery and cellular and telephone intercepts, are quickly becoming widely accessible, and make maintaining secrecy about military operations increasingly difficult.³⁷ This is not to say that the military should cease to be concerned about operational security, but rather to accept that some aspects are beyond their control. Through the development of positive relations with media personnel and outlets, the military should instead seek to minimize risks where they can and accept that some risks are part of warfare. The embedding of journalists in military operations won't reduce operational security risks, but employed in an environment of trust and respect won't necessarily cause them either.

The Military Perspective

Throughout time, the role of military professionals has been to fight and win wars on behalf of their nation. How these wars have been fought and won has been as important to a nation's citizen's as why they were at war. Within the Canadian context, this public understanding of the contributions of the CF depends on an ability to

³⁷ Brendan R. McLane, "Reporting from the Sandstorm: An Appraisal of Embedding," *Parameters* Vol. 34, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 87. The ability to discern the operational idea of military strategy through open sources has been shown. In 1997, an Air Expeditionary Force deployment to Bahrain was tracked by US Air Force Red Cell. Using public information and commercial satellite imagery, the Red Cell discovered the bed-down locations, missions, and force composition. Beth Kaspar, *The End of Secrecy? Military Competitiveness in the Age of Transparency*, occasional paper, Center for Strategy and Technology (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, 2001), p.15.

communicate effectively and engage Canadians in defence and security issues.³⁸ It appears on the surface that communicating effectively would be at odds with the secrecy that is often a strong component of military operations. Planning for operations involves secrecy for good reasons, the most important being that the lives of the military members may be at risk if that secrecy is violated. Informing the public about the roles, activities and operations of the CF does not have to equate to violating operational security. While journalists perceive themselves as the guardians of free speech, military commanders see themselves as defenders of Canadian democratic values.³⁹ The military commander often perceives these goals at odds with each other. Free speech could potentially result in compromising an operation. It is this perception that has prevented many military commanders throughout history from finding the proper balance of keeping the media and in turn the public informed and maintaining operational security.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was the Commander of Coalition forces during the 1990-91 Gulf War. During his career he had served in Vietnam and Grenada, locations where military-media relations ranged from free rein in Vietnam to excluding the media from the AOR for three days after operations commenced in Grenada. At the time of the Gulf War the relations between the media and the military were somewhat adversarial. Less than a week after his arrival in theatre, General Schwarzkopf faced his

³⁸ Department of National Defence, "Shaping the Future of Canadian Defence: A Strategy for 2020," http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/dda/cosstrat/2020/intro_e.asp Internet accessed: 20 April 2004.

³⁹ Colonel (retired) Ralph. Coleman, "The General/Admiral's Role in Public Affairs in International Operational Theatres." In *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*, edited by Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris 275-290. St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001, 384.

first press conference. He recognized that this meeting would set the tone for future Coalition media relations and set the following four ground rules:

1. Don't let them intimidate you;
2. There's no law that says you have to answer all their questions;
3. Don't answer any question that in your judgement will help the enemy; and
4. Don't ever lie to the American people.⁴⁰

General Schwarzkopf's openness served as an example to other commanders in theatre. The Commander of British forces in the Gulf, General Sir Peter de la Billiere, adopted a similar approach. He recognized that the instantaneous nature of modern communications made the media of "crucial importance"⁴¹. Additionally, by providing the media with as much information as possible first hand, it would contribute to the accuracy of their reports. Neither commander violated operational security in their dealings with the media. Instead, this open communication by these two commanders strengthened support for the Coalition within Saudi Arabia, with the American and British public at home and around the world.⁴² When the Gulf War ended not only was the war won, but also the peace.

Within the CF, the main role of Information Operations and by extension Public Affairs, is to gain and maintain the support of Canadians. This support can be defined as the centre of gravity for all military operations. That is to say that it is a crucial element

⁴⁰ H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre. *General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, The Autobiography: It Doesn't Take a Hero*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 399.

⁴¹ General Sir Peter de la Billiere, *Storm Command: A Personal Account of the Gulf War*. (London: HarperCollins, 1992), 64.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 399-400.

that permits the CF to operate. During military operations, the military commander will attempt to disrupt and/or destroy the enemy's centre of gravity while protecting his own centre of gravity from attack. The main objective of any Public Affairs plan is to protect the CF centre of gravity, public support to CF operations, against attack from the enemy and to take actions that attack the enemy's centre of gravity. One of the ways to defeat the enemy's centre of gravity would be to achieve information superiority in an Area of Operations (AOR). With the Internet, satellites, cell phones and various other means of transmitting information within an AOR, this objective is unattainable as it is impossible to control all aspects of the information environment and deny its use to the enemy. In the reality of today's CF operations, deployed Task Forces are unable to accomplish information dominance for a variety of reasons. The CF has a limited number of combat camera assets and Public Affairs staff to deploy on operations. When they are deployed, they are often deployed in small numbers to a large and diverse AOR, with a mandate that is frequently beyond their capability to fully support despite their best efforts.

At the beginning of an operation, a deploying CF Task Force generates considerable media interest with press conferences with commanders, interviews with deploying servicemen generating considerable national support for the military. After this initial media blitz other stories take over the headlines and the deployed Canadian Task Force settles down to the business they were sent to do. The limited number of Public Affairs officers are tasked with dealing with coalition and local news outlets, liaising with NDHQ and serving as advisor to commanders. The PA staff must also liaise with local and international media that are covering the operation. The momentum

generated at the beginning of a deployment eventually dwindles down to weekly briefings, unless a significant incident of some kind occurs. During peak holiday seasons or when troop rotations are scheduled, coveted combat camera units are deployed and the Task Force becomes a topic of interest to Canadians again.

In the meantime, to the enemy, the deployment of this Task Force into their AOR is the “only game in town” and efforts are made by both kinetic and non-kinetic means to prevent the Task Force from completing its mission. The non-kinetic means include turning local support against the Task Force and portraying the Task Force in a negative light in an attempt to discredit them in the eyes of the Canadian public. The 24/7 news services like CNN and CBC Newsworld and the Internet enable this negative propaganda campaign.

The net effect can be undermining local support to the Task Force, making mission accomplishment more difficult. Concurrently, such propaganda may also diminish Canadian public support for the Task Force.

The media gravitates towards the sources that are most obvious and available, tyrants and terrorists like Saddam, Milosevic, and Bin Laden learned to welcome reporters. Future enemies can be expected to develop sophisticated media strategies to draw attention to, and assign external blame for, the suffering of their people...⁴³

A successful IO campaign can also have potentially damaging effects on the Task Force itself. Bad news, inaccurate information and disinformation undermine soldier's

⁴³ Douglas Porch, ““No Bad Stories” The American media-military relationship,” *Naval War College Review*. Vol.55, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 104.

morale,⁴⁴ a key component to any military operation. The CF has limited ability to respond quickly enough to poor or inaccurate reporting, so must instead focus its energy and resources on generating positive news stories. This situation leaves the military in a dilemma, the need to gain and maintain public support with limited resources to achieve this goal on its own.

