

**Centre for Culture, Media and Governance**

**Journalism in Democracies during times of War: Examining the role of  
Indian and US media**

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# **Journalism in Democracies during times of War: Examining the role of Indian and US media**

## **Abstract**

The media are described as the citizens' window to the world. This role becomes even more pronounced during crises and war as the media are often the only and primary channel through which the public experience war and get information about what's happening on the frontlines and in the war zones. In democracies, where media are seen as the fourth pillar of society this role is even more pronounced. Not least because they are expected to present a 'free and fair' picture while reporting the war, but also because they help in building public opinion, which is seen as a key factor in democracies deciding to go to war.

This paper will try and examine the larger issue of how a 'free' media performs during times of war with particular reference to US and India using case studies. It will focus on 'national security' becoming a major pivot around which the media discourse is shaped. How the media practices 'patriotic' self-censorship and how governments stoke this 'patriotic' tendency to get support for their own agenda. It will also look at the media itself becoming an extension of the theatre of war when they go beyond reporting conflict and become a means through which the conflict is played out.

Access to information or rather the lack of it, during times of war will also be explored as freedom of information is an essential component of a democracy. An effort will be made to enumerate how total control to access has given way to managing and shaping the environment in which the media report. How indirect forms of censorship have frustrated journalists, curtailed their reporting or led to journalists 'trading freedom for access.'

Finally, the paper will try to address whether the arrival of online media has or can lead to pressure on the paid professional media and how they operate in times of war. How far do these alternate voices reach and what is their potential for changing the war media discourse in a democratic set-up.

# **Journalism in Democracies during times of War: Examining the role of Indian and US media**

## **Introduction**

*“The truth is that governments wage war to win and do not greatly worry about how they do it. To them the media are a menace.”* (Knightley, 2002)

Relations between the government and the media, between those ‘who fight the wars and those who report them’ have always been tenuous. But, it is a relationship that is also, to some extent, symbiotic. In times of war, the two need each other. The media are seen as the citizens’ window to the world. And this role becomes even more pronounced during war as the media is the only means for the public to experience war and get information about what's happening at the frontline. To fulfil this function, the media needs the government -- to get information about its operations and to gain access to the theatre of war. To the government, the media is important as it believes that it is not just the conduct of the war that is important for victory, but also its representation. It needs the media to build ‘support’ for the war.

In democracies, where media are seen as the fourth pillar of society its conduct is seen to be critical. Not least because they are expected to present a ‘free and fair’ picture while reporting the war, but also because they help in building public opinion, which is seen as a key factor in democracies deciding to go to war. And it is with this end in mind that governments and their armed forces have tried to exclude, contain and manipulate the media.

This paper will try and examine the larger issue of how a ‘free’ media performs during times of war with particular reference to US and India using case studies. It will focus on ‘national security’ becoming a major pivot around which the media discourse is shaped. How the media practices ‘patriotic’ self-censorship and how governments stoke this ‘patriotic’ tendency to get support for their own agenda. It will also look at the media itself becoming an extension of the theatre of war when they go beyond reporting conflict and become a means through which the conflict is played out.

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Finally, the paper will try to address whether the arrival of online media has or can lead to pressure on the paid professional media and how they operate in times of war. How far do these alternate voices reach and what is their potential for changing the war-media discourse in a democratic set-up.

But before all of that, the paper will have a brief discussion on the importance and role of media in democratic societies and how this role is further heightened during wars.

### **Democracy, Media and War**

The relationship between media and democracy can be seen at two levels, one at the Instrumental level where the role of the media, particularly the news media, is seen as one of facilitating and sustaining a democratic polity and second at the Institutional level where the focus is on the democratic character of the media system itself. The latter too indirectly feeds into the first as a more democratic and participative media is more likely to further a more democratic system of functioning at the national governmental level.

At what levels and in which ways media can serve and contribute to democracy have been the subject of much discussion, and different aspects – information, representation and participation - are emphasised depending on the media or the political system which is operational or visualised.

For the variations of democracy on offer in today’s modern world, in terms of concepts and forms, media systems too offer a range of democratic possibilities. In more general terms, it is the informational role of the media, which facilitates the citizens in making informed choices about public affairs, which is emphasised in the more elitist traditional and liberal understanding of democracy. In the Habermasian tradition of public sphere which is more akin to deliberative democracy and presence of pluralism, it is the participative role the media can play which is emphasised. The representational aspect of the media, where ideological constructions in the media are centre-stage, is emphasised by those looking at broadening the media’s democratic

scope. And finally the proponents of radical form of democracy who are more focussed on direct participation try to emphasise the empowering aspect of the media. However, that is not to say that these different approaches are exclusionist, it is just the level of emphasis that is different. Overall it is seen that all these aspects of the media contribute to democracy.

