

1991

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Recommended Citation

Winter, James P.. (1991). Truth as the First Casualty: Mainstream Media Portrayal of the Gulf War. *The Electronic Journal of Communication*, 2 (1).
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The Electronic Journal of Communication/ La Revue Électronique de Communication

The First Peer Reviewed Electronically Distributed Journal in the Social Sciences

**** WINTER ***** EJC/REC Vol. 2, No. 1, 1991 ***

TRUTH AS THE FIRST CASUALTY:
MAINSTREAM MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF THE GULF WAR

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Abstract. Mainstream news media coverage of the Persian Gulf War is examined in a case study comparison of the conflicting perspectives of political economy and (U.S.) cultural studies as typified by John Fiske.

The media presented a united front on the U.S. political, economic, and military goals in the war. As such, they formed an indispensable part of the State apparatus, omitting perspectives which are fundamental to a counter-hegemonic perspective.

Journalists and the news media generally accomplished the foregoing in two ways. First, they mainly relayed the perspective of the U.S. administration, including its military and academic collaborators, in an isolated and uncritical fashion. This was done to the exclusion of the alternative perspectives elaborated herein. Second, they adopted this dominant perspective as their own view, and passed that along to viewers with resultant heightened credibility.

This paper places the Persian Gulf crisis and war within a broader political, economic and historical framework. It adopts a critical perspective on the mainstream media framing which limited reality to the "common sense" range of the dominant ideology.

To parody the words of Winston Churchill, never have so many been manipulated so much, by so few. (Aldous Huxley, 1958)[1]

It was early March, 1991, and at the Michigan State fairgrounds, a 23-year veteran Detroit TV reporter was signing autographs for several fans who assigned him star status. The occasion was a welcome home ceremony for Captain Steven Tait, USAF, a Michigan resident and the first pilot to shoot down an Iraqi fighter jet in the Gulf War. Addressing the crowd, Tait said:

On the war effort itself, I think we contributed two things. The top military leaders did an outstanding job. The other thing that was successful was the technology that we had and it's the taxpayers out there that buy the technology that we need to do that! (Applause)[2]

A Vietnam veteran interviewed by the reporter was somewhat disgruntled. Partially echoing U.S. President George Bush, he said that in Vietnam, "We had our hands tied behind our backs because of the politicians." (This was only a partial echo, because Bush also tended to blame the media and the public for the U.S. "failure" in Vietnam.)

The next day, Sunday, the assignment editor told a student observer that there was "not much going on today. We need to formulate stories, but not make them up. If you have any ideas, let me know." She sent the same veteran reporter to yet another "Welcome Home Troops" rally (this time in Taylor, Michigan), where he interviewed a soldier in uniform about the reaction the troops were getting at home. Afterwards, the reporter learned that the young man never went to the Gulf, but was ready to leave "on a moment's notice." For the on-air TV news story, the message, "Almost served in the Gulf" was superimposed over the video footage of the soldier's interview.

Maybe Andy Warhol was right after all: everyone gets to be famous for 15 minutes.

The reporter too, mimicked Bush, when in his "stand-up" at the end of the news clip he said: "Many here agree with President Bush when he says the Vietnam syndrome is over."

The media generally also appeared to subscribe to Bush's interpretation of the Vietnam syndrome, and did their best to overcome it too.

Theoretical Framework

The primary focus of this paper is on the degree to which the information presented in mainstream media reflected the explanations and interpretations offered by the U.S. military and administration regarding the events in the Persian Gulf in 1990-91. I will examine these events and the media's role in light of two competing theories, which I have chosen to call the "normative consensus" theory, versus the notions of journalistic empowerment and consequent theory of "media pluralism."

The normative consensus view holds that along with other major cultural institutions, the media serve to "construct an order that is consonant with the needs and interests of dominant groups" and which "has the ideological effect of reproducing hegemony." [3] This latter concept is

attributed to the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci, who explicated it in the following fashion:

Corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the merely economic group, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups. This is the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures; it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become "party," come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself over the whole social area - bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a "universal" plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups.[4]

With regard to the role of the media specifically, Armand Mattelart has summed this up as, "...when the media actually begin to function as an integral part of the State apparatus,"[5] a notion which is closely linked to Gramsci's description of the media as a "hegemonic apparatus." In the recent communication literature, this position is represented by those who may be combined for purposes of convenience and brevity under the label of political economists.[6]

In contrast, the pluralistic view of journalistic (and audience) empowerment hold that there is a competing elite structure which leads to "ideological conflict" in the media.[7] As Ericson, et al. conclude:

Contrary to the dominant normative view in the academic literature that journalism is characterized by consensus among its practitioners, we found persistent and pervasive differences, divisions, and conflict. Editors struggled to control... Reporters asserted their autonomy... This activity ensured that there was real equivocality, and openings for discovery and alternatives, in their work.[8]

The pluralist stance was exemplified by the late Canadian sociologist John Porter, in his classic text, *The Vertical Mosaic* (1965). Porter's examination of census data contradicted the "Horatio Alger" myth of the self-made man, and as such undermined notions of individual determinism. However, similar to Ericson, et al., and others in the current literature, although he recognized the role of the media in the "ideological system," i.e., maintenance of the social structure, Porter saw that system as associated with but distinct from other power systems. He argued that the media and other components of that system provide the justification for separate political, social and economic systems. In short, he envisioned a pluralist, competing elite structure.[9]

Porter's student Wallace Clement, in *The Canadian Corporate Elite* (1975) and works since then, differs. Clement drew on C. Wright Mills and Ralph Miliband to argue that the media in general and the press in particular do not

constitute a free, open, or diverse marketplace, any more than does the marketplace generally. Instead, the free marketplace of ideas is an unattained ideal, the myth of which serves to legitimate existing monopoly power and class privilege.[10]

Clement argued that rather than having a pluralistic society of competing elites, we have a monolithic elite system. He provided evidence of considerable overlap between the media and economic elites, concluding that "in large part, they are the same people,"[11] thus buttressing his position that the monopoly of a few dominant sources has put an end to diversity and the so-called "open market" situation.[12]

Thus, Clement argued that if the function of the media is to relay or translate information for the public, they must be autonomous from other elites if they are to do this in a detached and objective manner. They must be part of the pluralist system described by Porter. His research, however, indicated that they are not.

One outcropping of the pluralist view held by Porter and others is the "cultural studies" rubric, perhaps typified by Stuart Hall in the British school, and John Fiske in the U.S. In Fiske's view, mainstream media constitute "polysemic texts that can be read in different ways."

"Dallas" is a remarkably "open" program: Rick Altman's description of it as a "menu" from which various, differently socially situated viewers choose different "meals" is a productive one. It is certainly much more productive than seeing the text as a singular determinate, closing down its meanings and producing a singular dominant ideology.[13]

For the most part the research by Fiske and others focuses on the process of self-emancipation realized by audiences, through "strategies of resistance," a view which ultimately proclaims "the people" as "the driving force behind the cultural industries." [14] At base, however, it can be seen as fundamentally in agreement with the argument of Ericson, et al. that the media (by implication, both in news and in entertainment) are open and diverse, and ultimately with the liberal-pluralist view that all is basically right with the media, and consequently with democracy.

In light of the above, my purpose is twofold. First, I will demonstrate how the mainstream media presented Gramsci's "unison of political and economic aims" on the Persian Gulf War. Second, I will delineate the (hidden) corporate or "State apparatus" interests which were not examined by the media, and which are fundamental to a counter-hegemonic perspective. As part of this latter process, and in order to contextualize adequately these events within the broader framework of political economy, it is necessary to elaborate the untold story which was omitted from the mainstream news media,

The Ubiquitous War Hero

By the beginning of March, George Bush had declared victory. He also had closed the books on another chapter of historical engineering. "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam

syndrome once and for all," Bush gushed in what The New York Times described as "a spontaneous [sic] burst of pride" following the war.[15]

This was in keeping with his press conference held to announce the war, only hours after the massive bombing of Iraqi forces began on January 16. "This will not be another Vietnam," Bush said, evidently promising to deliver public support for the war. "Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world. They will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their backs."

The U.S. dropped 4,600,000 tons of bombs on Vietnam, and 400,000 tons of napalm. They sent 2,150,000 troops to Vietnam, of whom 57,900 died while killing 1,921,000 Vietnamese.[16] So, in what way was the U.S. fighting with "one hand tied behind their backs?" It certainly wasn't for a lack of military firepower. Noam Chomsky has suggested that this refers to the Soviet Union as a superpower deterrent to unlimited U.S. aggression, a deterrent which internal problems in the USSR have since removed.[17] As mentioned above, another possibility is the lack of public support for a sustained war abroad.

Bush addressed the troops at his first "welcome home" ceremony, in Sumter South Carolina, on St. Patrick's day. "When you left it was still fashionable to question America's decency, America's courage, America's resolve," he said. "No one, no one in the whole world doubts us any more. [Applause] What you did, you helped us revive the America of our old hopes and dreams."

Bush told the public and troops' families,

You don't have to wear a uniform to be a war hero. Here, crowded on the bleachers, and out there on the field, are heroes and heroines of all ages. Mothers and fathers, sisters, brothers, children, neighbors, friends... the loved ones and even strangers all across our great country hung out yellow ribbons, unfurled flags, sent letters and gifts... no one understands this magic but it's a kind of blessing that enables good people to accomplish great deeds.[18]

Thus did Bush establish that those at home waving the flag were heroes too, and in so doing, he included the public as part of the war effort, leaving no room for protest and effectively defining non-support for the war out of existence.

In designating the supportive observers as war heroes, Bush reinforced the key concept of individual determinism.[19] Even as they waved their tiny American flags and rose (en masse) to deliver standing ovations, the spectators were congratulated on their individual roles. As Mattelart comments, in order to reinforce the "programming" under hegemony,

Each message should reproduce the receiver's status as an isolated individual. The forms of transmitting reality, the very concept of information in capitalist society, must reproduce this principle which inspires the morals of society, and which makes the individual believe that his well-being depends only on himself.[20]

Parenthetically, various strands of U.S. cultural studies do appear to reproduce this principle. As Garnham put it, this work has "moved ever further, not only from political economy but from notions of social determination in general, to focus on discourse within a relativist, largely ahistorical and individualistic frame of analysis." [21] Or, as Sholle observed, the audience-centered focus of U.S. cultural studies is "dangerously close to being incorporated into... conservative political approaches and administrative research." [22]

If audience responses such as ribbons, flags and letters are due to individual and inexplicable "magic," then this indeed is a "blessing" for Bush's "good people." It may also be self-evident that if we ourselves are responsible for everything ranging from our social status to the war on Saddam Hussein, then there is no point in looking for broader causal factors.

