

“ROLE OF US MEDIA IN THE PERSIAN GULF CONFLICT”

**Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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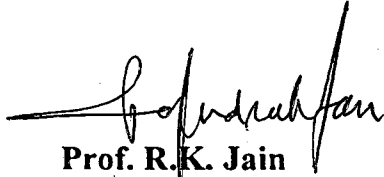
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **“ROLE OF US MEDIA IN THE PERSIAN GULF CONFLICT”** submitted by **MANNAN DWIVEDI**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, is his own work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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Preface

The present study focuses on the establishment and evolution of Media in the United States of America down the past two centuries in particular. The work primarily zeroes in on the mainstream and alternative media portrayals of the Persian Gulf conflict of 1991 which saw the biggest ever cobbling together of a US lead Western coalition against Iraq. The study makes an attempt to gauge the manner in which the United States media portrayed the American act of intervention in a troubled Kuwait. The questions raised are that whether the mainstream media reportage of the Gulf war was pro-administration and did it lead to a eulogisation of war. The role of media as a public opinion forging instrument at the disposal of the Bush administration is another facet which is examined keenly in this piece of work.

The present dissertation constitutes of five chapters and a select bibliography.

The chapter one, introduces the subject matter and after a cursory glance at the meaning of what the term media means, harks back to how American Media evolved down the ages, since the times of the American revolutionary years. The chapter is replete with the historical aspect of the American media and traces its development till the advent of Radio broadcasting in the United States.

The chapter two, titled "Mainstream media" delves at great length on the dynamics of the working of America mainstream media of all sorts. It does an analysis of how the mammoth media Moguls of the day are owned by the corporate giants. Apart from having a say in running the economy and influencing policy decision, the role played by the business Magnets in effecting media reportage and coverage is also a main highlight in the chapter.

The chapter three, titled "Media surveys and public opinion in the Persian Gulf conflict" gives a detailed account of how media presented the American war effort in 1991. It tends to focus on the fact that the news and views reaching the mass audience were filtered through a military created sieve, which made the media portrayals downright unidimensional and biased. Another chief aspect included in the chapter is the rise of Cable News Network (CNN) as the chief disseminator of "live" war time images of the battlefield.

The fourth chapter, "Alternative Media surveys on the Persian Gulf war, attempts to delineate the impact of alternative dissent media voices during the course of the Persian Gulf conflict. The handling of various war issues, especially the Feminist media and the Black Media is examined in the light of various media reports and sound bytes of this parallel starch of discourse social running through the American framework. The anti-war, thus an anti-

establishment voice raised against the war rhetoric is studied in this part of the dissertation.

The last part is the conclusion of the work which attempts to sum up what all the researcher has attempted to dissect and achieve in the whole body of work.

Chapter – 1

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN MEDIA

The history of American Media must necessarily involve an examination of rich print tradition into which broadcasting was also assimilated. It would involve an attempt to briefly overview the varied contours of that tradition, the various influences that impacted the growth of such media. They broadly point out the historical milestones of the media enterprises in the U.S. It would also involve a look at the developments that took place in colonial America to the modern 20th century. While the term media is plural, this chapter will deal with the historical path of the American print media, particularly the newspapers as they were the only means of communication between various revolutionaries of the American Independence. In fact, the role played by newspapers as several media studies have pointed out remain as one of the enduring features of the American freedom struggle.

From the start the American media was unique in its private sector orientation. While their relations with the government covered a spectrum of hostility to support, there remained an unshakeable acknowledgement of the role of press and media in a democracy. Distinguished

commentators such as Thomas Jefferson argued that without a free press, democracy cannot work. The communication between democracy and free press was maintained by the framers of free press. The guarantee of the freedom of press is thus placed in the amendment to the constitution. Today, the term first amendment is used to cover the concept of a free press, guaranteed in the U.S. with the understanding that the press would serve as a watchdog on government activities. The Political Philosophers engaged in serious discourses in framing the constitution contribute to the forging of public opinion which in turn influences government decisions, was of primary importance. Such questions as to what is meant by a free press and how should a guarantee for free press be enshrined in the the constitution? what are the limitations of a free press ?, stimulated public debate and political decisions that resulted in the first amendment.

It was based on the twin principles of free speech and free press. The purpose of which was to secure the practice of democracy by finding the truth exercising self Government and satisfying self expression. Media provided a forum through which individuals expressed opinions even while informing citizens of Government action.

To some observers, the first amendment imposes no obligations on the press to be restrained. To others, freedom of the press is not absolute. The press has obligations and responsibility when it comes into conflict

with other freedoms. In other words, this school of thought argues that the interpretation of the constitution should focus on the balance between freedoms and rights.

The Founding Fathers also meant to address the concern with the potential growth of an authoritarian Government. Thus, along with the creation of three separate branches of Government, one extra-constitutional, "was the free press." This idea became so popular that the press is often called the "Fourth Estate". In the last two hundred years, the press and the Media have grown to have an increasing impact on public policy, Government decisions and public opinion. This was always not so especially in the earlier years.

Even before the war of independence, the newspapers in existence often played the role of an informant, judge, opposer and critique of the politics of the day. Many believe that the aspects permeate Media traditions even today.

The early years of the 17th century saw the publication of the first newspaper from Boston. In the succeeding years there was a rapid rise in the numbers of Newspaper Publications. As the fervor of the American revolution grew, politics and political patronage became part of the American Landscape.