How then do we gain and maintain public support without weekly updates and with the enemy reaching Canadians directly through their media sources? The enemy's IO campaign has the potential to create fear and decrease public support to the CF. "Indeed, ignorance and misinformation are far more dangerous for the military than is informed reporting, however critical in tone."⁴⁵ Embedding of journalists in deployed units has been adopted as one solution to this situation. This solution contributes to the achievement of the main objectives of the Public Affairs plan as outlined above and is viewed as an open and transparent method to inform the Canadian public. This solution won't necessarily win the IO campaign, but embedded journalists can serve as a balance to the efforts by the enemy to discredit CF operations.

The practice of embedding can support the main objective of the PA plan to gain and maintain the support of Canadians and of the local population and reinforce the morale of the deployed military members. Embedded media can serve as a force multiplier for CF operations. The benefits achieved can be significant when compared to

⁴⁴ Mark R. Newell, "Tactical-level Public Affairs and Information Operations," *Military Review* 78, no. 6 (Dec 98 – Feb 99): 23.

⁴⁵ Porch. "“No Bad Stories” The American media-military relationship,”..., 104.

the relatively small effort and cost expended to establish such a program. The embedded journalist gets his story and the CF benefits from reporting that is seen by the public as open, transparent and not controlled by the CF. The military will not be able to control the stories produced by embedded journalists, but in the end commanders need to have faith and trust. Faith in the necessity of his mission, the training of his Task Force and their ability to conduct operations in a manner that will be credit to the CF. The commander also needs to trust that professional journalists will strive to provide a balanced story to the public and will not intentionally compromise operational security.

Bridging the Gap with Embedding

It would appear that the military and the media are often following contradictory agendas. The military needs the media to help gain and maintain public support for operations, while not being fully convinced that the media will contribute to this aim. The media, in turn, feel that their role is to inform the public about the military, whether the news is good or bad. Despite these conflicting agendas, there are four points of common ground when discussing media military relations:

1. Freedom of the Press as a principle is accepted without reservation – the problem is how the principle should be applied in war.
2. There is inevitably going to be extensive media coverage of any modern conflict. The public will demand it; it is an essential part of maintaining support for military operations.
3. New technologies have opened up new dimensions in covering a conflict, in terms of immediacy, quality of images and global coverage to a massed audience.

4. The media will be the most powerful force in forming public opinion, one way or another, for or against the war. The quality of the performance of the media is therefore a matter of national importance.⁴⁶

Even with this common ground, the differing perspectives and roles in society of the media and the military can still result in a love-hate relationship between the two.

The military should not be afraid of the critical media as such critical reporting when taken in isolation will not usually completely undermine public support for the military. “Citizens in a free society will face the truth of things, however unpleasant, provided those who lead them deserve their trust and confidence.”⁴⁷ Constructive criticism when well intentioned, well informed and not malicious can be useful and often serves as precursor for positive change. Within the media-military relationship, that is not to say that the media is always right when it criticizes the military. Though a story may in fact have the three qualities of constructive criticism listed above, this does not necessarily mean that the military should immediately change how it conducts operations in response to a story. The best balanced reporting will still miss nuances of a situation or circumstance, whether due to the natural bias of the journalist or his employer or omissions by the military whereby the full details can not be made available to the public for reasons of operational security. Instead, the military should focus on developing relationships with the media of mutual respect for each others roles which is the key to bridging the gap between the professions.

⁴⁶ Young. *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War...*, 17-18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

In today's society, the average journalist, just like the average citizen has little daily interaction with members of the military and may have no knowledge about military operations. In the current competitive news environment journalists are often forced to cover a large variety of topics, including the military, which can prevent them from being as well informed as the military would like. Embedding journalists in CF military units would permit them to become better informed about CF operations. These journalists in turn produce more balanced stories, with the side benefit being continued Canadian public support for the CF.

The embedding of journalists in combat units dates back at least to World War II. The close relationship between the soldiers and reporters like Walter Cronkite and Ernie Pyle were legend and fostered significant US public support for the military⁴⁸. These journalists were respected by the military commanders and the soldiers alike and were trusted to report on all aspects of the war. During conflicts in the second half of the 20th century, journalists were free to travel throughout the war zone in Vietnam, then restricted from the conflict in Grenada and Panama and finally relegated to pools during the 1991 Gulf War. Each approach to dealing with the media adopted by the military had its own failings and generally resulted in a widening gap between the two professions. None of these methods could recreate the positive relationships of World War II and in fact fostered more antagonism than ever before.

In an article written by respected journalist David Pugliese for the *Canadian Defence Quarterly* in Autumn 1997 shortly after the Somalia Inquiry, he called for

⁴⁸ Willey. "The military-media connection: For better or for worse,"..., 14.

openness in media-military relations. Despite the political climate of the time, his comments are still valid today. He identified the root of the problem as the military's attempt to control information and cites numerous examples where this practice has backfired on the military. He further points out that it is easier for him to report a story on the American military than on the Canadian military. Finally, he cautions that if the Canadian military doesn't talk to the media, someone else will, with their own interpretation of events. The only way to achieve a balanced story is by the CF having a voice with the media.⁴⁹ Embedding journalists in military units provides that voice.

Under a privileged platform, another journalist, addressing the Army War College in November 2000, urged future commanders that it is in their interest to improve relations with the media and highlighted that they “have a responsibility of persuading the American public that you are important,... We [the media] are your way to reach the public.”⁵⁰ The speaker went on to highlight that no one could tell their story better than the military themselves. Embedding of journalists is a definite attempt to address these concerns.

Embedding as a means to report a war is not without controversy. There are those who contend that embedded journalists will lose their objectivity and develop their own version of the Stockholm syndrome. It is argued that close relationships between the

⁴⁹ David Pugliese, “The military and the media: time for openness,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 34-35.

⁵⁰ Harold Kennedy, “Reporter to future military leaders: News media is your best friend,” *National Defense* 85, no. 564 (November 2000): 15.

media and their subjects, the military, would prevent balanced and tough reporting. Further criticisms cite that reports by embedded journalists would be filtered through the military and therefore not true depictions of events. Finally, the critics of embedding maintain that reports by embedded journalists would provide the public with an incomplete view and focus of the CF operations. These stories would be further constrained by the limited environment in which the units would be operating.⁵¹ This has been likened to watching a sport or event through a straw, which allows the viewer to only see one aspect at a time and unable to see the bigger picture. These reservations caused some news agencies, like the CBC, and some journalists to opt out of the embedding program. Yet despite these concerns, these same agencies demonstrated no reservations about using photos and copy generated by the journalists embedded with troops during the recent Gulf War.⁵²

Stephen Ward, former CP reporter and currently an associate professor of journalism ethics at the University of British Columbia, raised additional concerns about embedding. He focused on the type of news that embedding produces. He stresses that journalism is more than “breathless spot news. It is about explaining what one is seeing; it is about questioning and investigating; it is making sure that one’s overall reportage has a diversity of voices and perspectives.”⁵³ Mr. Ward’s contention is that embedded

⁵¹ Stephen J.A. Ward, “Iraq War coverage: In bed with the military,” *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Spring 2003. 5-6.