Vietnam: A Case of Collective Historical Amnesia

The "Vietnam syndrome" was an underlying theme of the Gulf War. In referring to it, again, Bush appeared to signal an (unjustified) lack of public support for the war effort. [23] Others viewed it as the public's desire for peace. [24] Neither is accurate, although the latter comes much closer than the former. An understanding of conflicting interpretations of what happened in Vietnam is crucial in order to place the Gulf War in perspective. Hence, we will examine the Vietnam syndrome in some detail at the outset.

In documenting their media propaganda model, Herman and Chomsky illustrate that the Vietnam war, certainly as seen by the official government and mainstream media, and perhaps in the public's recollection as well, bears more resemblance to a "Rambo" film than to actual events. [25]

This conventional "common sense" [26] history of Vietnam is roughly as follows: In the 1950s, as the French abandoned their fight against the communist hordes in Vietnam, the U.S. and several allies became involved. This escalated gradually until the U.S. was provoked by the Vietcong, in the Tonkin Gulf incident of 1964, into sharply accelerated efforts. U.S. involvement was at the urging of the South Vietnam government and people, who opposed the Vietcong and communism. After about four years of heavy involvement, and following the communist Tet offensive of 1968, U.S. media coverage turned against the war. Television in particular, with its vivid footage of My Lai-type massacres and U.S. bodybags, also served to turn public opinion against the war. With the media and the public against them, the administration and Pentagon had little recourse but to seek "peace with honor."

According to this perspective, the Vietnam syndrome represents the inability of armed forces to win a protracted war which is unpopular with the media and the public back home. Even though the goal of the U.S. administration might be the altruistic defense of small third world countries faced with naked communist aggression, this means nought when filtered by the leftist media and opposed by their peacenik collaborators.

A competing interpretation, or what Ralph Nader termed a "dissenting ideology" as applied to Vietnam, might be as follows: By the late 1940s, U.S. backing of France's

post-WW2 attempts to reconquer its Indochina colonies meant that the U.S. was aligned against Vietnamese nationalist forces struggling for freedom and representing the overwhelming majority of the population. With French withdrawal in 1954, the U.S. subverted Geneva agreements which laid the groundwork for the unification of Vietnam, instead establishing a client state in South Vietnam which controlled its population with substantial violence. In the early 1960s, the U.S. bombed South Vietnam in an effort to drive millions of people into "strategic hamlets" which were no more than barbed-wire concentration camps, and which would ostensibly protect the South Vietnamese from communist guerrillas whom they were willingly supporting.[27]

Contrary to the arguments of proponents of the Vietnam syndrome, the evidence suggests that it was the U.S. government, not the media or the public, which first abandoned hopes of a military victory after the 1968 Tet offensive.

The Tet offensive of January 1968 ... convinced U.S. elites that the war was proving too costly to the United States, and that strategy should shift toward a more "capital-intensive" operation with reliance on an indigenous mercenary army (in the technical sense of the phrase) and gradual withdrawal of the U.S. forces, which were by then suffering a severe loss of morale, a matter of growing concern to military authorities.[28]

Thus, the media and eventually the public merely "mirrored the changes in elite opinion." [29] Content analyses of the period indicate that the media were pro-war. Polls taken indicate that watching TV coverage made the American public more rather than less supportive of the war effort up until 1969, when the focus of media coverage shifted to the Paris peace talks.[30] So, rather than media portrayals turning public opinion against the war, eventually resulting in low troop morale and political pressures which caused the U.S. to lose the war, it appears that the media and the public merely followed the decisions, attitudes, and lead of the administration, Pentagon, elites generally (in the form of Johnson's "wise men,") and even the demoralized troops themselves.

Chomsky quotes from a New York Times analysis of the debate over the Vietnam War, written much later, which stated:

There are those Americans who believe that the war to preserve a non-Communist, independent South Vietnam could have been waged differently. There are other Americans who believe that a viable, non-Communist South Vietnam was always a myth. A decade of fierce polemics has failed to resolve this ongoing quarrel.[31]

So, the hawks allege that the U.S. could have won, while the doves say victory was always beyond their grasp. What's missing, says Chomsky, is a third position, based on the view that "the United States simply had no legal or moral right to intervene in the internal affairs of Vietnam in the first place." The third position exceeds what Chomsky calls, "The Bounds of the Expressible," and illustrates the genius of "brainwashing under freedom."

If one rejects the common sense view in favor of the

dissenting view, then the question of why the administration (successfully) has foisted the former view on us becomes paramount. A logical conclusion seems to be a variation of "blaming the victims,"[32] if it is possible to conceive of American media and public as victims of the Vietnam war, without in any way wishing to downplay the infinitely more important case of the Vietnamese victims themselves.

The media have of course been, perhaps willingly, victimized by the flak machine which constitutes the fourth filter in Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model. This is all the more evident, as these authors point out, in that the two-volume tome constituting the authoritative "proof" that the media lost the war through their biased, anti-government reporting, was sponsored by Freedom House,[33] one of the preeminent organizations which "harass the media and put pressure on them to follow the corporate agenda and a hard-line, right-wing foreign policy." [34] The effectiveness of this approach may be seen in the way the media toed the official line in reporting on Nicaragua, Panama, Grenada, and as we will see, the Gulf War.

Mattelart, in referring to Bruno Bettelheim's psychoanalytic study of fairy tales (The Uses of Enchantment, 1976) says this

allows us to see how a culture conveyed by the media attempts to deprive the people of its memory. While giving the illusion of relying on and assuming a patrimony of myths, this culture actually standardizes, serializes and appropriates history, which it mutilates and reduces to a series of miscellaneous news items (faits divers). The greatest standardization is undoubtedly that of historical time.

Mattelart says the elite class "claims to be universal. [I]n order to have its own history appear as 'natural,' and the only possible interpretation, it must colonize the history of the other classes. This is the only way it can assure its ideological hegemony. . . The 'de-historizing' and reduction of history into a series of faits divers presides over all of the standards ruling the transmission of reality." [35] Clearly, this was in operation vis-a-vis the "Vietnam Syndrome," and was used effectively by the U.S. administration -- and obediently relayed by the media -- during the Gulf War.

As for the public, the protestations of support for the troops at peace rallies, combined with the ubiquitous flag waving and yellow ribbons, attest to public guilt and remorse over the "doctrinal consensus" on Vietnam. Three further, brief examples are illustrative of the patriotic frenzy aroused no doubt in part by this remorse.

1. In Seton Hall, New Jersey, college basketball player Marco Lokar was hounded back to his native Italy, for refusing to wear the U.S. flag on his uniform.[36]
2. At a rally held at the SUNY college campus in New Paltz N.Y., to protest the war, professor Barbara Scott urged American military personnel not to kill innocent people. In the enormous brouhaha following the event, the media dubbed her "Baghdad Barbara," in reference to Tokyo Rose of WW2. Republican Senator Charles Cook

went so far as to publicly accuse Scott of treason. Letter campaigns were aimed at the college president and Governor Mario Cuomo, urging them to fire Scott. Meanwhile, hate mail arrived at her office.[37]

3. In Kutztown, Pennsylvania, a newspaper editor was fired for his editorial titled, "How about a little peace!"[38]

These examples illustrate that it doesn't pay to be "unpatriotic," even if you're not American, or to promote peace or oppose the war, in light of the Vietnam syndrome.

Indeed, coverage of peace demonstrations was negligible. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader commented that the peace march held in Washington D.C. on January 26, 1991:

was probably the biggest citizen demonstration ever [held] in Washington in Winter. CBS gives them a four-second -- that may be an exaggeration -- scan while someone is saying, "Meanwhile, there were protests on both coasts today." They didn't interview anybody. The media have gone to the point where they don't even cover the bizarre, if the bizarre reflects a dissenting ideology.[39]

An estimated 250,000 people took part in this demonstration. As of February 1, 1991, there were more than 3200 events against the war held in the U.S. alone.[40] Moreover, Hodding Carter III, former State department spokesperson for the Carter administration, noted that the Bush White House was "grousing about coverage of the antiwar demonstrations -- which, I would note, was almost nonexistent." [41]

Thus, there was significant opposition to the war, despite the overwhelmingly positive propaganda in favor of it in the mainstream media, where public opinion was portrayed as being universally in favor of the war and the Bush administration. There is of course no question that the vast majority approved of Bush's decision to use force against Iraq; the point is that the opposition that did exist was under-represented to the point of invisibility.

However, the "Vietnam syndrome" mindset was evident even at anti-war demonstrations and teach-ins, where the majority of speakers went out of their way to explain that they too "support our troops." This demonstrates that even the so-called "peaceniks" subscribe to, or have been influenced by, the Bush administration's version of Vietnam. As Z Magazine publisher Michael Albert noted:

Of course we want them back alive. But they are Bush's troops insofar as they are soldiers fighting an unjust war. We cannot support that. . . . Of course I want to help save the ground soldiers from having to kill or be killed. But I oppose what the ground soldiers are doing.[42]

Noam Chomsky commented in May that:

Huge media campaigns wielding vacuous slogans to dispel the danger of thought are now a staple of the ideological system. To derail concern over whether you should support their policy, the PR system focuses attention on whether you support our troops -- meaningless words, as empty as the

question of whether you support the people of Iowa. That, of course, is just the point: to reduce the population to gibbering idiots, mouthing empty phrases and patriotic slogans, waving ribbons, watching gladiatorial contests and the models designed for them by the PR industry, but, crucially, not thinking or acting.[43]

It may be argued that the net result was "an almost fascist popular culture,"[44] in support of the war effort. Mainstream media in Canada and the U.S. played an instrumental role in delivering public support for the war to Bush and Brian Mulroney, while simultaneously misdirecting attention from domestic problems which in Canada included Native issues, the Goods and Services Tax, the Free Trade Agreement, etc.[45]

It wasn't only the Americans, with their ubiquitous yellow ribbons, who were duped. Although survey results consistently show that only about 20 per cent of Canadians say war is justified when other means fail, support for the war (option) climbed to 55 per cent after it actually began.[46]

Both voluntary and involuntary censorship supporting the war were underway long before it began. Media hype climaxed in an "inevitable" momentum on January 15. Minutes before Bush's deadline to Iraq passed, an American TV news anchor said that if an attack didn't follow soon, "there may be a certain sense of letdown." [47]

This gleeful anticipation typifies the mainstream media role, which generally may be described as "cheerleading," and which served to "anesthetize" the public. There were a number of other characteristics: Naming, or characterizing war as peace; Dehumanizing the Iraqis; Demonizing Saddam Hussein; Playing up the terrorist threat; Overestimating the Iraqi war machine; and claiming war was the Final Resort after failed diplomacy. Finally, the media severely restricted the range of debate, by propagating the official U.S. Administration's version of the issue. There were relatively minor exceptions, as is evident from some of my mainstream media sources. But the overwhelming emphasis, reflected in public support for the war effort, was on the fairytale spun by what Eisenhower dubbed the "military-industrial complex." North Americans were subjected to a glut of "infotainment" which totally obscured the real picture, replacing it with the "common sense" version approved by the Bush administration and its military arm.