There is an entire body of work spelling out media systems associated with different political and economic formulations (Siebert et al.1963, Hallin and Mancini 2004, Mc Quail 2000, Schudson 2003), the role of the media in society (Curran, Mc Quail) and evaluations of how the media perform; power imbalances in communication, its nature and effects (Herman& Chomsky, Mc Chesney 2010). However, this paper will not dwell in detail on these theoretical aspects but will instead go on to looking at why it is important to look at the role of the media, particularly in a democracy.

### *Why the scrutiny*

“Democracy theory generally posits that society needs a journalism that is a rigorous watchdog of those in power and who want to be in power, can ferret out truth from lies, and can present a wide range of informed positions on the important issues of the day ...the media system as a whole should make this calibre of journalism readily available to the citizenry (Mc Chesney 2010, 26).

The role of media, its performance, its underpinnings, its shortcomings, its impacts are increasingly being debated and discussed. The media is increasingly under fire for not performing its duty. It is a profession that is more under scrutiny than any other. And not without reason. It is for the ability of journalists to report, analyse and comment in a free a fair manner, independent of any interference –commercial or political- that the media is seen as the fundamental fourth pillar of society in democracies.

Journalism is a central factor in the “constitution of a democratic social order” and can be directly related to the “defense of democracy” (Nordenstreng 2006). It is this contribution of the media towards the working of a democracy – as a critical independent voice, a neutral source of information – that has made its role and more so its performance the focus of attention.

Also in a democracy people expect the media to be uncompromised, not under pressure from the state, unlike in autocracies, dictatorships or even communist regimes where the media is virtually state controlled. In the latter societies, the citizens are aware of the compulsions and

regulations under which the media operate and as a result discount or question the facts presented in the media. Over time they also learn to discern the truth from the propaganda. In democratic societies however, people expect 'their' media to be presenting an independent and objective voice which they can take at face value. They do not feel the need to verify the facts presented by the media since there is no perceived demand on the media to follow the line of the state. This puts greater responsibility on journalists in democratic societies to ensure that their reporting is accurate and robust and can withstand scrutiny.

### *War and Media*

While the role of the media is vital in any democracy, it is during times of conflicts and wars that it becomes even more pronounced. It is because most of the citizens, other than those participating in the war have no way of knowing and understanding the goings on in the 'theatre of war'. It is through the "endeavours" of the "frontline journalist" that "audience with little or no direct experience of war today become aware of death and destruction in often faraway places" (Tumbler & Webster 2006: 7).

The role of the media in communicating the modern conflict (from the Crimean War onwards), has been broken down into three main narratives – media as a "critical observer", a "publicist" and also as a "battleground" itself, a field of contestation where war is "imagined and executed" (Thussu and Freedman 2003: 4). In the first, the journalists are seen in an adversarial role, where they are said to keep a watchful eye on the warring sides and report free of ideological or organisational impingements (ibid).

The "battleground" narrative looks at the media as an extension of the war theatre through which people experience conflicts. "The argument here is not whether the media promote or oppose particular conflicts but that they are the means by which contemporary conflicts play out" (Thussu and Freedman 2003: 7).

Others have tried to define the role of a war correspondent as that of "bearing witness". The "act of witnessing, of seeing for oneself the heart of the story, encapsulates the large problem of determining what counts as truth in the war zone" (Allan & Zelizer 2004: 5). This is what is said to give the reportage an authenticity or authority on account of the journalist's presence at a given location.

However, journalists, more often than not, have not been able to meet these exacting standards and have fallen short/found wanting on many a markers.

## **Media's performance during wars**

In Philip Knightley's seminal work on war reporting *'The First Casualty'* the label of a publicist, a "propagandist and mythmaker", has been used to describe war correspondents. According to Knightley's account (2004), the reportage of war, more often than not, reflects the government or the military perspective, reinforcing the information given out by official sources. There is little or no impartial and independent monitoring of the government, military and their actions.