⁵² Stephen Thorne, “The Editor’s Page,” *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Spring 2003, 3.

⁵³ Ward. “Iraq War coverage: In bed with the military,” ..., 5-6.

journalists could have a tendency to produce one-sided stories. If this does indeed occur, the responsibility of adding context and balance will then rest with the editors and the public. The public will need to become more critical news consumers, filtering reports and seeking out alternate sources of news to formulate balanced opinions. He is convinced that the practice of embedding can undermine journalistic independence and erode media credibility.⁵⁴ The validity of all of these concerns are difficult to quantify. Whether it is really a problem to be blamed on the concept of embedding or the lethargy of the public to seek out various news sources can be debated.

Concerns about impartiality are not the only reasons that some journalists choose not to participate in embedding programs. Hampton Sides of *The New Yorker* changed his mind about embedding after participating in one week of training provided to the five hundred journalists waiting to deploy with US military units in Kuwait, in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The instruction included Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) training with gas masks, atropine injectors and stories about the effects of the various agents that may be encountered on the battlefield. Mr. Sides began to question why the US Administration that “had shown no particular concern for world opinion in the previous months would go to such lengths to accommodate so many journalists.”⁵⁵ When he posed this question to one of his military trainers he was informed that the media was there to accurately report on the use of NBC by Saddam Hussein, because the world would not believe the military if they reported its use, but would believe the media.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁵⁵ Hampton Sides, “Unembedded,” *The New Yorker*, 24 March 2003.

He stated that this comment made him feel like a lab rat and contributed to his decision to “unembed”.⁵⁶ Therefore, the decision by some journalists not to be embedded in military operations should not be taken necessarily as a condemnation of embedding, but perhaps as a recognition that warfare is a dirty business and being up close and personal to it is not for everyone.

The embedding of journalists in US military units during the recent Iraq war, and with CF units in Afghanistan has been seen as a step towards re-establishing a relationship of respect and trust between the media and the military. When the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in January 2002, the media was waiting for them on the tarmac. This deployment of Canadian troops into combat for the first time since the Korean War was newsworthy. The Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel (LCol) Stogran, had decided before his deployment that the media would be an important tool for him and he set out to treat them as professionals with objectives complementary, but different from to own. His degree of openness with the press was unsettling for his Public Affairs officers, who initially preferred a more stand off approach. LCol Stogran also found that his troops were not eager to cooperate with the media due to the sensationalism and intense scrutiny that the CF had been under for the past decade. These obstacles were hard to overcome and it took time to develop that level of trust between the soldiers and the media.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

LCol Stogran placed his trust in the journalists and there were not any instances of breaches in operational security during the deployment. Once the journalists recognized that the military was making every effort to include the media in all aspects of operations, they respected the Battle Group operational security guidelines. The journalists were provided opportunities to participate in reconnaissance patrols and observe first hand a combat air assault on Taliban/al-Qaida positions. Every story was not always positive, but ultimately a relationship of trust and respect was established between the members of the Battle Group and the war correspondents. LCol Stogran's final assessment was that the embedding of journalists was a positive experience and a great success. That is not to say that there aren't ways to improve the CF embedding program. His key recommendations include providing training to certified war correspondents where needed and developing affiliations with certified war correspondents through their continued involvement in future CF training exercises and deployments.⁵⁷

Stephen Thorne, one of the journalists that lived with the Battle Group in Kandahar for three months echoes this positive experience. He shuns accusations of Stockholm syndrome, instead stressing that the access provided to him enabled him to “not only know his subject but understand it.”⁵⁸ He states that this awareness helped him to be able to better distinguish between good and bad stories, and on at least one occasion the access afforded him due to the relationship of trust and respect he had developed with the members of the Battle Group, kept him from filing an inaccurate story. He supports

⁵⁷ LCol Pat Stogran, “Train, certify warcos, then give ‘em access, says Canada’s top soldier in Afghanistan,” *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Fall 2002. 1, 14-16.

⁵⁸ Stephen Thorne, “Editorial,” *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Fall 2002. 3.

LCol Stogran's recommendations to maintain this growing relationship between the media and the military. In his words:

For the military, there is no more effective public relations tool than subjecting a journalist to the heat, the dust, the bad food, the physical demands and, most of all, the gut-wrenching fear, knee-knocking anticipation and sobering realities of war day-in, day-out for extended periods of time.⁵⁹

Mr. Thorne's experiences two years later when he was embedded with the Royal 22nd Regiment Battle Group in Kabul as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan were not as positive. During this operation embedded journalist movement was restricted and they were not permitted to accompany the Canadian units on raids against suspected terrorist safe houses. The reasoning provided by the ISAF Headquarters was inconsistent and switched back and forth between operational security and political sensitivities. According to Mr. Thorne, the PA personnel in theatre and the Battle Group commander were not receptive to having embedded media in theatre and provided minimal support and access to operations. Further, he states that the commander had attempted to have him and another reporter banned from the camp on several occasions. As a journalist who was a supporter of the embedding program, Mr. Thorne was very disappointed with his second experience with embedding. Despite this setback, he continues to support the concept, stressing that better cooperation and communication are the keys to success in the future.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3

⁶⁰ Stephen Thorne, "The enemy within," *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Fall 2004. 1, 18-19.

In an editorial in the fall 2004 issue of the Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter, Mr. Thorne sees the root problem with the CF embedding program as an initiative started by the Public Affairs Branch. Though he applauds these efforts, he asserts that since this program is not top down driven by the CF chain of command the support by operational commanders is not consistent. There are no clear guidelines to commanders and journalists and, in his opinion, no operational leadership to ensure the success of the program. This is unlike the implementation of embedding in the US military. That process was initiated by the Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, who ordered the military to make it happen.

Canadian journalist Matthew Fisher was embedded with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation Iraqi Freedom in the spring of 2003. A year later he was embedded with the 3rd Battalion the Royal Canadian Regiment in Kabul during the ISAF mission. During the 600 kilometre sprint from Kuwait to Tikrit, Iraq, with his assigned unit, Mr. Fisher was made to feel welcome from the top generals to the soldiers he traveled with. He was regularly invited to intelligence and mission briefings with the clear understanding that he would not report upcoming missions, troop strengths or allied and enemy troop dispositions. He abided by these rules and his reports were never vetted. Mr. Fisher has had considerable experience covering warfare, but never before with such unprecedented access. He admitted that he formed close bonds with the soldiers he traveled with, but is emphatic that this did not colour his objectivity. He acknowledges that embedded journalists provide only a narrow view of a conflict and concedes that it is not the only way to cover a war. Despite these concerns he predicts

that “it is the way all Western armies will provide access to journalists during combat operations”⁶¹ in the future.

Mr. Fisher’s experience with embedding with Canadian troops was quite different. The CF embedded eight journalists with the 3rd Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment during ISAF operations. This venture was originally touted as a “quiet public relations offensive” and a “warts and all coverage of the Army”⁶². The first months after the deployment saw unprecedented CF coverage across the nation. This situation did not continue throughout the deployment. When comparing embedding between his US and CF experiences, Mr. Fisher found the Canadian experience lacking.