Below, we will outline each of these elements of news media portrayals, prior to contextualizing them within a broader theoretical framework. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the problem was by no means restricted to news coverage. Star-studded welcome home troop extravaganzas, Whitney Houston's video rendition of the U.S. national anthem, the Super Bowl halftime show with George and Barbara Bush, and talk show host Arsenio Hall, who initially opposed the war but eventually appeared draped in the U.S. flag, all form an important part of the popular media perspective on the war, which is not addressed here. This too is in keeping with the hegemonic structure of "monopoly culture" outlined by Mattelart.

We should note in passing that the mass cultures reinforce the mass culture, or rather that the media mutually reinforce each other in order to

repeat ad infinitum the circle of their repetition.[48]

What's in a Name?

To begin with, it was often not even called a "war." And, as with Korea and Vietnam, war was never declared. In Vietnam, it was called a "conflict." But the Newspeak dictionary has taken a giant leap forward since then. War has become more sanitized, and surgically clean: an "operation." Toronto Globe and Mail editor-in-chief William Thorsell gloated that the Gulf War "was really more of a campaign than a war. It consisted of the largest and best targeted bombing campaign in the history of armed conflict. The Iraqi side cowered, evaded, endured and finally broke under relentless pounding from the air." [49]

The 1989 invasion and war waged on Panama in search of general Manuel Noriega was labeled "Operation Just Cause." The War in the Gulf began with operation "Desert Shield," and moved to operation "Desert Storm." Indeed, in May we were still reading newspaper stories under the logo, "After The Storm." Of course, storms are both naturally occurring and beyond human control. Today, "wars" are only waged on poverty and drugs, not people. With the language of Orwell's Newspeak, the raining of massive death and destruction has taken on the surrealistic atmosphere of a combination video-game and sports extravaganza.

As Mattelart notes, in the mass culture typified by North America, "The function of [Gramsci's] civil society is to render opaque the reality of the repressive, brutal force of the class- State by sublimating and disguising it as symbolic violence." [50] This contrasts with the more open methods adopted in the U.S. client states in Central and South America, for example, but which, as Chomsky has documented, are "rendered opaque" for the American home audience.

In the St. Patrick's Day address in Sumter, S.C. referred to above, Bush summed up the war by saying "The coalition victory in Kuwait" involved the merging of "nine allied nations" into "a seamless theatre airforce," which conducted "the most intense, most successful air assault in history." [51] "That powerful, precise air assault crushed Saddam's war machine while sparing innocent Iraqi citizens and while saving allied lives," Bush said. But the media not only reported Bush's words, and those of Schwartzkopf and others, they also carried video footage or ran special sections with full-color diagrams, witnessing their own fascination with war technology. In so doing, they served to disguise brutal force as symbolic violence.

About six months after the war ended, news of American atrocities continued to leak out and to be reported with alacrity. The Toronto Globe and Mail, for example, ran a story (relegated to page 12) about Iraqi troops buried alive by bulldozer tank blades. Although the story quoted Lieutenant- Colonel Stephen Hawkins as saying the burial tactic "was designed in part to terrorize the Iraqis into surrendering," this was buried in the last two paragraphs of the story. In contrast, a "Kicker" headline quoted a Washington spokesman who said "There's no nice way to kill somebody in a war." [52] Just as war became a game, so too have games become war. For example, as hockey's Pittsburgh Penguins reached their first Stanley Cup final, en route to becoming NHL champions, the media labeled this, "Operation

Ice Storm."

Operation Ice Storm has entered the ultimate theatre of NHL operations. Operation Desert Storm, the successful military campaign in the Middle East earlier this year, was the instigation for some Penguins fans to hang an Operation Ice Storm sign in the Civic Arena on Saturday when their conquering heroes defeated the Boston Bruins 5-3 to win the Wales Conference championship.[53]

During the war, the folks back home heard about "sorties" or "visits" carried out using smart "ordinances" virtually guaranteed to avoid "collateral" damage. "Surgical strikes" called up images of diseased tissue being removed. But those "surgical strikes" first were introduced in Vietnam, where hundreds of thousands of Indochinese villagers perished. In the Gulf War, about 2000 bombing raids were conducted daily on Iraq. In the first week of the air war, the U.S. dropped twice the tonnage of bombs dropped on Germany during 1944. But while media and public remained riveted to technical displays of the laser-guided wizardry of the Cruise and Patriot missiles, U.S. officials later admitted that at best only 60% of the laser-guided bombs hit their target, so at least 2 out of 5 missed, "sometimes by thousands of feet." [54] U.S. General Merrill McPeak, Air force Chief of Staff, told reporters that the guided bombs "hit their targets more than 90 per cent of the time." Even so, "only about one-quarter of the conventional bombs... hit their targets. And the vast majority of the bombs used in the war -- almost 93 per cent -- were these conventional 'iron' bombs." [55]

When one of the intended targets turned out to be a bomb shelter, hundreds of civilians were killed by the "smart" weaponry. U.S. military spokesmen responded that it was Saddam Hussein's fault for nefariously duping civilians into hiding in military targets! This was reminiscent of the "they brought it on themselves" logic used by an American official in Vietnam:

What the Vietcong did was occupy the hamlets we pacified just for the purpose of having the allies move in and bomb them. By their presence, the hamlets were destroyed. [56]

During the coverage of the "bunker incident," one of the very few occasions when civilian casualties were mentioned, NBC anchor Tom Brokaw intoned, "We must point out again and again that it is Saddam Hussein who put these innocents in harm's way." [57]

Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General of the U.S., obtained permission to go into Iraq with a camera crew. His group traveled 2000 miles across Iraq, from February 2 to 8th, examining civil damage in Baghdad, Basra, and Diwaniya.

There was no "collateral" military damage; all the destruction was to civilians. We saw no evidence of military presence in any of the bombed areas we visited. [58]

Clark concluded that, "The air assault deliberately targeting the civilian population of Iraq is a war crime."

In meeting the ultimate qualification for Orwellian Newspeak, however, war has been classified as peace. Bush

told the U.S. Congress that a vote to give him war powers offered the best chance for peace, and The New York Times intoned, "Congress has armed the President, first and foremost, for peace." [59] Canadian External Affairs Minister Joe Clark commented that "What the world is doing in the Gulf... [is] returning to the notion that peace should not only be kept, but made." [60] Defence Minister Bill McKnight told the House of Commons on November 30 that Canadian forces "are there to enforce the world's condemnation of Iraq. They are there to bring about peace and security in a region where it is important." [61]

Returning to Mattelart, he illustrates the importance of naming with an illustration from communication studies as a discipline.

The term "means of communication" is rarely used ... and has been hidden behind the economically and politically neutral terms "communication media," "mass communication media," and particularly "mass media." Thus the materiality of the means of communications is obfuscated and the immaterial aspects are emphasized. [62]

This point was later emphasized by Dallas Smythe, who preferred the term "Consciousness Industries." The obfuscating and misleading use of terms such as "operation," which was not only perpetrated by the Bush administration but adopted wholesale by the media, is further evidence of their perhaps unthinking, but nonetheless tangible, complicity.

Dehumanizing the Iraqis

The massive bombing was undertaken and maintained in order to crush Iraqi resistance and reduce the number of U.S. body bags arriving home: another distasteful image of Vietnam. Of course, in this manner the lives of American troops were exchanged for those of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians. This was explained as a simple exercise of "degrading the Iraqi army." This is a "rerun" of the enormous casualties and devastation for the Vietnamese civilian population in that war. [63]

One young pilot described the light show over Baghdad as the "best I've seen since the fourth of July." Thus were the Iraqis dehumanized. A U.S. pilot described what it was like picking off Iraqi tanks along the Saudi border with Kuwait: "It's almost like you flipped on the light in the kitchen late at night and the cockroaches started scurrying and we're killing them." [64]

This wasn't an isolated view. Marine pilot Lieutenant-Colonel Dick White, describing for pool reporters what it was like to see Iraqi troops in Kuwait from his plane, used the same terms, saying "It was like turning on the kitchen light late at night and the cockroaches started scurrying. We finally got them out where we could find them and kill them." [65] In addition, Iraqis were called "camel jockeys," and "sand niggers" -- an incredible epithet, given the large proportion of Afro-American troops in the Gulf.

Citing as examples the use of "Japs," "Reds" (for the Chinese), and "Vietcong," with its connotation of the Congo and Blacks, Leonardo Acosta describes these as "word-fetishes with a negative content." [66] Writing in The Nation, an observer commented that:

One TV reporter told the nation after the first 8000 sorties had pulverized Iraqi forces, "Soon we'll have to stop the air war and start killing human beings." [67]

Like the military, journalists such as this one came to subscribe to the view that they were merely shooting fish in a barrel. Credence was lent to this perspective by the Pentagon's refusal to release estimates of Iraqi civilian or military casualties. Thus, while television showed film footage of ducks immersed in oil slicks, victims of Hussein's alleged "eco-terrorism," we were largely denied access to the death and destruction wrought on the Iraqi people. Commenting on one segment of Iraqi casualty footage, NBC correspondent Dennis Murphy said "Until we get some western reporters and photographers in there to vouch for it, I think we'll have to call it propaganda." Anchor Garrick Utley agreed, "That's a pretty good name for it." [68]

Earlier, in order to help justify the war, the Iraqi people were portrayed in a form of liberation discourse as innocent victims of Hussein who had to be saved from him. All of this is again reminiscent of Vietnam, as indicated above.

A version of hate crime was perpetrated on Arab-Americans, who were subjected to "arson, bomb threats, and indiscriminate beatings," [69] which served as tangible evidence for the impact of the cooperative campaign by the true coalition forces: the U.S. government, military-industrial complex and mainstream media.