The adversarial role, or rather the lack of it has also been brought out by many who have studied the performance of journalists during wartime. Journalists have been accused of indulging in 'on-side', patriotic and 'us Vs them' journalism (Knightley 1995, Kalb 1994, Reese 2004). They have been charged with oversimplifying the war, reporting without context and using the jargon of propaganda and falling in line with the dominant storyline of war as a heroic exercise and grand achievement (Seib 2004, Hudson & Stanier 1999, Boyd-Barrett 2004, Kellner 2004). Journalists are said to have given up their 'freedom' in order to gain access to the battlefield thus providing vivid reports but a narrow approach where important factors shaping the war remain under the radar (Allan & Zelizer 2004).

Criticism from academics and media analysts aside journalists present in battle zones themselves have often found it difficult to understand and explain their role. Especially, when their own country is at war. The BBC's Kate Adie has said, "the very nature of war confuses the role of a journalist" (Adie in Allan & Zelizer 2004: 3). Others, like John Burns of the New York Times, say whatever the circumstances, war reporting should be about the effort "to tell people as much of the truth as you can" (Burns in Allan & Zelizer 2004: 4).

Self-doubts aside journalists are also not always able to 'witness' this 'truth', in order to inform the public. In this process of trying to bring the 'truth' to the fore, journalists encounter numerous obstacles and constraints that prevent them from reporting in an independent and critical manner. The ability of journalists to present the picture of war has more often than not been limited, undermined or altogether blocked.

### *Governments their militaries and the media*

Governments see the period of war as a time when the media should suspend its watchdog role and respond to what the government perceives as the nation's interest. Media on the other hand demands information and access as a right – as part of its duty to inform the

audience; and to monitor the role of the government and the military. Issues of what should be reported, how much and when are highly contentious.

To the governments' and the military, the media is important as they believe it is not just the conduct of the war that is important for victory, but also its representation. "The governments, mindful of their popularity, generally seek to harness mass media in wartime to persuade citizens of a war's justness and the enemy's implacability" (Carruthers 2000: 5). It needs the media to build support for the war.

It is with this end in mind that governments and their armed forces have tried to exclude, contain and manipulate the media through propaganda, obfuscation, psychological operations or censorship.

Pentagon's Joint Vision 2020 speaks of "full spectrum dominance" according to which "information dominance is the key to victory" (Miller 2004). Information warfare is thus integrated into the military strategy by the United States. Many other modern militaries have followed suit and even rebel groups have incorporated it into their overall strategy.

One of the most striking examples of this approach is the 'embedding' of journalists, a practice that was fine-tuned and perfected during the Iraq war. Here, the interference is subtle. Most media organisations and journalists see embedding as a solution to their access woes. However, even though access is increased in this case, rather than restricted, a specific focus and angle for the coverage is defined. By putting the journalist in the field along with the troops the story becomes about "winning and losing, rather than a consideration of a context in which the war was fought" (Lewis & Brooke 2004: 299).

Governments have also tried to curtail the ability of journalists to obtain information beyond the battle front by resorting to curbs and surveillance of the wider medium of communications -- censoring mails and telegraph messages, tapping telephone lines and scrutinising internet communication. This practice has expanded post 9/11, with the US passing the Patriot Act whose provisions are often referred to as "sneak and peak" for their infringement on individual liberty (Hills 2006). These restrictions impact the journalists' work as it makes it harder for them to protect their sources.

*Journalistic standards*

But analysis of war reporting has shown that often governments have not had to try very hard in order to get their point of view in the media. Journalists have been more than willing and have not hesitated in 'flying the flag' and wearing their patriotic credentials on their collar. They have reported as 'on-side' and identifying themselves with the armies of their nation or the 'sides' they represent.

This form of 'patriotic' self-censorship has been practiced by journalists and media organisations in many subsequent wars. The practice can be traced back to the American Civil War, was witnessed during the First Gulf War when the "us and them" approach was adopted by the media and the majority of the US press accepted military briefings as the absolute and unquestionable truth and also later in the Iraq war (2003) when the US media uncritically accepted the administration assertion that Saddam Hussain's was holding 'weapons of mass destruction' in Iraq (cite?).

A similar pattern of 'jingoistic journalism' was on display in the news reportage in India when the country fought the Kargil War with Pakistan (May-July 1999). Reportage, particularly on television, was far from critical. It not only totally accepted the government view point but also indulged in jingoistic programming (Thussu 2002). The role of the media was also seen by the military as that of a "force multiplier" and it was seen as essential to building national morale and "winning popular support" (Joshi 2004: 125).