Mr. Fisher and the other journalists were not billeted with the Canadian troops in order to provide privacy to the soldiers. Their accommodation was in fact of a lower standard than the CF members. Unfortunately, this reinforced the “us and them” way of thinking. Transportation of embedded journalists was not a priority, and journalists were often left behind when patrols departed. This frustrated the journalists, leaving them unable to report on the activities of the Canadian troops. Finally, access to intelligence and intelligence officers were limited, unlike the greater access that had been provided to Stephen Thorne by LCol Stogran in 2002. Though the relationships with the soldiers did improve, the lack of support from senior personnel prevented the experience from being a

⁶¹ Matthew Fisher, “Our Matthew, embedded: The ‘tip of the tip’ in Iraq,” *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Spring 2003. 1, 18-19.

⁶² Chris Wattie, “CF on the PR Offensive, “warts and all” coverage?” *Frontline Magazine* (August 2004): 18.

true success. These circumstances were in stark contrast to Mr. Fisher's embedding experience with the Marines. Despite these criticisms, he tempers them with the fact that the circumstances of the two deployments were quite different. The Marines went to Iraq to wage war, not maintain peace as the Canadians did in Kabul. The Marines were on the move at all times and only supported embedded journalists for six weeks, vice the six months the journalists spent with the Canadian troops. Mr. Fisher feels with some fine tuning the Canadian embedding program can be improved. His recommendations include ready access to transportation to enable journalists to accompany troops on patrols and greater access to intelligence briefings to better understand the strategic situation. Finally, Mr. Fisher contends that embedded journalists must be permitted to cover operations and not be confined to a bunker with rear echelon troops when troops engage the enemy.⁶³

History has shown that the news media can have a strategic impact. It is widely believed that Walter Cronkite's assertion during the nightly news in the 1970s that the US war in Vietnam was lost caused President Johnson to reassess US involvement in the war. The President was disheartened that he no longer had "Walter's support".⁶⁴ During military operations in Somalia, the images of dead serviceman being dragged through the streets diminished US public support, eventually leading to the withdrawal of US forces from the mission. Finally, during the Gulf War the images of laser guided bombs and

⁶³ Matthew Fisher, "Sleeping with Soldiers – An Insider Perspective," *Canadian War Correspondents Association Newsletter*, Winter-Spring 2004. 1, 18-19.

⁶⁴ David Halberstam "The Best and the Brightest" (New York: Random House, 1965), 294, quoted in Marc D. Felman, "The military/media clash and the new principle of war : media spin." (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, 1993), 7.

their capabilities led to a public expectation of limited collateral damage. When collateral damage did occur and images of dead civilians were broadcast there was a concurrent decrease in public support for the war. The military needs to acknowledge the important role that the media will play in future operations. That does not in any way mean that commanders should become so accommodating to the media that they are no longer able to conduct operations, or that striving for openness jeopardizes operational security or military lives. A balance must be achieved that permits commanders to execute operations and the media to report those operations to the public. Such a situation will always involve risk, but there are ways to mitigate those risks.

Ways to Mitigate the Risks

There are ways to mitigate the risks associated with embedding journalists in CF operations and decrease the impact of these risks in the future. Lessons learned have been captured from returning contingents and commanders, as well as embedded and non-embedded journalists who have expressed their opinions on how to improve the embedding concept. Obviously, all recommendations are not necessarily achievable, but a decision not to implement change should be closely assessed against any potential benefit that may be achieved by making such a change. These recommendations have never been collated in one document and will be summarized below. The recommendations to improve the embedding program in CF operations can be grouped into three main categories. The first group of changes is for implementation at the strategic level by NDHQ. They target ways to improve the overall CF Information Operations and Public

Affairs policies and regulations and the training provided to CF members on these same policies. The next group of recommendations is primarily related to the circumstances surrounding when a decision is made to embed journalists in a deploying CF Task Force. Finally, the manner in which the media and the military interact, both in garrison and when deployed can be improved.

The policies that govern the relationship between the media and the military form the foundation of that relationship and are the logical starting point for change. Even before a situation develops that may see a CF Task Force deploy, there are changes to current DND/CF policies and regulations, culture and standard operating procedures that can be made. They will create an environment that will make the embedding of journalists in CF operations more successful. The current PA policies are well written and mirror similar policies in the Allied militaries with a few exceptions that should be considered for addition into CF IO and PA policies.

The impact that PA activities can have on the morale of the military members, both in Canada and deployed should not be underestimated. CF operations cannot be successfully conducted without the support and commitment of its soldiers, sailors and airmen. If CF members are indeed the CF's greatest resource, then their support should not be taken for granted. Public Affairs activities need to focus on generating and maintaining that support, in addition to the support of the general public. Including this facet into the current PA policies will highlight the significant impact PA activities can have on CF morale. This greater awareness by CF members, especially commanders,

should assist in providing further incentives to develop positive media-military relations. Positive relationships in Canada will serve as a basis for positive relationships on deployed operations between the CF members and commanders and embedded media.

CF Public Affairs policies should also be amended to include the potential impact PA policies can have on the enemy's will to continue to conduct operations against CF Task Forces. Granted the CF does not possess the sheer military might of the US, but one should not undervalue the potential impact of offensive IO on operations. The erosion of local support for the enemy, frustrating his plans and counteracting his own Information Operations can all contribute to creating a more benign environment in which to conduct CF operations. These two proposed changes to CF Public Affairs policies may appear as merely cosmetic, but shouldn't be discounted. Adapting future PA activities to conform to these policy changes can contribute to improving the morale and confidence of CF members both in Canada and abroad. There could also be a reduced risk on a deployed operation if robust offensive IO activities are conducted. Undoubtedly these benefits would be of interest to commanders and should be brought to their attention, especially if these improvements can be achieved by simply implementing and supporting a robust IO campaign in their AOR. Embedded journalists in a deployed Task Force can be a key component in such a campaign.

Current CF Public Affairs policies encourage all CF members to be more open and approachable with the media. The recent policy shift within the CF to a more expeditionary role will increase the potential of CF members deploying more often in the

future. Interactions between the media and individual CF members will likely increase as a result of this change. Participating in media interviews is not a natural form of interaction. It takes practice to become comfortable and credible in front of the camera or over the airwaves. Accordingly, Public Affairs training must be incorporated in some manner in all CF career courses, at all levels to ensure that CF members have some exposure to this type of training. As members progress in rank, the training provided on more senior courses should be more detailed and involved to prepare senior leaders throughout their career with the tools to successfully interact with the media. This training will be invaluable when the CF member finds themselves deploying with embedded media.

Guidelines and interviewing techniques are not included in current CF Public Affairs regulations as this is usually covered during PA training. CF personnel who may find themselves deploying with embedded journalists lack a resource to provide guidance on interacting with the media. This shortfall is even more critical when the CF member has no previous training. A new PA regulation should be developed that can outline successful interviewing techniques and provide guidance.