This racist attitude pervades the highest levels of military and government. Bob Woodward writes that during sensitive negotiations with the Saudis before the U.S. was invited in, amongst Bush and his top advisers, "There was a pessimism in the group about the Arabs in general. They could not be relied on." [70]

Demonizing Saddam Hussein

In George Orwell's classic, 1984, Winston Smith's Oceania is (at first) at war with Eurasia, which is led by the Enemy of the People, Emmanuel Goldstein. Goldstein was once one of the leading figures of the government Party of Oceania, but now "was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching." [71]

Saddam Hussein, too, was once (and not very long ago) a welcomed member of the fold. Prior to the August 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait, he was an ally and friend to the U.S. and the West, which armed and backed him in his eight-year war with Iran, from 1980-1988. As early as 1975, The New York Times, for example, characterized Iraq as "pragmatic," and "cooperative," with credit for this shift going to Saddam's "personal strength." [72] During the Iran-Iraq war, western leaders went to extraordinary lengths to find excuses for Baghdad.

When an Iraqi warplane launched a French-made missile that crippled the USS Stark, former U.S. president Ronald Reagan not only quickly accepted

Baghdad's explanation but added that it was Iran (whose tankers were the targets) that was really at fault.[73]

As recently as November, 1989, the U.S. gave Iraq \$1 billion in loan assurances, second only to Mexico, and became Iraq's largest trading partner.[74]

No longer. On February 1, 1991, a political cartoon on the op-ed page of The New York Times titled "The descent of man," showed in descending order: Clark Gable, a gorilla, a monkey, a snake, and Saddam Hussein.[75] Hussein's rapid fall from glory as America's champion in the war with Iran has less to do with his (deserved) long-term reputation as a brutal dictator and murderer, than it does with the fact that, like Panama's General Manuel Noriega before him, he became more useful as an enemy than as a friend. In this respect his position was similar to that of the democratically elected government of Iran, prior to the CIA sponsored coup (led by the father of General Norman Schwartzkopf) which installed the Shah of Iran in 1953.

In the spring of 1990, Iraq had massive debts of from \$70 to \$100 billion U.S., incurred during the Iran-Iraq war, including what it had hoped was \$40 billion worth of forgivable loans from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[76] OPEC set the price of oil at \$18 per barrel in 1986, along with production quotas to maintain that price. But Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates exceeded their quotas, driving the price down to around \$13 in June 1990.[77] Meanwhile, Kuwait was exporting vast amounts of oil at the deflated price, some of which was being pumped from the Rumailah oilfield straddling the border and jointly-owned with Iraq. This harmed Iraq's ability to recover financially from the war with Iran,[78] as oil constitutes 95 percent of Iraq's exports. Hussein was desperate. As The New York Times indicated on March 1, with the war safely over, "Iraq's near-empty treasury has been both a cause of war and an obstacle to its conclusion." One former diplomat was quoted as saying, "They [Iraqis] were in a very tight condition financially, which is why we had the invasion" of Kuwait.[79]

On top of this, Iraq feared another Israeli or U.S. attack, as the U.S. was grumbling about Saddam's military buildup. In a July 1990 meeting with April Glaspie, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Saddam was reassured that border disputes between Iran and Kuwait were a local matter, and the U.S. would not intervene. He may have interpreted this as a green light from the U.S., similar to that involved in his aggression against Iran.

Thus, the U.S. claims the right to defend its interests by force, according to the official view presented in justification of its invasion of Panama,[80] and as indicated by its very presence in the Persian Gulf. Other leaders and countries which operate under the same philosophy are portrayed as the Antichrist.

This is some of the background to the invasion of Kuwait, not to be found in mainstream media bent on portraying Saddam as another "Hitler," or a madman whose ruthless acts are unsupported by rhyme or reason. The Globe and Mail, for example, in an editorial titled: "The world unites against Saddam Hussein," commented on the day the war began that "The world faces war in the Middle East because of the intransigence of one man." [81] After the war, The

Globe commented, "The defeat of evil on the other side certainly justifies great satisfaction, as does the successful defence of important coalition interests." [82] Just as the ground war was coming to an end, The New York Times led off an editorial by proclaiming, "At every chance, Saddam Hussein has worked to make himself the most hated man in the world." [83]

In a television interview in mid-April, former U.S. President Richard Nixon called Hussein "an international menace," and said if he was still the president, he would have had Hussein killed.

If I could find a way to get him out of there, even putting a contract out on him, if the CIA still did that sort of a thing, assuming it ever did, I would be for it. [84]

One of the most striking portrayals of Hussein was in The New York Post. When Hussein used a video which included him shown patting the head of one of his child hostages, the newspaper ran a photo on its front page, with the screaming headline: "Child Abuser." [85]

All of which is not to say that Hussein is anything other than a vicious thug. But as Noam Chomsky notes, "Saddam Hussein is a murderous gangster, just as he was before August 2, when he was an amiable friend and favored trading partner." [86] It is the hypocrisy, misrepresentation, and unnecessary death and destruction that rankles.

The Terrorist Threat

A small army navy surplus store in Windsor, Ontario had a run on an unusual item -- gas masks. Ultimately, they sold out. For weeks, the North American media had been running stories on Israeli preparations for Saddam's use of chemical warfare. Reporters' voices were muffled and camerapersons' vision blurred, as they followed instructions and sat in plastic-sealed rooms, wearing their gas masks, distributed free to Israelis by their government. It took a court decision to force them to distribute the masks to Palestinians living in the West Bank as well. Families provided guided tours to journalists, showing them their "safe" rooms, with the food stores and plastic lining. The coverage intensified as the occasional Scud missile landed in Tel Aviv, or Haifa.

Scrambling for Gulf-related stories which can be "localized," the media reported on gas mask sales, and "terrorist" threats which seemingly were synonymous with mention of the word "Palestinian." Symptomatic of the hysteria over terrorism, CBS anchor Dan Rather asked the FBI director whether Jewish Americans should send their children to school the next day. Air travel was down. People were buying gas masks, 20,000 kilometers away from the Middle East.

This scenario brings to mind a scene from Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, where the people are holed-up in their homes, watching on the video screens as the police search for terrorists.

Gas masks and air travel indicate that, like the media, the public managed to "localize" the Middle East crisis. It seems reasonable to conclude that the real or imagined

terrorist threat served this purpose, while simultaneously heightening the demonization of Hussein and dehumanization of Iraqis and Arabs generally.

The Iraqi War Machine

Exploiting the alleged "terrorist threat" was a major means of justifying the Gulf War, as was the emphasis on the chemical weapons threat, the mystique of the "battle-hardened," elite Republican Guard, and the portrayal of tiny Iraq -- a nation of 18 million with an economy devastated from eight years of war, and an army of conscripts -- as the "fourth largest army in the world." Prior to the ground war which began on February 24, the U.S. estimated the number of Iraqi troops in the "Kuwaiti theatre of operations" as 540,000, with some estimates rising as high as 1,000,000. Afterwards, estimates were revised downwards to between 200,000 and 320,000. "We'll never know, and it really doesn't matter," one U.S. Administration official said cavalierly.[87] Iraqi defenses of bunkers, fire pits, and minefields, "terrifyingly portrayed in newspaper graphics around the world," were "much less formidable in reality." [88]

Yet, the Pentagon kept silent beforehand about what they afterwards termed, the "hollow Iraqi threat." [89] In fact, just as Bush was calling a halt to the military offensive at the end of February, The New York Times was busy relaying Schwarzkopf's justification for the ground offensive.

A bold strike was needed, [Schwarzkopf] said, because the Iraqis outnumbered the allies 3 to 2 overall and 2 to 1 in fighting forces, when the offense classically needs a 3-to-1 superiority over the defense.[90]

Terrorists have no scruples, so Saddam Hussein was expected to use chemical weapons on civilians. Indeed, in the early days of the war with the first Scud attack on Israel, CBC national radio news reported that a mustard gas attack was underway. In fact, the Americans were the only ones to use chemical warfare, in the form of napalm. (Of course, we were told that it was only used to set fire to oil in ditches dug by the Iraqis to defend against tanks. We were to believe that all of the napalm, a deadly incendiary gel, fell on ditches rather than troops.) The admitted use of napalm by the Americans was buried in the war coverage.[91] Contrast this with the prominent coverage afforded to charges by Shiite rebels that Iraqi government forces "massacred thousands of people in napalm attacks," in fighting following the war. The coverage of the napalm issue also exemplified the media's predilection for favoring the military position, when contrasting views were available.[92]

Additionally, the so-called "Butcher of Baghdad" was supposedly responsible for other atrocities: such as the charge that 300 newborn Kuwaiti infants were killed in hospitals by invading Iraqis. This charge was later denied by Kuwaitis, following their "liberation." [93] Unreported by the mainstream media was the fact that forty infants were in incubators, mothers at their sides, at Baghdad's Saddam Central Children's Hospital the night the U.S. bombs began to fall.

First the electricity went out. With the thunder

of war all around, the mothers were panic-stricken. In their desperation, they grabbed their children and rushed them into the basement. Six hours later, 20 of the babies were dead from lack of life support.[94]

Another aspect of this highly functional portrayal of Iraq involved "eco-terrorism," over the Gulf oil spills. Late in January, an oil slick was reported in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. blamed Iraq for an intentional release of oil from Kuwaiti facilities. Bush said Saddam's "scorched water strategy" was "kinda sick." [95] While much attention has been paid to Iraq's destruction of Kuwaiti oil facilities, very little has been paid to the U.S. bombing of Iraqi oil refineries, rigs, tankers, and other targets, resulting in widespread spills. U.S. bombers also knocked out the civilian water supply to major cities like Baghdad, bombed water purification plants, and operational nuclear facilities,[96] all bona fide acts of eco-terrorism.