Coverage of wars is also said to sell media 'products' as newspaper circulation and television viewership is said to increase during wars with the audience wanting more coverage of these issues (Tai & Chang 2002). Thus, newspapers and television channels are more than willing to trade "freedom for access" and see embedding with the military as an answer to their access woes in trying to bring the war to their 'consumers'.

However, this outlook is beset with problems. Access to military locations and sensitive information does improve the understanding and appreciation of the journalist to "tactical and operational aspects of a military campaign". But it also means that reporters make their "gate-keeping choices (what to report) on the basis of military rationale instead of purely journalistic logic." (Brandenburg 955)

If this was not worrying enough the changing nature of war and technological advances in the field of communication have posed new challenges for the media and brought further

pressure on the journalists in reporting the war in a manner that help its audience in making sense of the chaos.

## **New Media**

The arrival of the internet has changed the unidirectional nature of the reporting. The war reporting scenario has also changed with voices that were never heard finding a space on the internet. But before discussing the change in the dynamics of war reporting with the arrival of the internet, the paper will put forth what this new medium has done to and for the business of journalism.

### *Internet and the media*

The internet is not just another medium for disseminating information, it is instead a participatory medium which allows for multi-dimensional flow of information and a diversity of voices to be heard. It allows for greater interaction between producers and users of information and demands active engagement from the participants (Schultz, 2000). One can comment on story, question the premises, put forth a contradictory view and possibly even induce a response from the original 'poster'.

It helps break the earlier binaries of producer-reader in a news format as low entry barriers to publishing on the internet mean that anyone with access to the internet can produce content (Deuze and Platon,2003). The dialogue in this case is not in the earlier format of 'few to a many' but takes the form of 'many to many'.

In this way the internet breaks the hegemony of the mainstream media over information and provides ordinary citizens (with access to the internet) a new visibility. It enables the audience not only to be a producer but also in many cases provides him with direct access which was earlier the exclusive domain of the journalists like government policy documents and reports of non-governmental organisations which earlier had to be mediated through the media. This brings into question the function of journalism (Slevin 2000).

Another aspect that makes the internet different is the ability of the medium to synthesise text, audio, visual and audio-visual at the same time. The medium is also able to break away from a linear way of reporting a story by providing hyperlinks that allow the user to explore different aspects and background which help him with a more detailed understanding the issue at hand (Frost 2003).

Researchers have posed questions about how the arrival of online journalism with the internet is putting pressure on the traditional ways in which journalism has been practiced (Palvic 2004, Stovall 2000) and is likely to force change.

But there are problems and shortfalls. In the absence of gate-keeping and editorial no verification can be done of the information and data being on various internet sites and blogs. There is no checking as to what information passes as 'true' which makes the web vulnerable to being regarded as non-credible (Bucy, 2003; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000, 2001; Sundar, 1998, 1999). While the medium has a great democratising potential, it can also become an insulated space if the user so decides by only accessing sites, blogs etc. which confirm to the already held positions and views. Also in many cases the alternate media, where people themselves are not present on sites, use information and links from mainstream media and only provide further views. Thus, reverting back to the original circle.

### *Internet mediated war*

“Half an hour ago the oil-filled trenches were put on fire my cousin came and told me he saw police cars standing by one and setting it on fire. Now you can see the columns of smoke all over the city.”

From the blog “Where is Raed?” by an Iraqi, “Salam Pax.”(In Hamdy & Mobarak, pg 250)

It was not just the mainstream media that were giving information to the people about the Iraq War. Hundreds of others were pitching in with what they knew. And internet as a medium made it possible for them to disseminate the information they had. It was not just Iraqis in their country doing so but also many Americans in the US who were providing an alternate view and opinions on the war. *The Onion*, which referred to itself as “America’s Finest News Source” put up satirical headlines like “Dead Iraqi would have loved democracy” and “Bush asks Congress for \$30 billion to help fight war on criticism” (Hamdy & Mobarak , 2004, 253).

While internet was used in the Balkan Wars where a multitude of voices offered an alternative and counterpoint to the mainstream media, it was in the second Gulf war that it was said to have come of age. The Iraq War (2003) was referred to by many as the ‘first war in cyberspace’ as during the wars in the former Yugoslavia internet was not as widespread a medium as it became later. More than 75 per cent of Americans turned to the Internet to learn

about the Iraq War and for the latest news and updates ( Hamdy & Mobarak, 2004). However, these were not all alternate media but also websites of mainstream media.