The Public Affairs Chapter of the American British Canadian Australian (ABCA) Handbook provides a useful list of PA Guidance that could be used as a start point for a new CF regulation. The key messages should include an affirmation of the right for military personnel to talk to the media. Military personnel should be aware that everything they say is on the record, and that they could be quoted by name. Personnel

should therefore avoid discussions of classified or sensitive information and refrain from commenting on policy. They need to restrict their comments to their field of expertise. Honesty needs to be the cornerstone of any interview and personnel should not be reluctant to say they don't know an answer if that is indeed the case. Journalists should be treated as the professionals they are and military personnel should make every effort to respect their deadlines. When speaking to the media, personnel should keep their answers brief and to the point, avoiding military or technical jargon. Finally the most successful interview will occur when the person being interviewed is relaxed, friendly and maintains eye contact with the interviewer.⁶⁵ Though these interview techniques are mostly common sense, they may not readily come to mind when the CF member is unexpectedly faced with a media interview by an embedded journalist. This training needs to stress the importance of trying not to control the agenda or the information released to the media on a deployed operation, but rather to develop a positive relationship based on respect and trust.⁶⁶ A new CF regulation outlining these techniques would be a valuable resource for all deploying CF personnel.

The final recommendation for CF publications is regarding the DCDS Direction for International Operations (DDIO). This document was developed to provide deploying commanders and units with specific direction on the various components of a deployed operation such as IO, Rules of Engagement, Logistics, Health Services etc that

⁶⁵ United States. American-British-Canadian-Australian (ABCA) Armies. *ABCA Coalition Operations Handbook*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, November 2001), 15-5 – 15-6

⁶⁶ Major-General A. Leslie, "Media Relations: A Commander's Perspective" (lecture, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, 31 August 2004).

are unique to deployed operations. Functional Offices of Primary Interest (OPIs) are each responsible for updating their specific chapter as required. The DDIO was intended to be the “go to” document for deployed units. Currently, the DDIO contains direction on Information Operations. Public Affairs as a component of IO is included, but no direction is provided with respect to dealing with the media or the potential that media may be embedded with the Task Force.⁶⁷

The decision to embed journalists with a deploying Task Force will not be automatic, but all deploying Task Forces will need to interact with the media during the course of their deployment. Clear direction on the CF policy for dealing with the media should be included in the DDIO as well as the potential that journalists may be embedded with the Task Force. A CF instruction titled *Embedding Media with CF Formations/Units* provides clear guidance to commanders and units on dealing with embedded media including accreditation, release of information, logistics support and ground rules for embedded media.⁶⁸ It may not be necessary to include this Instruction in the DDIO since embedding won't necessarily occur on all deployments, but there must be a reference included to advise commanders that such a document exists and where to access it.

In all other aspects of military operations the CF trains as it fights, utilizing doctrine, equipment and tactics that it would use in wartime. Public Affairs activities and media operations should be no different. The CF should actively seek out and

⁶⁷ Department of National Defence, “DCDS Direction for International Operations,” http://hr.d-ndhq.dnd.ca/j1coord/engraph/references_e.asp; Internet; accesses 26 January 2005.

⁶⁸ Department of National Defence. Associate Deputy Minister (Public Affairs)/J5 Public Affairs Instruction 0301 *Embedding Media with CF Formations and Units*.

incorporate media involvement in all training exercises of any significant length. Encouraging interactions between the media and the military in peacetime will generate a better understanding of each other's roles in society and serve to create the basis for better working relationships. LCol Stogran served as a media escort as a young Captain during RV '85. He states that this experience helped form his future opinions about the media and guided his successful interactions with the media during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.⁶⁹ If such experience proves beneficial, it would logically follow that such interactions will benefit the journalist as well.

It is often the lack of understanding about the military's roles, responsibilities and culture that contribute to the friction between the media and the military. This lack of understanding can lead to inaccurate reporting, or reporting about insignificant issues vice major ones, simply to make headlines. In the end, "understanding, not mere information, makes the difference between fair coverage and a negative feeding frenzy."⁷⁰ Less than one per cent of our population is in uniform...we no longer have military garrisons in our urban areas."⁷¹ Consequently the public is exposed to fewer and fewer soldiers and the issues that involve the military. The same can be said of the media, but interactions between the media and the military under training conditions will lead to a better understanding when the two groups deploy to a theatre of operations. Changes to policies and training are the easiest things to change once a commitment to

⁶⁹ Stogran. "Train, certify warcos, then give 'em access, says Canada's top soldier in Afghanistan,"..., 16.

⁷⁰ McLane. "Reporting from the Sandstorm: An Appraisal of Embedding."..., 78.

⁷¹ Robert Smol, "Basic Training of a Different Kind," *Esprit de Corps* Volume 11 Issue 9 (August 2004). 14.

change is made. It is this commitment to change that is in itself the most difficult thing to achieve. This is because in order for change to be successful and fulfill the desired goals, the people instituting the change must stand behind all the measures being instituted.

The next group of recommendations is primarily related to the circumstances surrounding when a decision is made to embed journalists in a deploying CF Task Force. The decision to deploy a CF Task Force is made at NDHQ, so it is at this level that a supportive environment of embedding needs to be established first. Prior to any deployment with embedded journalists, various challenges and risks need to be assessed by NDHQ staff in consultation with the deploying Task Force commander and a decision made if embedding is appropriate to the upcoming operation. There will be many challenges including the security of media personnel, the legal issues surrounding embedding, distance from Canada, the harsh environment, limited infrastructure and the costs associated with supporting embedded reporters. There will also be risks that will need to be carefully considered. They include a limited initial awareness of mission goals on the part of the media, media fatigue, the erosion of privacy of the troops, less control and packaging of the Public Affairs message and most importantly operational security.⁷² None of these challenges or risks should be taken lightly. Each must be examined and weighed against the potential benefits positive media reporting could have on the Task Forces ability to conduct their mission. One must also consider the beneficial exposure the CF will receive in the eye of the Canadian public.

⁷² Leslie. "Media Relations: A Commander's Perspective".

Once a decision to proceed with embedding is made, one of the key resources of the commander of a CF Task Force will be Public Affairs assets. There must be a commitment by Public Affairs staff at NDHQ to ensure that the Task Force Commander is provided with sufficient PA assets to permit him to conduct his mission. Commanders of CF Task Forces with embedded journalists, especially those who have not deployed with embedded journalists before, will have a greater requirement for sound, immediate on-site advice, necessitating a strong link to national PA assets in NDHQ. The PA message being disseminated in an AOR must be consistent across all the forces in theatre and with the government of Canada.⁷³ This will only be achieved if all Public Affairs personnel at strategic, operational and tactical levels are committed to the embedding program.

The chain of command of the deploying Task Force and within NDHQ must be fully engaged from the start and be completely supportive of the arrangements that have been coordinated for embedding the media.