The Final Resort

In late January George Bush told the National Association of Religious Broadcasters that the Gulf War was a "last resort" after "extraordinary" diplomatic efforts had been tried and failed.[97] This was the U.S. administration's "diplomacy has failed" line, which usually was dutifully reported by the media. The New York Times, for example, noted on January 20 that "now that diplomacy has failed and it has come to war..."[98]

In reality of course, the Bush administration blocked all efforts at reaching a peaceful settlement, while continuing to pay lip service to it. The economic embargo was only in effect for five months, and was not given a chance (given, of course, the dubious assumption that "we" had the right to establish such an embargo in the first place). Both Zbigniew Brzezinski and Admiral William Crowe, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argued that the question was not whether the embargo would work, but whether the United States had the patience to let it work. The CIA reported in early December that the embargo was already seriously affecting the civilian economy, and Iraq's military could maintain its level of readiness for no more than nine months. Noting this in The Globe and Mail, Morris Wolfe commented, "Unfortunately, Bush didn't have the 'courage of patience,' to use Eisenhower's apt phrase." [99]

As early as August 12, 1990, Hussein offered to withdraw completely from Kuwait if others too would withdraw from occupied Arab lands: specifically, Syria from Lebanon, and Israel from the territories it conquered in 1967. The Financial Times of London suggested that this offered "a path away from disaster ... through negotiation." The Bush administration, however, dismissed it with utter derision.[100] So too did Barbara Walters of ABC's Nightline, who characterized Hussein's proposal as: "Unless you solve all the problems of the Middle East, we're going to stay in Kuwait." [101]

Hussein also offered to withdraw if an international conference were held on the Palestinian question. On August 23, Iraq offered to withdraw from Kuwait and to allow foreigners to leave in return for the lifting of sanctions, guaranteed access to the Gulf, and full control of the Rumailah oil field. Although a Mideast affairs specialist in the Bush administration described this proposal as

"serious" and "negotiable," the White House responded that it "had not been taken seriously because Mr. Bush demands the unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait." [102]

When, in late February, Iraq agreed to a Soviet proposal for unconditional withdrawal over three weeks, even this was not adequate: it had to be done according to Bush's timeframe of one week. Because the Soviet/Iraqi peace plan called for the removal of economic sanctions once the withdrawal was complete -- sanctions which only existed because of the invasion in the first place -- this was seen as a "conditional" peace offer, and hence unacceptable. [103] Of course, Soviet motives were also portrayed as suspect. [104] Bush's desire for a total military victory led him to reject the proposal, which failed only in its inability to match Bush's escalating demands. Bush was uncompromising in that he offered no opportunity for Hussein to save face. The New York Times commented, "American officials are confident that American and allied forces are on the verge of a decisive military victory and are seeking a peace settlement that is the political equivalent of a rout." [105]

Opposition to Bush's hard-line stance was non-existent in the mainstream media. For example, Democratic House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt was quoted as saying that, "The president spoke this morning for the entire country when he reiterated our insistence on an immediate withdrawal by Iraq." [106]

In Canada, William Thorsell of The Globe and Mail celebrated the use of force, rather than a peaceful resolution. "We did a lot of things right in managing this conflict," he wrote. "We were not distracted by Mr. Hussein's last-minute efforts to extract political points in defeat through a negotiated settlement." [107] Far better to mete out death and destruction than to allow "political points."

In keeping with the U.S. administration's aim to "kick the Vietnam Syndrome," thousands of peace demonstrations went virtually unreported. When they received any coverage, peace activists were portrayed as unreasonable hysterics and fanatical leftists. The media referred to the "anti-war rhetoric" of the "peaceniks," as contrasted with the "technical analysis" provided by the generals. [108]

The Limited Range of Debate

Much of the above describes the limited range of the debate carried in the mainstream media. But how did the media conduct and portray the debate over their own role in covering the war? Some attention was given to broader issues, such as media complicity, oil interests, and economic imperatives. [109] But just about all of the navel-gazing and criticism was of the "safe," conformist variety. [110] For example, CBC radio's Media File (now defunct), which in many respects provided an unusually diverse service, presented the views of two journalism professors. The "critical" one argued that the media behaved irresponsibly, by reporting inaccurately in their rush to be first with the news. The "fawning" one argued that criticism arises out of print journalists' envy of TV, which can provide "history in real time," where you can "see the facts," and "see a Patriot missile destroy a Scud." Hence, despite the inaccuracies, getting the news to consumers fast is worth it.

The extremely safe and non-threatening criticism found on Media File demonstrates how the mainstream media generally preclude critical perspectives. Not only is the content distorted, but the discussion of that distorted content itself is confined to the very limited perspective of "two sides,"[111] (of the same coin) fulfilling the need for "balance" and the myth of "objectivity." Despite occasional references in the media to some of the issues and viewpoints outlined above, the vast infotainment glut on the Gulf War followed the Bush agenda as faithfully as any Ministry of Propaganda.

To do otherwise would be to exceed what Chomsky calls, "The Bounds of the Expressible" which, again, illustrate the genius of "brainwashing under freedom." The distinction drawn by Chomsky parallels Gramsci's notion of "civil society" versus "political society," with the former characterized as "private," "hegemonic" and operating by "consensus," while the latter is the State, which uses "direct domination and force." Ultimately Gramsci argued that the political society subsumes the civil.[112] Referring to the Vietnam context, Chomsky wrote:

In a totalitarian system, it is required only that official doctrine be obeyed. In the democratic systems of thought control, it is deemed necessary to take over the entire spectrum of discussion: nothing must remain thinkable apart from the Party Line. State propaganda is often not expressed, merely presupposed as the framework for discussion among right-minded people. The debate, therefore, must be between the "doves" and "hawks," the Schlesingers and the Alsops. The position that the US is engaged in aggression, and that such aggression is wrong, must remain unthinkable and unexpressed.[113]

Authorized Knowers and Common Sense

Like Vietnam before it, the Gulf War was fought to preserve global economic interests (a topic which is addressed in the next section). The mass media, as we have seen, function as the delivery system for elite ideology. As indicated above, the result is what Herman and Chomsky have termed the "doctrinal consensus," which is "based on serviceability to important domestic power interests." [114] Fundamental to this consensus is "the subordination of the media to the requirements of the state propaganda system." [115] Obviously, this is a complex topic about which numerous authors have written numerous books. Our goal here is to focus on two related aspects of this situation, as they apply to the media role in the Gulf War: the use of authorized knowers, and the development of a "common sense" perspective.

As they do on a daily basis, during the Gulf War the media exercised a form of self-censorship by relying extensively, if not exclusively, on what has been characterized as "elite authorized knowers." [116] As generalists, newswriters rely on specialist sources for the quotes, opinions and interpretations contained in their ostensibly "objective" stories. Indeed, the myth of objectivity, which is still pervasive in journalism, although increasingly expressed in terms such as "balance," or "neutrality," is one of the underlying driving forces behind the use of official sources. [117] Unable to overtly

opine themselves, given the pretext of objectivity,[118] journalists, editors, and producers actively frame their stories and then seek out sources who will support their perspective. They also allow themselves to be willing conduits for their sources.

The sources relied upon overwhelmingly tend to be official in nature: politicians, corporate leaders, academics, members of "nonpartisan" think-tanks, and so on. One 30-month study at the University of Minnesota, for example, looked at the three major U.S. networks.

Correspondents and producers established a pattern of returning time and again to a very small group of the same experts... They tend to be men rather than women, East Coasters rather than West, and Republicans (along with a few conservative Democrats) rather than critics of the political establishment. Also favored by television news are ex-government officials (mostly from Republican administrations) and "scholars" from conservative Washington D.C. think tanks who appear to be more steeped in political partisanship than in academic credentials.[119]

Leon Sigal found that U.S. government officials made up almost half of all sources cited in stories beginning on page one of The New York Times and The Washington Post.[120] A content analysis of the three Toronto papers indicated that from 80 to 90 percent of the stories reflected "official news" such as government coverage, press conferences, speeches, press releases, crime and the courts, rather than coverage stemming from the newspapers' own initiative.[121]

The use of authorized knowers helps to maintain the image of objectivity, and protects the media from charges of bias. It makes journalists' work easier; rather than reading that lengthy tome you've written, they merely ask you to sum it up in a sentence or two. We saw this in the Gulf War, where journalists ostensibly covering "the war," were ensconced in hotel rooms hundreds of kilometers from the action, wearing army fatigues and watching press conferences on television. The use of retired generals and other military experts was pervasive. Moreover, the media hung on every official word spoken by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, Colin Powell of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gulf forces commander Norman Schwarzkopf, George Bush, etc.

Yet, the media/source relationship is symbiotic. Sources make newswriters' jobs easier, while media deliver sources' propaganda, free of charge and with an added credibility component. When George Bush says we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome, the public may remain skeptical, but it's likely that skepticism will wear down under the constant repetition by The New York Times, the television news, and so forth. In short, as Ericson, et al. sum it up, the news is "framed so as to translate sources' politically interested views into a seemingly apolitical, no-nonsense, common-sense view."[122]

This common sense view is in certain respects, with apologies to Walter Lippmann, the picture we carry around in our heads. It is a type of conventional wisdom, which is inherent in one's world view, for example, the view that communism is bad, or that capitalism is synonymous with democracy, or indeed the notion of a Vietnam syndrome

discussed earlier, and just what this is.[123] Stuart Hall argues that such "preferred codes" as these:

have been rendered invisible by the process of ideological masking and taking-for-granted.... They seem to be, even to those who employ and manipulate them for the purposes of encoding, simply the "sum of what we already know." [124]

Given our limited first-hand exposure to world events, journalists play a crucial role in formulating our common sense perspectives. As Ericson, et al. note, "His (sic) is the power of news transformation, constructing as part of the common sense what most people do not know otherwise." [125]

As was the case with Vietnam, Panama, Nicaragua, Grenada, Tripoli, and a myriad of international and national events before them, this is the legacy of the Gulf War.

[News] shapes not only our knowledge of the world, but also our knowledge of how to know. In transforming the bureaucratic knowledge of other social controllers into the common sense, journalists are simultaneously providing citizens with a means not to know. [126]

This then is the crux of the epistemological problem for those prominently displaying their flags and yellow ribbons, the patriots Bush described as heroes without uniforms: They neither know, nor know how to know.

The U.S. -- Mercenaries to the World

Elements of an alternative perspective on the Gulf War have been outlined above. What's missing is an answer to the "why" question: why did the Bush administration perpetrate this war? Implicitly, we've rejected the conventional explanation that it was to "liberate Kuwait," or as an ingenious placard held by demonstrator Robert Letcher in the January 26 Washington demonstration put it, to "Restore Kuwait's Legitimate Dictator!"

Of course, the so-called "wimp factor" undoubtedly played a role, as Bush evidently found this label to be quite disconcerting, and probably relished the thought of shedding it for good. [127] The immediate aftermath indicated that this worked, as The New York Times commented: "The war provided a clarity and passion to Mr. Bush's leadership that had been missing. He seemed more focused, more constant in purpose, and less a chameleon of public opinion. . . . Mr. Bush appeared to be acting from strong, unequivocal beliefs." [128] An added bonus is his subsequent rise in the polls, and attainment of a support rating in excess of 90 percent: even higher than it was following the Panama invasion and operation "Just Cause." Within days, The Times was expounding on his excellent re-election chances. [129] But much more was at stake than George Bush's personal pride or political future.