A study conducted on blogs during the Iraq War (Wall 2005) found that a large number of them were being executed by different kinds of people from soldiers, to people. It showed that the blogs brought in divergent voices from military personnel in Iraq, an Iraqi citizen, academics, journalists, graduate students, activists, office workers, to technology specialists. There provided wide range of information and opinion with some bloggers supporting the war, others opposed to it and some neutral. While not all were popular but some blogs (Daily Kos) had as many as 1754 responses within 4 days (Wall 2005).

The easy availability of digital images through cameras and phones meant that these accounts were often supplemented by the video and pictures which could then be uploaded on sites such as YouTube, GoogleVideo and even Wikileaks which made classified video, containing imagery from military surveillance devices, from the Iraq war public leading to major embarrassment for the US government and military.

Often graphic, shockingly violent and gruesome, these pictures and the text that accompanied it challenged the rather sanitized version of war presented by the mainstream media. This posed a “challenge [to] traditional journalism's claim to authenticity and credibility precisely by showing that which mainstream news will not show and thus rendering dubious the Professional practices of selection, framing, and editing' (Anden-Papadopoulos 2009, p.24) The internet, thus, has the ability to offer information and perspectives that are otherwise lost in mainstream media representations of conflicts (Russell, 2001).

The multiplicity of perspectives, some believe, is more conducive to the emergence of truth than traditional journalistic norms of objectivity and balance (Deuze and Platon, 2003). However, availability of varied perspectives does not mean that it helps the reader or viewer in contextualising and making sense of the information. Often these pieces are incomplete and focus on only one aspect of the story like military men talking about what is happening in their units. In this cacophony of voices a person looking for an overview may have to turn back to the mainstream media for help.

Also as mentioned in the earlier section the anonymity of voices creates the problem of credibility as well as of veiled propaganda by interested sides as was seen in the Balkan war (Hall 2000). The other issue is that of the digital divide when a handful of ‘connected’ people are

in a position to hijack the agenda and make the others irrelevant as has been talked about by Castels while discussing his network society thesis. This can manifest in many societies like India where a large number of people still do not have the access to the internet.

And finally, it is the question of censorship. While internet's participatory and democratising potential has been much talked about, we have several examples of governments cracking down on the internet and censoring cyberspace, particularly in times of conflicts and war in the name of 'national security'. Even in a democratic country like India, during the Kargil War with Pakistan in 1999, access to the Pakistani newspaper, *The Dawn*, was blocked by the Indian government (Thussu 2002).

### **The changing nature of war in the era of 24/7 news**

All these changes in technologies have changed the way in which we experience and understand war. And while these understandings may be different what is common to all is that war has become more immediate, more complex and as some scholars put it diffused (Hoskins & O'Loughlin 2010). These authors claim that the traditional ways of looking and trying to make sense of the war can no longer be valid with the instant, ever-present and all pervading media changing the dynamics of how the wars get initiated, fought or even responded to. To them, diffused war, is a new paradigm, where the causal relations between "action and effect" are diffused leading to greater "uncertainty" on part of the policymakers (ibid. 3). While they contend that reasons over which wars are waged - for political or economic hegemony- may still exist, what has changed is the way in which war "proceeds". To them there has been a marked change in "justification, conduct and reconstruction of war".

The globalisation and risk society theory also argues that radical uncertainty of the risk society demands new ways of facing and tackling threats, arising out of unintended human actions, in terms of our political responses and demanding a more global and cosmopolitan outlook (Giddens ). It is these unintended risks or threats have been used by those selling 'fear politics', much more so in the post 9/11 world, to try and build a solidarity against terror, just as the risk society tries to build a 'solidarity from anxiety'. War by them is "understood as a preventive measure to pre-empt possible risks and threats" (Hammond 2007, 10).

Postmodernist scholars have argued that while the reduction of wars to ‘spectacle and image’ by the media needs to be examined, as does the changing character of war it is more important to seek an understanding of rational of war by examining the events and the politics behind them. Referring to Western post-modern societies they contend that wars and interventions, where they are involved, are driven by a search for “a sense of purpose and meaning” (Hammond 2007, 11).