Media presence on the battlefield is a reality that commanders must consider during mission planning. ... Failure in this regard will not prevent the media from covering operations, but it will ensure that the media will use alternate sources for information, and coalition forces will have lost the ability to influence the outcome of a story.⁷⁴

Proper planning will ensure that this doesn't occur. The PA plans for coalition partners and parent organizations like NATO and the UN must also be coordinated and

⁷³ Henault, Lieutenant-General R. R. "Modern Canadian Generalship in Conflict Resolution: Kosovo as a Case Study." In *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*, edited by Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris. St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001, 281-282.

⁷⁴ American-British-Canadian-Australian (ABCA) Armies. *ABCA Coalition Operations Handbook...*, 15-1.

complementary to the Task Force's PA plan.⁷⁵ The liaison necessary to ensure the success of the embedding program should be coordinated by NDHQ personnel prior to the Task Force deploying and not be left to the commander to coordinate after arrival in the AOR. Any disconnects in PA policies between the Task Force, NDHQ and the HQ within the AOR, need to be reconciled prior to the deployment. Ultimately all players need to working towards a common goal and following the same guidelines and procedures.

The manner in which a Task Force deploys and is employed in a theatre of operations need not be adversely affected by the embedding of journalists. Simple changes can be implemented by deploying commanders and their Task Forces that can create an environment for a positive and successful operation for both the media and the military. Public Affairs personnel in deployed operations must be committed to creating a synergistic relationship between the deployed Task Force and the embedded journalists. All advice provided to the commander must be focused toward achieving this goal. The PA plan may highlight the requirement for additional equipment, such as vehicles be deployed to facilitate the embedding of journalists. Media embedding arrangements must be in phase with the mission build-up including accommodation, rations, transportation and communications arrangements.⁷⁶ These issues should be assessed and resolved prior to the Task Force deploying. Additionally, the support responsibilities must be within the capabilities of the deploying Task Force and not conflict with their ability to conduct their primary mission.

⁷⁵ Leslie, "Media Relations: A Commander's Perspective".

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Task Force commanders will set the tone for the relationship between the embedded journalists and their units. They must ensure that support for the embedding program is well known throughout the unit. The issuance of soldiers cards to all deployed personnel is a common practice and helps keep soldiers informed about their mission in case they are asked. This practice also instils in soldiers a confidence in their mission that will resonate when they are interviewed by the media. That message and confidence will be conveyed to the Canadian public, further strengthening public support. Rear-Admiral D.E. Miller was the Commander of the Combat Logistics Force Fleet during the 1990-91 Gulf War and he encouraged deployed commanders to:

Interview every reporter who joins your command in a operational mission to do a story. If you as a Commander cannot deal with media personally then make sure you pick a combat operator as a trusted agent who does. You will be able to affect your mission positively if you deal with the media up front, honestly and with a cooperative attitude even when you may not like what they print.⁷⁷

This practice will send a positive message to both the embedded journalists and the members of the Task Force and serve as a solid foundation for future relations.

Former CDS, General R.R. Henault, in his article on *Modern Canadian Generalship in Conflict Resolution* recommended that when dealing with the media, commanders should ensure that the selection of a spokesperson is commensurate with the significance of the event and that this person must be made regularly available to media. “This positive interaction between the military and the public is necessary and beneficial, and is a positive by-product of the Information Age and the changing expectations of

⁷⁷ Miller, Rear-Admiral D.E. “The Naval Commander in joint Operations in the Gulf War.” In *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*, edited by Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001, 238.

Canadian society.”⁷⁸ The commitment of Task Force commanders will be the key to the success of the embedding of journalists on CF operations. Their actions and interactions with the embedded journalists will establish the cooperative environment that will contribute to the success of the program. Commanders will also serve as the example for their troops and their relationship with the embedded journalists.

Major-General (retired) Lewis W. MacKenzie was arguably one of the best known and recognizable Canadian generals in the 1990s. During his tour as the Commander of the UNPROFOR operations in the Former Yugoslavia he was in daily contact with the media from various nations. He wrote of his experiences in the book *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*. In his chapter article entitled *The Media as a Tool of the Military Commander*, Major-General MacKenzie stressed the importance of Task Force commanders taking the time to interact with the media on operations.

He distilled his thoughts on the responsibilities of commanders into five simple statements. He warned against giving long briefings, rather encouraging commanders to leave time for questions instead. This approach promotes more open dialogue between the commander and the media. He advised against using spokesmen, recommending that if the commander is not available to have subordinate commanders vice staff take the questions. This sends that message that the commander is committed to dealing with the media as openly as possible. Major-General MacKenzie advocates providing the media with the info necessary for their personal security when this information is available, to help reinforce a cooperative relationship. Finally, he warns commanders to remember

⁷⁸ Henault. “Modern Canadian Generalship in Conflict Resolution: Kosovo as a Case Study.” ..., 282.

who their audience is – the Canadian public. Commanders have a responsibility to avoid cover-ups and guilt and to tell everything without omission and opinion.⁷⁹ He felt that these simple guidelines would create a positive, cooperative environment between CF Task Force commanders and the media.

Though commanders are often the focus of information on CF Task Forces, they should not be considered the sole source for the media to interact with. Major-General MacKenzie highlighted that the Canadian public would likely, most easily relate to the average soldier. He recommended that:

Whenever possible have soldiers or junior ranks do the talking to the media once the more formal bits are over...[They] tend to be a bit nervous.. which surprisingly adds to their credibility with the viewing and listening audience. Soldiers give the type of sound bites the media loves and they are the best advertisement for our profession and country.⁸⁰

It is this type of connection with the Canadian public that needs to be achieved. Embedded media due to their continual presence in the AOR can assist in gaining and maintaining this support. In fact, Major-General MacKenzie went on to refer to the media as Friendly Forces and feels that they should be therefore treated as such.⁸¹

Rear-Admiral Miller, General Henault and Major-General MacKenzie all had slightly different approaches when dealing with the media during their careers and during their experiences as commanders. The common theme of creating a foundation of

⁷⁹ MacKenzie, Major-General (retired) Lewis W. “The Media as a tool of the Military Commander.” In *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*, edited by Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris St. Catherine’s: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001, 405-408.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 405.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 405.

respect, trust and professionalism resulted in successful media relationships for all of them. Future Task Force commanders would likely experience the same successes if they follow these same theme's when dealing with embedded journalists. The situation of embedded journalists may tempt some commanders to use the Public Affairs network to achieve other goals, including deceiving the enemy, to further mission objectives. Commanders must be careful that this situation is not abused or tainted in any way. The use of Public Affairs whether it be intentionally or unintentionally to conduct Psychological operations has the potential to destroy CF credibility with both the media and the Canadian public.