Economist Tom Riddell argues that throughout the post-World War II period, the U.S. has functioned as a global police force. War, or the threat of war, has been used by the multinational corporate elite to protect their national and global economic interests. Hence, both old and new "world orders," or the U.S. sphere of influence, in Chomsky's terms, has consisted of the following:

The promotion of international trade; open access to markets, raw materials, cheap labor, and investment opportunities; and a set of trading and financial institutions that primarily benefited multinational corporations and the already developed countries. [It promotes] profitability and economic growth. Military assistance to cooperative regimes, global military power, and frequent interventions were used to reinforce this order and to support U.S. hegemony within it. ... War, then, is the ultimate prop for the global capitalist system under U.S. leadership, when power itself is insufficient to determine the course of events and relationships. In this sense, the U.S. intervention in the Middle East is about protecting access to oil, preserving jobs (Baker), and continuing the "American way of life" (Bush).[130]

In the post-Cold War period, the U.S. military establishment is facing drastic cutbacks. With Satan himself (a "communist" USSR) no longer around to justify exorbitant military expenditures on "defense," it becomes necessary to invent new enemies, some of whom may be former friends and allies, such as Panama's Manuel Noriega, or Saddam Hussein. The unsavory alternative is to reduce military spending, possibly diverting the funding to social programs, and towards the huge federal deficit, estimated at \$300 billion for 1991.

Bush chose to use the enormous military expenditures to relieve the economic depression, all the while reducing spending on social programs. The beauty of this approach is that the costs of the war have been more than paid for by foreign pledges -- so, the U.S. global police force is actually mercenaries! The Saudis, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Germany, and Korea have pledged from \$40 to \$50 billion to the war effort, a total which it was estimated would finance the war for three months.[131] Since the war lasted for less than two months, it turns out to be profitable for the military, as well as the corporations falling over themselves to rebuild Kuwait. (With preference going to American companies, and bidders pre-ranked according to their national war effort.) Or as The Times put it, with "the Kuwaiti policy of favoring the ally that has done the most fighting." [132]

Just as the ground war was coming to an end, The Times reported that:

In the rush for postwar business deals, American companies have won about 70 percent of the roughly 200 contracts signed so far, worth more than \$800 million.[133]

By February 28, 1991, we learned that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had a \$45 million contract to "help manage the recovery program" in the first 90 days after the war. That is, the army arranged contracts for U.S. businesses said to be "burning up the phones" with eagerness to get in on the rebuilding.[134] Total U.S. trade with Kuwait for the first five months of 1991 was \$1.5 billion; the total for all of 1989 was \$53 million.[135] Who says war doesn't pay?

Thus Bush was at least potentially able to deliver on his promise not to raise taxes to finance the Gulf War -- he

didn't need to, it was financed abroad. Of course, with the ground war pending and victory at hand, he immediately asked Congress for \$15 billion.[136]

The question that occurs is, if the U.S. and other countries were willing to spend all of this money waging war, and if Iraq's dire economic straits were a major contributing factor in its invasion of Kuwait in the first place, why weren't financial arrangements simply made, such as forgiving some of the Iraqi debts to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia? Why wasn't there a negotiated settlement? Chomsky argues that the U.S. blocked the diplomatic track because it didn't want the crisis defused at the cost of a few token gains for Iraq: no outcome would be tolerated other than Iraqi capitulation to U.S. force.[137]

In mid-August, 1991, we learned from a Congressional report that U.S. weapons sales to the Third World more than doubled in 1990, to \$18.5 billion, from \$8 billion in 1989. This includes \$14.5 billion in U.S. weapons for Saudi Arabia, most of which was supplied after the invasion of Kuwait. Additionally, the report said, "The White House is planning to ask Congress for another massive weapons sale to Saudi Arabia of some \$14.5 billion in fighters, tanks and other arms." [138]

This may go a long way toward explaining why the war took place, when economic sanctions were "working." Still, the answer to the "why" question is evidently complex, and has already been the sole subject of several lengthy articles. In his analysis, Colin Gordon sums up the reasons for the war as the U.S. "Acting on traditional and mundane concerns for the stability of commodity markets and world trade, and for its credibility as a world power." [139] But whether or not this is entirely true, or the entire truth, it is evident that the public justifications proffered by Bush were just plain drivel, yet were swallowed wholesale by the media.

A final word must be said about the plight of the Kurdish refugees. As Edward Herman noted,

There has even been a tilt back in [Hussein's] favor as a counterweight to more fearsome local nationalist extremists. The fact that Bush repeatedly urged the Iraqis to overthrow the tyrant, and then stood by while the tyrant slaughtered them, I have seen mentioned only in Doug Ireland's column in the Village Voice.[140]

The Kurdish people have paid an enormous price for the U.S. administration's successful efforts to thwart Iraqi democracy.[141] But such "nationalist extremists" of course represent a greater threat to U.S. interests than do brutal dictators.

Conclusions

As stated at the outset, my goals for this paper have been twofold: first, to demonstrate how the media presented a united front on the political, economic, and military goals of the Persian Gulf War; and second, to delineate the hidden corporate or State apparatus interests which were not posed by the media and which are fundamental to a counter-hegemonic perspective.

This analysis identifies the mainstream media's role in

the Gulf War as both a cohesive and integral part of the State apparatus, or what I have termed simply "the Bush administration." There is very strong, if not unequivocal, evidence for Gramsci's "unison of economic and political aims," as well as "intellectual and moral unity," in this reading of media reportage.

Consequently, insofar as this case study is concerned, there is an obvious choice between the competing theories of "normative consensus," represented by political economy, and the "media pluralism" of U.S. cultural studies, with the former strongly favored over the latter. Diversity of content was restricted almost entirely to alternative media, notorious for their limited readership. The occasional exceptions which found their way into the consciousness industry outlets were "engulfed."

Despite his pre-eminent position as representative of the British school of cultural studies (which differs significantly from the American variant), Stuart Hall has provided the following explanation for what he terms the "pivotal and commanding notion of hegemony":

The "definitions of reality" favourable to the dominant class ... come to constitute the primary "lived reality" as such for the subordinate classes. In this way ideology provides the "cement" in a social formation, "preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc." This operates, not because the dominant classes can prescribe and proscribe, in detail, the mental content of the lives of subordinate classes ... but because they strive and to a degree succeed in framing all competing definitions of reality within their range, bringing all alternatives within their horizon of thought.[142]

Mainstream media framing of the Gulf War thus succeeded in limiting reality to within the "common sense" range of the dominant ideology.

Some would defend the media with the excuse that they were censored, and thus had no choice. This simply doesn't hold water. Censorship doesn't prevent the asking of questions, it merely inhibits the provision of some answers. The alternative media, which continued questioning and seeking answers and context, portrayed a very different picture of events, all the while suffering from even greater censorship. Additionally, if the problem were limited to one of censorship, then the media would have altered their portrayal since the war ended. This has largely not happened. Thus, a form of self-censorship may be identified as the major problem, and the albeit existent military censorship merely afforded a convenient scapegoat. In blaming the military, the mainstream media reinforced the common sense mythology of a pluralistic power structure and the "normal" objectivity of the media. In the process, the separate reality recounted herein was virtually excluded from what journalist A.J. Liebling called, "a monovocal, monopolistic, monocular press."

Finally, this brings us to the debate both between the cultural studies variants and between political economy and cultural studies, over the "effects" on audiences. While this is not an "effects" study, certain inferences have been made about resultant audience attitudes and behavior, such as the ubiquitous yellow ribbons and flag-waving; the

disregard and even intolerance for anything remotely constituting criticism of the war effort. It is my position that this anecdotal evidence, buttressed by polls which showed overwhelming support for both Bush and the war, points to the success of the media as a hegemonic apparatus to the state. The effects, such as they were, may not have been monolithic, any more than was the media content (the U.S. use of napalm was reported on the front page of The New York Times, after all), but both might be accurately described as "overwhelming." We will leave the final word to Stuart Hall, who notes,

Audiences, whose decodings will inevitably reflect their own material and social conditions, will not necessarily decode events within the same ideological structures as those in which they have been encoded. But the overall intention of "effective communication" must, certainly, be to "win the consent" of the audience to the preferred reading, and hence to get him [sic] to decode within the hegemonic framework. Even when decodings are not made through a "perfect transmission," within the hegemonic framework, the great range of decodings will tend to be 'negotiations' within the dominant codes -- giving them a more situational inflexion -- rather than systematically decoding them in a counter-hegemonic way.[143]

Notes

- [1] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited*, pp. 19-20, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1965. (First edition 1958).
- [2] The station and newswriters will not be identified, in order not to jeopardize future research. However, the quoted address was broadcast as part of a local newscast on Saturday March 9, 1991, in Detroit. The author wishes to thank Pamela Cote, now a graduate student in our department, for her research assistance. The account of the Detroit TV station comes from Cote's course paper.
- [3] Richard Ericson, Patricia Baranek, and Janet Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organization*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987, pp. 28, 31.
- [4] Antonio Gramsci, "Analysis of Situations: Relations of Force," from *Selections From The Prison Notebooks*, reprinted in David Forgacs (Ed.), *An Antonio Gramsci Reader*, Schocken Books, New York, 1989, pp. 205-206.
- [5] Armand Mattelart, "Introduction: For A Class Analysis of Communication," in Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub, (Eds.), *Communication and Class Struggle*, Vol. I, *Capitalism, Imperialism, International General*, New York, 1979, p. 66, Footnote 93.
- [6] Cf. Nicholas Garnham, *Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the economics of Information*, Sage, London, 1990.
- [7] Ericson, et al., *Visualizing Deviance*, p. 10.
- [8] Ericson, et al., p. 348. Although the authors specifically are discussing journalistic freedoms

rather than diversity of output, the latter is implied. They go on to say that "Through skilful mobilization of organizational resources the journalist can create some autonomous space in which to practise his craft. The journalist who is articulate in the vocabulary of precedents has the power to turn organizational constraints to advantage. . . . Indeed, this is what makes the system work" (p. 349). This notion of a "working system" is contrasted with the view in some of the literature where "A picture emerges of great normative consensus among journalists, who thus appear as automatons in the mass-media production process" (p. 350). Contrasting their own research with that of Gaye Tuchman, for example, the authors, like the journalists they studied, "see the potential for negotiating alternative ideas, approaches and outcomes" in the newsroom and resultant media content. Consequently, "the range available is better visualized in terms of the number of windows in a modern multi-story newspaper office building than as 'a window on the world'."