But theories on technologies and modernity aside, as it will interest working journalist little, it is quite apparent that in the last decade or so the war as we know it has changed. The events of 9/11 and the coinage of the term ‘war on terror’ have significantly contributed towards this change. The immediate response to the attack on the twin towers in New York may have taken the US to war with Afghanistan and subsequently to Iraq, but now it has become amorphous and defused and is no longer just being fought just at the frontlines. This new kind of wars are being fought in our own countries, in our neighbourhoods or doorstep and none of us even those not directly involved in the war are insulated from its impacts.

The US government and now other governments’, like in India, have followed suit to define their own ‘wars on terror’ which have put these countries in a state of “permanent war footing”( Lobel 2001, 40). These have led to legislations and laws enacted in the name of ‘national security’ that often impinge on civil liberties (ibid.). Existence of such provisions in autocratic and dictatorial regimes would be no surprise but when put in place in democratic countries which boast of a free Press, they also reflect on the media’s inability or unwillingness to question the government of the day when it comes to issues framed as ‘national interest’. ‘Patriotism’ seems to have become a weapon in the hand of the state to blunt the edges of the media.

In such changing scenarios where war has become a constant presence, the responsibility on the media in democratic countries becomes manifold. They not only have to gain access to the frontlines and bring home the war that is being fought at the frontlines but also remain vigilant to the war being fought at home and its unexpected consequences and unsuspecting victims. Under these circumstances the media can no longer compartmentalise war coverage but aim to see it in its totality and changed nature, where they themselves have become its part.

But is this asking for too much? Just how vigilant can the media be in this era of 24/7 news which is proliferated by news providers competing for eyeballs? The drive to be first with the story; getting scoops; beating the rivals at the ratings and the circulation game has led to profits and populism scoring over professional reflexivity. The ‘need for speed’ has adversely impacted the gate-keeping layers and rigour at media organisations. It may not be always about journalists being ‘co-opted’ but also the changing requirements of the profession that impact their performance.

As war correspondent Morley Safer has put it succinctly “live coverage... only adds heat, it does not add light. You learn nothing, generally speaking, from live coverage” (Ives 2003). Emphasis on ‘live news’ leaves very little time for fact checking. This further exacerbates the absence of context by reducing news to ‘a spectacle’ (McLaughlin,2003).

### **Conclusion: all is not lost**

Challenges faced by the media during times of war are not new. In democratic societies the governments waging war and its media reporting the war have always been at loggerheads. A tug of war has always existed over access to battlefield and information. But now fast moving technological changes, the transforming nature of the war and cut-throat commercial competition not just within media groups but also with alternate media has added further complexities to the job of journalists covering war. At the same time the eternal question of ‘patriotism’ of journalists during wartime has not just remained central to the debate but become subject to even more scrutiny with countries being at a ‘constant’ state of war.

It may be true that war correspondents have not always come out in shining light with several examples portraying a grim picture of media’s performance, but it is not the entire story. There are journalists who have done critical work despite criticism from governments’, their own peers and at times even the public. Many have refused to go in as ‘embeds’ and reported wars with an independent perspective. Some have questioned their leaders for misleading them while others have reflected on their own performance post-war. For instance, when the US President announced the end of the Iraq war on May 1, 2003, Tom Brokaw, NBC 10’s anchor, raised the issue that though the Iraq war was waged in the light of 9/11, there was no proof found of Saddam Hussain’s link with the incident till the end, (Munshi 2004,58). Other’s like CNN’s top

war correspondent, Christiane Amanpour, went on to assess the media and her own station's performance during war saying the "press was muzzled" and broadcast compromised in a "climate of fear and self-censorship" (in Boyd-Barrett 2004, 438). The New York Times, Public Editor, Daniel Okrent, pointed to "institutional" failure in his newspaper's overplaying the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) story throwing in its "hunger for scoops" (Boyd-Barrett 2004, 441).

While these instances can't extricate the journalists and the media of their follies, as by their reflections came when the damage was already done, one can hope that this reflexivity would lead to better performance and more exacting standards in the future. Similarly, the arrival of net media –though its impact on journalism so far has been seen as mixed - has given a platform and visibility to the voice of many independent journalists who are free from many of the constraints that define commercial mainstream media. This reflexivity among the journalists and technological changes one hopes will tip the purely commercial direction the media seems to be going in and change the contours of journalism in general and more so in times of war as it has life and death implications.

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