The Lessons Learned on embedded media submitted by the 3rd Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group after their tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2003 offers further recommendations that will be published by Land Force Doctrine and Training System. Some are repeat of what has been discussed previously, reinforcing the validity of the recommendations listed above. The remaining recommendations address some of the concerns expressed by former CF Task Force commanders and the journalists who have been embedded with the CF in the past five years. Embedded positions should be given to journalists who are willing to cover the operations for an extended period of time as this fosters a better understanding of the mission. This was certainly the case during LCol Stogran's deployment to Afghanistan. Equal access for all embedded journalists is critical to maintaining harmony. Most embedded media want to be assigned to fighting units, to be where the action will take place. If this is not possible due to unit size, then a rotation system that permits all embedded journalists to spend

some time with these units needs to be devised. The tactical transportation of the media can be a challenge, requiring extra efforts to be made to develop alternate solutions. Theatre specific ground rules regarding the release of sensitive information should be established early and be clearly communicated to embedded journalists. If properly educated, the majority of journalists will not compromise security through the release of sensitive information. Care must be taken when allowing media access to sensitive operations or information, but exposure to this material should not be rejected out of hand.⁸²

Though Matthew Fisher, who was one of the embedded journalists, had some criticisms of the embedding program during that period, he did concede that the real test occurred during the fatal mine strike in October 2003. The Canadian Task Force commander, Major-General Leslie ensured that embedded journalists received information before media back home did, and the embedded journalists were permitted timely access to key sources of information. Matthew Fisher's final analysis was that the shortcomings he notes can be fixed through good will and fine tuning.⁸³

The final group of recommendations involves the embedded journalists themselves and the manner in which the media and the military interact, both in garrison and when deployed. The first aspect is media familiarization with the military. The Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute with the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary has developed a two-week intensive course with the

⁸² Lessons Learned Draft. "OP Athena Roto 0 – Embedded Media." Task Force PAO, 2004, 1-14.

⁸³ Fisher. "Sleeping with Soldiers – An Insider Perspective,"..., 19.

“aim to introduce prospective journalists to the CF and issues involved in covering the Canadian military.”⁸⁴ During this training journalism students are taught the rank structure, history and organization of the CF, in addition to receiving instruction on different types of weapons, vehicles and kit used by the average soldier. “The main themes of the program are understanding and respecting the unique culture and mindset of the military.”⁸⁵

Not all of the journalism students will go on to cover the military in their careers, but one mustn't forget that journalists are also part of the Canadian public. As such, the investment in time will never be wasted if the student leaves with a better understanding of the military and its roles. Such training results in “a journalist that may never have been in uniform, but who will at least have a working knowledge of those who are.”⁸⁶ This benefit will be even more apparent when that same journalist is embedded in a deploying CF Task Force. This impact should not be underestimated and the CF should seek out opportunities to establish similar programs in cooperation with other journalism schools across the country. The minimal cost associated with such a program can potentially yield great dividends.

With respect to the journalists actually selected to be embedded in operational units there are some improvements to be made as well. Embedded journalists are

⁸⁴ Smol. “Basic Training of a Different Kind,” ..., 13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

required to agree to and sign a comprehensive set of ground rules prior to deployment. Signing the rules is mandatory prior to a journalist being embedded in a Task Force. The ground rules are quite specific about the requirement for the embedded journalists to provide his/her own equipment and kit, to be physically fit, have the proper inoculations and insurance coverage. All of these rules are straight forward and generally agreed by most journalists.⁸⁷

There is however, one aspect missing from the ground rules. Pre-deployment training of both a general and technical nature should be offered to and agreed by all deploying journalists. The general training should include the Task Force's mission, concept of operations, AOR. Also of interest would be information on the command relationships regarding superior headquarters and co-located contingents from other countries in order to properly orient the embedded journalist to the task at hand. Journalists often have significant information about the future AOR and effort should be made to turn this into a reciprocal information gathering exercise that would benefit both parties.

Each deployment may have its own unique requirements, but some training would be generic to all. Technical training should include First Aid, fire response, vehicle access, explosive and weapons safety training for the safety of both the embedded journalists and the members of the Task Force. A well informed and trained embedded journalist will be less of a burden to a Task Force and likely integrate into the Task Force

⁸⁷ Department of National Defence. Associate Deputy Minister (Public Affairs)/J5 Public Affairs Instruction 0301 *Embedding Media with CF Formations and Units*.

more quickly and with fewer problems. Since 1999, the German Bundeswehr has run a similar form of training for war correspondents likely to be assigned to crisis areas. The course includes how to extract themselves from minefields, finding cover in a field environment, transiting illegal checkpoints and what should be in an emergency pack.⁸⁸ Though the German training is not intended for embedded journalists, its intent would be very similar if incorporated into a Canadian requirement for them.

Canadian journalists, embedded or otherwise, will interact with military forces in an AOR and if they don't possess the skills to operate and protect themselves, the military may be tasked at some point to assist them should they end up in situations they cannot handle. Embedded journalists should be issued with a battlefield aide memoire that provides non-military personnel with a brief explanation about how an army, air force or navy unit is organized, the rank structure, common military acronyms and information unique to that unit that may ease the integration into the unit. Veteran journalists will not likely require such an aide memoire, but it is more useful to "assume your audience knows next to nothing about the military."⁸⁹ Rarely has too much information been the situation when the media and the military have deployed together.

Finally, the most important way to improve media-military relations for the future is to learn from the past. All CF deployments are required to submit Lessons Learned reports to the DCDS upon completion of the operation. These reports are collected and

⁸⁸ Egan, F. translation "Obey. Don't lie. No tricks." How the Bundeswehr teaches War Correspondents," *Münchner Merkur* 30 August 2004.

⁸⁹ MacKenzie. "The Media as a tool of the Military Commander." ..., 408.

distributed. The Canadian Army Lessons Learned Centre collates these lessons learned from all missions and produces a journal called “Dispatches” on key topics.

The Dispatches on Media Relations was produced in March 1997 and provides an abundance of information on dealing with the media. It also highlights, the important role Public Affairs plays in gaining and maintaining public support and gives advice on how to conduct an interview with the media. The information is presented in an accessible format and in plain language making it user friendly.⁹⁰ The only drawback to the document is that it is not very well read. Excerpts from it should be reproduced in *The Maple Leaf* on a quarterly basis to better educate all CF personnel. Commanders should make it mandatory reading in their units and incorporate Public Affairs training into unit Professional Development training on a regular basis. This increased level of awareness, when added to training that all CF personnel receive during career courses, will serve as a solid foundation for the pre-deployment training that they need prior to deployment.

These Lessons Learned, while valuable documents, only present the military perspective on the experience. Feedback from embedded and non-embedded journalists should also be solicited to ensure a more accurate measure of the successes and challenges of the operation. Oftentimes, articles that are viewed as negative about the military are discounted out of hand. Constructive criticism about the embedding program from respected journalists can maximize the force multiplier potential of embedding.

⁹⁰ Department of National Defence. Army Lessons Learned Centre Dispatches *Media Relations*. (Kingston: DND Canada, 1997), 1-24.

There are inherent risks to the military when media are embedded with deployed contingents. There are also ways to mitigate those risks. Increased media awareness training for all CF personnel during career courses will make these members more aware of the significant role that the media plays in all CF operations, domestic or international. The doctrine and policies that govern this training must be expanded to include all potential impacts the media may have on an operation, including that which affects morale and disrupts the enemy.