- [9] John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1965.
- [10] Wallace Clement, *The Canadian Corporate Elite*, Carleton University Press, Ottawa, 1975, pp. 278-279.
- [11] Clement, p. 297.
- [12] Clement, p. 287.
- [13] John Fiske, "Popular Television and Commercial Culture: Beyond Political Economy," in Gary Burns and Robert Thompson, *Television Studies: Textual Analysis*, Praeger, N.Y., 1989, pp. 27-30.
- [14] Fiske, "Popular Television..." p. 31.
- [15] Maureen Dowd, "War Introduces Nation to a Tougher Bush," *The New York Times*, March 2, 1991, p. A1.
- [16] "What Does Bush Mean?," *Z Magazine*, 4:3, March 1991, p. 42.
- [17] Noam Chomsky, comments during a public lecture in Detroit, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, Friday September 20, 1991.
- [18] From the Associated Press, "Bush greets soldiers returning from gulf," as reported in *The Windsor Star*, March 18, 1991, p. A8. Also, from television news coverage of the ceremonies on March 17, 1991.
- [19] As noted this is a myth largely put to rest, at least in the Canadian context, by John Porter's work.
- [20] Mattelart, "Introduction..." p. 45.
- [21] Garnham, *Capitalism and Communication*, p. 20
- [22] David Sholle, "Reading the Audience, Reading Resistance: Prospects and Problems," *Journal of Film and Video*, 43:1,2, Spring & Summer 1991, p. 82. Sholle goes on to note that "Fiske's reputation as a popularizer of this work, and his growing status as exemplary of American cultural studies, makes it all the more important to question the theoretical

weaknesses of his position."

- [23] In an article in The New York Times, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense to Ronald Reagan defined "the Vietnam syndrome" as "a reluctance to engage in any overseas military operations and to provide the wherewithal to do so." He also referred to its "exorcism" by the Gulf War. Dov S. Zakheim, "Is the Vietnam syndrome dead? Happily it's buried in the Gulf," The New York Times, March 4, 1991, p. A17.
- [24] Cf. "Quiddity," Z Magazine, Vol. 4:3, March 1991, Boston, p. 3.
- [25] These authors have been prolific on this topic, but see in particular, "The Indochina Wars (I): Vietnam," Chapter 5, pp. 169-252, in Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of The Mass Media," Pantheon, N.Y., 1988.
- [26] The concept of "common sense" has been elaborated by Clifford Geertz, Local Knowledge, Basic Books, N.Y., 1983. Its properties are that it is natural, practical, thin, ad hoc, and accessible. As Ericson, et al. comment, "These characteristics make common sense seem so obvious that it is difficult to reflect on it, let alone analyze it." (p.17)
- [27] Herman and Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent, pp. 179-180.
- [28] Herman and Chomsky, p. 183.
- [29] Herman and Chomsky, p. 220.
- [30] Herman and Chomsky, p. 199.
- [31] Noam Chomsky, "The Carter Administration: Myth and Reality," in C.P. Otero (Ed.), Noam Chomsky's Radical Priorities, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2nd Ed., 1981, p. 141.
- [32] Noam Chomsky, Necessary Illusions, CBC Enterprises, Toronto, 1989.
- [33] Cf. Peter Braestrup, Big Story, 2 Vols, Westview, Boulder, 1977. Freedom House, according to Herman and Chomsky, "has long served as a virtual propaganda arm of the government and international right wing" (p. 28). Ironically, Braestrup appears to have changed his mind. Quoted in Richard Valeriani, "Talking Back to the Tube," Columbia Journalism Review, March/April 1991, Braestrup said "A lot of the military are living a myth -- that TV news had a decisive effect [on] public support for the war in Vietnam.... People don't need television to impress upon them the realities of war."
- [34] Herman and Chomsky, p. 27.
- [35] Mattelart, "Introduction..." p. 45.
- [36] Murray Campbell, "A nation bound and determined to present a united front," The Globe and Mail, February 18, 1991, p. A12.
- [37] Eric Coppelino, "Support Troops: Crush Dissent," Letter in Z Magazine, 4:3, March 1991, Boston, p. 6. Taken

from the Student Leader News Service, New Paltz, N.Y.

- [38] The Nation, Vol. 252:9, March 11, 1991, p. 291.
- [39] Richard Valeriani, "Talking Back to the Tube," Columbia Journalism Review, March/April, 1991, p. 27.
- [40] "Gulf War Responses," furnished by The Public Eye, and published in Z Magazine, 4:3, March 1991, p. 32.
- [41] Valeriani, "Talking Back to the Tube," p. 28.
- [42] Michael Albert, "Loose Ends," Z magazine, 4:3, March 1991, p. 11.
- [43] Noam Chomsky, "'What we say Goes': The Middle East in the new world order," Z Magazine, 4:5, May 1991, p. 60.
- [44] This quotation is taken from a statement by my colleague from Concordia University in Montreal, Dr. Jody Berland, who was speaking at a round-table discussion on the media and the Gulf War, held at the annual conference of the Canadian Communication Association, Queen's University, Kingston Ont., May 31, 1991.
- [45] For a brief recounting, see Jim Winter, "Gulf war distracting voters from other woes," The Windsor Star, January 29, 1991, p. A7.
- [46] Michael Valpy, "Canadians gung ho on war, survey finds," The Globe and Mail, March 20, 1991, p. A7. Valpy is quoting from the results of a survey by University of Lethbridge, Alta., sociologist Reginald Bibby.
- [47] Jim Winter, "Gulf war distracting voters from other woes," The Windsor Star, January 29, 1991 p. A7.
- [48] Mattelart, "Introduction..." p. 68.
- [49] William Thorsell, "The gulf war: For once, the good guys got almost everything right," The Globe and Mail, March 2, 1991, p. D6.
- [50] Mattelart, "Introduction..." p. 49.
- [51] George Bush, address to the troops at the welcome home ceremony in Sumter S.C., March 17, 1991. Covered live on CNN.
- [52] Reuters and AP, "Iraqi troops buried alive, Pentagon admits: 'No nice way to kill somebody in war,' Washington spokesman says," The Globe and Mail, September 13, 1991, p. A12.
- [53] CP, "Penguins reach first cup final," Windsor Star, May 13, 1991, p. C1.
- [54] Holly Sklar, "Buried stories from media gulf," Z Magazine, Vol. 4:3, March 1991, p. 58. Cf. Matthew Fisher and Colin MacKenzie, "Toll on Iraqis 'horrendous,' U.S. believes," The Globe and Mail, Feb. 20, 1991, p. A14.
- [55] Colin MacKenzie, "Desertions, understaffed units eroded the threat of Iraqi army," The Globe and Mail, March

- 19, 1991, p. A1.
- [56] Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon, N.Y., 1988, p. 221.
- [57] Metta Spencer, "Prisoners of our own minds: Censorship and the Gulf war," *The Whig-Standard Magazine*, August 31, 1991 p. 5.
- [58] Ramsey Clark, "A War Crime," *The Nation*, 252:9, March 11, 1991, p. 309.
- [59] Edward Herman, "Gulfpeak II," *Z Magazine*, 4:3, March 1991, pp. 15-16.
- [60] Joe Clark, "Make peace by force," quoted in "Just what was said," *The Globe and Mail*, November 12, 1990, p. A18.
- [61] "What was said: Canada's role in the gulf," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 23, 1991.
- [62] Mattelart, "Introduction..." p. 46.
- [63] Edward Herman, "Mere Arabs," *Z Magazine*, 4:2, February 1991, p. 72.
- [64] Holly Sklar, "Buried stories from media gulf," p. 60.
- [65] Murray Campbell, "A nation bound and determined to present a united front," p. A12.
- [66] Leonardo Acosta, "Mass Media and Imperialist Ideology," in Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelau (Eds.), *Communication and Class Struggle*, Vol. 1, International General, N.Y., 1979, p. 147.
- [67] Lloyd DeMause, "The Gulf War as Mental Disorder," *The Nation*, 252:9, March 11, 1991, p. 307.
- [68] Metta Spencer, "Prisoners..." p. 5.
- [69] Editorial, "Home-grown hatemongers," *The New York Times*, February 27, 1991, p. A14.
- [70] Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1991. Quoted from an excerpt published in the *Toronto Star*, May 3, 1991, p. A23.
- [71] George Orwell, 1984, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, N.Y., 1949, p. 14.
- [72] Christopher Hitchens, "Why we are stuck in the sand," *Harper's*, January 1991, p. 72.
- [73] Paul Koring, "How Saddam became the enemy's enemy," *The Globe and Mail*, March 2, 1991, p. D3.
- [74] Noam Chomsky, "Nefarious aggression," *Z Magazine*, 3:10, October 1990, p. 23.
- [75] Holly Sklar, "Buried stories from media gulf," p. 60.
- [76] *The New York Times*, "Reparations, without retribution," (editorial), March 4, 1991, p. A16.

- [77] Philip Agee, "Producing the proper crisis," Z Magazine, 3:11, November 1990, p. 55.
- [78] Noam Chomsky, "Nefarious aggression," p. 24.
- [79] Keith Bradsher, "War damages and old debts could exhaust Iraq's assets," The New York Times, March 1, 1991, p. A6.
- [80] Noam Chomsky, "Nefarious aggression," p. 24.
- [81] The Globe and Mail, "The world unites against Saddam Hussein," (editorial), January 17, 1991, p. A16.
- [82] William Thorsell, "The gulf war: For once, the good guys got almost everything right," p. D6.
- [83] The New York Times, "Beyond fury, cool calculation," (editorial), Feb. 27, 1991, p. A14.
- [84] Reuters, "Hussein a Menace, Nixon Says," The Globe and Mail, April 15, 1991, p.A9.
- [85] Lloyd DeMause, "The Gulf War..." p. 303.
- [86] Noam Chomsky, "The gulf crisis," Z Magazine, 4:2, February 1991, p. 52.
- [87] Colin MacKenzie, "Desertions, understaffed units eroded the threat of Iraqi army," Globe and Mail, March 19, 1991, p. A1.
- [88] Colin MacKenzie, "Desertions, understaffed units eroded the threat of Iraqi army," p. A1.
- [89] Colin MacKenzie, "Desertions, understaffed units eroded the threat of Iraqi army," p. A1.
- [90] R.W. Apple Jr., "Kuwait is retaken after 7 months as allies destroy main Iraqi force," The New York Times, February 28, 1991, pp. A1, A9. See also Michael Gordon, "Outnumbered and outgunned, allied forces outfox Hussein," The New York Times, February 28, 1991, p. A9.
- [91] See R.W. Apple Jr., "Air War is Pressed: Record Number of Raids Flown Over Kuwait - Iraqis Burn Wells," The New York Times, February 23, 1991, pp. A1, A8. Apple did report on page 1 that "hundreds of canisters of napalm, the gel that bursts into flame when it lands, were dumped into deep, oil-filled trenches in front of enemy lines to try to burn off the oil," and noted, "It was the first known use of napalm in the Persian Gulf war."