A commitment to a positive media-military relationship must start at NDHQ and flow through all levels of the chain of command including the Task Force Commander and deployed CF personnel. This commitment must be initiated early in the planning stages of an operation and continue into the theatre of operations. The CF must create opportunities to interact with the media by liaising with the journalism schools to provide budding journalists the opportunity to learn more about the military first hand. During training operations, the media should be invited to participate and the media component must be realistically exercised. This will increase media awareness in CF personnel and develop relationships with members of the media, that will pay dividends in the long run.

When the decision is made to embed media in a CF Task Force, appropriate arrangements must be coordinated to properly support the media. Realistic training must be provided to the media. A well informed and trained embedded journalist will be less of a burden to a Task Force and will likely integrate into the Task Force more quickly

and with fewer problems. When operations come to a close, lessons learned from the practice of embedding journalists must be captured from both the deployed Task Forces and the media. Lessons learned are not of value unless they are indeed learned. Appropriate changes to operating procedures, CF policies and the embedding program need to be made. In turn, these lessons must be effectively communicated to the CF in general for the experience to be of any value.

The media-military relationship is here to stay. The risks associated with this relationship should not be ignored and can be mitigated. Learning from past experiences will assist in setting the framework for future interactions between these two professions. Despite often divergent objectives between the media and the military, both professions serve the Canadian public. With this in mind, focus instead should be placed upon creating an environment of respect, trust and professionalism that permits both groups to do their job. Rear Admiral D.E. Miller aptly summarized this, when he stated:

paying or not paying close attention to all aspects of the media can make or break a campaign even if it is operationally successful... You will be able to affect your mission positively if you deal with the media up front, honestly, with a cooperative attitude even when you might not like what they print.”⁹¹

Conclusion

The modern relationship between the military and the media has ranged from frictional to heated, to fiery. Oftentimes each group sees them self as the protectors of the public. The media serves as the conduit between the public and the military and in a

⁹¹ Miller. “The Naval Commander in Joint Operations in the Gulf War.”..., 238.

perfect world, will provide the public with fair and balanced reporting about conflict and the military's role in it. Military operations, by their very nature rely on secrecy, and to the uninformed observer, media scrutiny can jeopardize those same operations. The availability of current news in its many forms permits today's citizens to access news as it happens and from various sources in order to form their opinions. This immediacy results in fierce competition among media outlets to report the news first before their competitors. The military has grave concerns that such immediacy may jeopardize their operations and the lives of their personnel if operational security is violated.

A recent trend to improve this relationship has been to embed journalists in military units. Some military commanders express concern about operational security and object that the logistics and coordination required to support and protect embedded reporters is not worth the small benefit. Some journalists too, call into question the objectivity of reporters who are reliant on their military subjects for support and protection.

From a CF perspective, the media is actually a force multiplier during operations. The media can help gain and maintain public support for CF operations. In a theatre of operations, media can assist in improving relations with local civilians. Media coverage can also enable CF units to achieve information superiority against an enemy or belligerents who would wish to discredit CF operations. Embedding journalists in deployed military units is appropriate for the CF.

In support of this thesis, this research paper examined CF policies on Information Operations and Public Affairs in conjunction with those of Canada's major allies. It identified the key aspects of each profession, highlighting the differences and similarities between the two. The case for embedding journalists in CF units on deployed operations was evaluated, citing recent successes and failures. Finally, recommendations to mitigate the risks of embedding journalists were provided.

The development of sound Information Operations and Public Affairs policies and doctrine is but the first step in creating positive relationships with the media. Vigorous application of these same policies and doctrine throughout the organization in training, garrison and operational environments is essential. Despite the positive guidance provided by CF Public Affairs policies, there are still those within the military who are reluctant to recognize the value of Public Affairs operations and their role in daily CF domestic and deployed operations. The positive impact that media relations can have on operations is often underestimated. The military culture of operational security does not easily lend itself to open relationships with the media. Concern about operational security is often cited as a reason to limit media involvement in operations.

Today's information rich environment has the potential to result in greater breaches of operational security than any journalist could achieve. In fact a considerable amount of information on military operations can be found on open sources on the Internet. This is not to say that the military should cease to be concerned about operational security, but rather to accept that some aspects are beyond their control.

Through the development of positive relations with media personnel and outlets, the military should instead seek to minimize risks where they can and accept that some risks are part of warfare. The embedding of journalists in military operations will not reduce operational security risks, but employed in an environment of trust and respect will not necessarily cause them either.

History has shown that the news media can have a strategic impact. The military needs to acknowledge the important role that the media will play in future operations. That does not in any way mean that commanders should become so accommodating to the media that they are no longer able to conduct operations, or that striving for openness jeopardizes operational security or military lives. A balance must be achieved that permits commanders to execute operations and the media to report those operations to the public. Such a situation will always involve risk, but there are ways to mitigate those risks.

Increased media awareness training will make CF personnel more aware of the significant role media will play in CF operations. The doctrine and policies that govern this training must be expanded to include all potential impacts the media may have on an operation. A commitment to a positive media-military relationship must start at NDHQ and flow through all levels of the chain of command. This commitment must be initiated early in the planning stages of an operation and continue into the theatre of operations. The CF must create opportunities to interact with the media to provide journalists the opportunity to learn more about the military first hand. This will also increase media

awareness in CF personnel and develop relationships with members of the media, that will pay dividends in the long run.

Decisions to embed media in a CF Task Force, must be coordinated to properly support the media. This includes realistic training, resulting in a well informed and trained embedded journalist who will be less of a burden to a deployed CF Task Force. At the end of operations, lessons learned must be captured from both the deployed Task Forces and the media and appropriate changes to operating procedures, CF policies and the embedding program made. In turn, these lessons must be effectively communicated to the CF in general for the experience to be of any value.

The media-military relationship is here to stay. The risks associated with this relationship should not be ignored and can be mitigated. Learning from past experiences will assist in setting the framework for future interactions between these two professions. Despite often divergent objectives between the media and the military, both professions serve the Canadian public. With this in mind, focus instead should be placed upon creating an environment of respect, trust and professionalism that permits both groups to do their job.

The practice of embedding will support the main objective of the PA plan to gain and maintain the support of Canadians and of the local population and reinforce the morale of the deployed military members. In a theatre of operations, media will help to improve relations with local civilians. Media coverage will also help achieve information

superiority against an enemy or belligerents who would wish to discredit CF operations. Embedded media will serve as a force multiplier for CF operations. The benefits achieved will be significant when compared to the relatively small effort and cost expended to establish such a program. Embedding journalists in deployed military units is appropriate for the CF.

The practice of embedding journalists in CF deployed operations will have its growing pains, but the potential benefits to both the media and the military are worth the extra effort. The words of veteran journalist, Mike Wallace aptly summarize how the media-military relationship needs to evolve in the future “when a free country goes to war the press and the military need each other. One to fight and the other to explain why. Only in that way can they accomplish their respective missions.”

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⁹² Wallace, Mike. *Uneasy partners, the press and the military*. New York: A&E Television Network, 1996.

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