The elaboration was carried in the third-last paragraph, on page 8. "The Associate Press quoted an unidentified marine air officer as saying napalm was being used against Iraqi troops, as it was against the enemy in Vietnam. But Lieut. Comdr. John Tull, a command spokesman, denied the report, asserting that allied warplanes were dropping the gel only on Iraqi defensive works."

Leaving aside Apple's assertion that napalm was only used on the "enemy in Vietnam," and not North or South Vietnamese citizens, it's clear that faced with

conflicting reports from AP and a military spokesperson, he has sided with the latter. This is evident from his front-page description of how napalm was being used.

A separate story by Malcolm Browne that same day, "Allies Are Said to Choose Napalm For Strikes on Iraqi Fortifications," (p. A8) also presented the U.S. military perspective. Accompanied by a photo of a napalm bomb attached to a Marine Harrier jet, the story provided a lengthy technical description of the origin of napalm (invented at Harvard University during World War 2), and its makeup (gasoline thickened with acids and ignited on contact). The article then went on to describe napalm as "a mainstay of armies and airforces throughout the world." It said it was being used in the gulf "by allied aircraft" which "are dropping napalm canisters on ditches excavated by Iraqi forces in Kuwait as tank obstacles... Dropping napalm appears to be in an effort to burn off the oil before an attack."

The final paragraph of the Browne story read: "The napalm attacks may also be intended to inflict casualties on front- line Iraqi troops and to depress their morale."

- [92] AP and Reuters wire services, "Rebels accuse Baghdad of napalm massacre," The Globe and Mail, March 18, 1991 p. A1.
- [93] Chris Hedges, "Freed Kuwaities tell of Iraqi abuse including some cases of torture," The New York Times, February 28, 1991, pp. A1, A6.
- [94] Dennis Bernstein and Larry Everest, citing M. Ismail, the hospital's director, in "Health Catastrophe in Iraq," Z Magazine, 4:6, June 1991, p. 27.
- [95] Zoltan Grossman, "Ecocide in the Gulf?" Z Magazine, 4:3, March 1991, p. 26.
- [96] Zoltan Grossman, "Ecocide in the Gulf?" p. 26; see also Holly Sklar, "Buried stories from media Gulf," pp. 60-61.
- [97] Edward Herman, "Gulf speak II," Z Magazine, 4:3, March 1991, p. 14.
- [98] Thomas Friedman, writing in The New York Times, January 20, 1991, cited in Edward Herman, "Gulf speak II," p. 14.
- [99] Morris Wolfe, "The wimp as a factor in the gulf war," The Globe and Mail, March 14, 1991, p. C1.
- [100] Noam Chomsky, "Nefarious Aggression," p. 22.
- [101] Metta Spencer, "Prisoners..." p. 5.
- [102] Noam Chomsky, "Nefarious Aggression," pp. 22-23. Chomsky also notes that: "Rejection of diplomacy was explicit from the outset. New York Times chief diplomatic correspondent Thomas Friedman (in effect, the State Department voice at the Times) attributed the Administration's rejection of 'a diplomatic track' to its concern that negotiations might 'defuse the

crisis' at the cost of 'a few token gains in Kuwait' for the Iraqi dictator, perhaps 'a Kuwaiti island or minor border adjustments' (August 22). Anything short of capitulation to U.S. force is unacceptable, whatever the consequences." Noam Chomsky, "Oppose the war: the gulf crisis," Z Magazine, 4:2, February 1991, p. 50.

- [103] Terence Hunt, (AP) "U.S. rejects peace plan; War effort to continue," The News-Journal, Daytona Beach Fla., Feb. 22, 1991, p. 1.
- [104] The New York Times reported that although they were "initially suspicious" of the Soviets, Bush and Co. "have come to see [Gorbachev's] initiative more as an attempt to juggle several competing interests than [as] a sinister plot." The Soviet strategy, while falling short of "a Cold War scheme," was "to enhance Moscow's status in the Arab world, position [their] country for a role in the postwar gulf settlement and demonstrate to Soviet hard-liners that Kremlin foreign policy has not become an extension of American foreign policy." Thomas Friedman, "No subterfuge is perceived behind Soviet peace moves," The New York Times, February 23, 1991, p. A5.
- [105] Michael Gordon, "The seven-day strategy: Bush timetable seeks to humble Hussein while diminishing army's fighting ability," The New York Times, Feb. 23, 1991, p. A1.
- [106] (From wire services) "Saddam's time running out as Bush orders noon pullout," The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla, February 23, 1991, p. A1.
- [107] William Thorsell, "The gulf war: For once, the good guys got almost everything right," p. D6.
- [108] Jim Nunn, (host) Media File, CBC radio, January 26, 1991.
- [109] Cf. Jim Winter, "Media broom sweeps clean," The Toronto Star, January 24, 1991, p. A27; Jim Winter, "Gulf war distracting voters from other woes," The Windsor Star, January 29, 1991, p. A7.
- [110] Cf. Klaus Pohl, "Few facts and fewer scruples," The Globe and Mail, January 22, 1991, p. A15; Stan Cunningham, "War causing media to take hard look at itself," The Windsor Star, January 25, 1991, p. A7.
- [111] This follows one of the tenets of the media propaganda model devised by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, in: Manufacturing Consent: A Political Economy of the Mass Media, Pantheon, N.Y., 1988.
- [112] Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, (Eds.), Selections from the Prison Notebooks, International Publishers, N.Y., 1971, p. 263.
- [113] C.P. Otero (Ed), Noam Chomsky's Radical Priorities, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2nd Ed., 1981, pp. 299-300.
- [114] Herman and Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent, p. 135.
- [115] Herman and Chomsky, p. 299.

- [116] Richard Ericson, Pat Baranek, Janet Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organization*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987, p. 351.
- [117] These comments are based primarily on the excellent work by Ericson, et al., cited above, but also on the sociology of news literature by authors such as Edward J. Epstein, David Altheide, Gaye Tuchman, Herbert Gans, the Glasgow University Media Group, Todd Gitlin, and others, as well as personal observations as a media source over the past decade.
- [118] On the pretext of objectivity, cf. Michael Schudson, *Discovering The News*, Basic, N.Y., 1978, and W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, Longman, N.Y., 2nd Edition, 1988.
- [119] Marc Cooper and Lawrence Soley, "All the Right Sources," *Mother Jones*, February/March 1990, pp. 20ff.
- [120] Leon Sigal, *Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking*, D.C. Heath, Lexington Mass., 1973.
- [121] John Miller, "Rethinking old Methods," *Content* magazine, September/October 1990, pp. 24ff.
- [122] Ericson, et al., p.17.
- [123] These examples are my own. For a general discussion of common sense, cf. Ericson, et al., p.17; also Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, Basic Books, N.Y., 1983, p. 93.
- [124] Stuart Hall, "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect,'" in James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott, *Mass Communication and Society*, Sage, London, 1979, pp. 343-344.
- [125] Ericson, et al., p. 346.
- [126] Ericson, et al., p.363.
- [127] Evidently this moniker dates back to a Newsweek cover story in 1987, titled, "Fighting the 'Wimp Factor.'" Bush was "apoplectic," snubbing Newsweek for almost a year, until their representatives finally met with him to negotiate a truce. Bush fumed for 45 minutes. "He said that he was personally offended and that his family had been hurt, his daughter had cried..." Morris Wolfe, "The wimp as a factor in the gulf war," *The Globe and Mail*, March 14, 1991, p. C1.
- [128] Maureen Dowd, "War introduces nation to a tougher Bush," p. A1.
- [129] Robin Toner, "Bush's luck in war confers an aura of invincibility in '92," *The New York Times*, February 27, 1991, p. A1.
- [130] Tom Riddell, "The gulf war and the U.S. economy," *Z Magazine*, 4:3, March 1991, pp. 63-64.
- [131] Tom Riddell, "The gulf war and the U.S. economy," pp. 65-66. These figures will be disputed. The Pentagon predicted, for example, that the war would cost from

\$58 to \$77 billion for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1, 1990. Thus, the Bush Administration asked Congress for \$15 billion, "plus the use of all \$51 billion" pledged in aid from other countries, on February 22. This differs considerably from Riddell's figure of \$41.5 billion pledged. (AP), "Pentagon predicts war to cost up to \$77 billion this year," The News-Journal, (Daytona) February 22, 1991, p. 16A.

- [132] Steve Lohr, "U.S. Corporations win Kuwait rebuilding jobs," The New York Times, February 28, 1991, p. A11.
- [133] Steve Lohr, "U.S. Corporations..." p. A11.
- [134] Steve Lohr, "U.S. Corporations..." p. A11.
- [135] Cited in Parker Payson, "Figure it out," The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, July 1991, p. 55.
- [136] "Pentagon predicts war to cost up to \$77 billion this year," p. 16A.
- [137] Chomsky, "'What we say goes..." p.58.
- [138] Associated Press, "U.S. tops in supplying Third World weaponry," The Toronto Star, August 12, 1991, p. A3.
- [139] Colin Gordon, "Thicker Than Oil," Z Magazine, 4:4, April 1991, p. 30.
- [140] Edward Herman, "War's Bright Future," Z Magazine, 4:5, May 1991, p. 10.
- [141] That is, if U.S. administrations had not supported Saddam Hussein (before) or if Bush had supported the Kurdish resistance (after), then the emergence of a democratic system in Iraq might have been more likely to occur. For a detailed analysis, see Noam Chomsky, "What we say goes: the Middle East in the new world order," Z Magazine, 4:5, May 1991, pp. 49-64.
- [142] Stuart Hall, "Culture, the Media..." pp. 332-333.
- [143] Stuart Hall, "Culture, the Media..." p. 344.

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