The first continuous newspaper in the United States was published in Boston by two brothers, John and Duncan Campbell, who found requests for their newsletter outstripping copying speed. It was the Boston newsletter in 1704.¹ The weekly paper, was very much British in content and form. The paper was filled with news of foreign affairs, natural disasters, ship arrivals, court actions and political appointments and decisions.²

Colonial newspapers relied heavily on foreign newspapers for news and borrowed heavily from them even when the news was two months old. As did the British, the colonists showed high degree of interest in European events.³ As newspapers spread all around, news from other colonies also began to appear.

Colonial authorities did not actively use the press to achieve political objectives. Government officials did not attempt to direct newspaper content or shape new articles. What they used to do was punish editors by failing to grant much coveted government printing contracts. The poor remuneration from publishing and necessary reliance on government printing jobs made this threat a very serious one.⁴

¹ Alfred McClungbe, *The Daily Newspaper in America*, [New York; Macmillan, 1937,] p.37

² Alfred Mott, *American Journalism*, p. 11-12

³ Merrill Jensen, *The Founding of nation*, [New York, Oxford University Press, 1968,] p.316-317

⁴ Arthur Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence*, p.62-64.

Political changes wrought immediately prior to and during the revolutionary war altered the role of the press in political life. The newspaper became useful as an useful tool mobilizing public opinion in the course of the revolution. John Adams believed the “radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people was the real American revolution”. Some historians suggest the press played a significant role in affecting that radical change.⁵

Before the revolution publishers were caught in the cross-fire between the appointed colonial executive and the popularly elected legislature. Many printer-editors still relied on patronage from the colonial governor and were hesitant to oppose the government openly. For example, nearly one fifth of the advertising space in one Georgia newspaper was bought by the colonial government.⁶

Printers faced either the dictat of the governor or the rules of the legislature or even moles of angry patriots. One North Carolina publisher aptly described the colonial printer’s dilemma, “What part is now to act? Continue to keep his press open and be free and be in danger of corporal

⁵ Philip Davidson, *Propaganda and the American revolution*, [Chapel Hill, N.C. University of North Carolina Press, 1941,] p.225-245.

⁶ Robert M. Weir, “The Role of the Newspaper Press in Southern Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution, in *The Press and the American revolution*, edited by Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench, [Worcester, Mass: American Antiquarian Society, 1980,] p.103.

punishment, or black it up, and run the risk of having his brains knocked out".⁷

Simultaneously, the colonial press denigrated the mother country. Tales of immoral behavior by public figures and corruption in British politics fostered the public belief that the British empire was corrupt and only independence would free the colonies from the stain of British immorality.⁸ The patriots also benefited from more efficient mail service and a liberal exchange of newspapers between colonies.

The spread of information about British moves and patriot response fostered a sense of oneness and identification with other colonies in opposition to England.⁹

When the colonies were able to oust the British, the newspapers began playing an influential role in the ratification of the constitution. Some of the widely distributed articles were by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, later compiled and titled the Federalist papers.¹⁰

Originally published as essays in the New York independent journal, the articles became the most powerful defense of the constitution.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Merrill Jensen, *The Founding of a nation*, [New York: Oxford University Press, 1968,] p.316-317.

⁹ Robert M. Weir in *The Press and the American revolution*, edited by Bernard Badgn and John B. Hench, [Worcester, Mass: American Antiquarian Society, 1980,] p.125-129

¹⁰ Carl Van Doren, *The Great Rehearsal*, [New York, Viking Press, 1948,] p.188-192

On the opposing side, the letters of a Federal farmer, authored by revolutionary war General Richard Henry Zel, were among the best essays against ratification.¹¹

The eventual ratification of the constitution produced a momentary political consensus in the new nation as political leaders such as Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton sub-merged their deep seated ideological differences in an effort to stabilize the new government¹². However, these differences over such issues as the scope of the role of the national government, the function of the presidency, the future of the economy and the value of democracy did not remain long suppressed. National political leaders began to distinguish themselves into two broad groups later known as Federalists and Republicans.¹³

The press had few options but to follow the dictates of the political parties and the government. The leaders of the order of Jefferson and Hamilton utilised an impoverished press to their advantage. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked a period of great instability in American Journalism. It has been estimated that prior to 1800 more than 500 newspapers folded within one year of

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Robert A. Autland, *The News Managers: Journalism in the Life of the Nation 1690-1972*, [New York, Dial Press, 1973,] p.62-63.

¹³ Robert A. Rutland, *The ordeal of the constitution: The anti-federalists and the ratification struggle*, Norman, [Opla: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966], p.62.

establishment.¹⁴ Advertising, which would offer a firm financial base for later generations of publishers, was then not fully realized as a tool for financial stability. This eased the task of political leaders to utilize the press for partisan purposes.

Political leaders offered financial loans for the establishment and maintenance of favoured journals. It is noted that Alexander Hamilton and other Federalists contributed about \$1,000 each for William Coleman to establish the New York evening post¹⁵ A less direct form of financial aid was assistance with subscriptions. Thomas Jefferson had solicited subscriptions for the National Gazette, and other Republican political leaders for various republican papers throughout the country.¹⁶

The relationship between political leaders and the press had been formed in the early days of the united states. However, an eventual effort by the leaders to tighten their grip over the press, sowed the seeds of the eventual destruction of the relationship.

By 1830s, more than twelve dailies competed in Philadelphia and six dailies were published in New York. Even Charleston boasted of four to six newspapers in this period. Overall in United States, the number of

¹⁴ George Henry Payne, *History of Journalism in the United States*, [New York, D. Appleton, 1920,] p.120-125.

¹⁵ Frank Lütier Mott, *Jefferson and the Press*, [Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1943], p.28.

¹⁶ *Ibid*

news papers jumped from 200 at the turn of the century to about 1,200 by mid 1830s.¹⁷

Alex de Tocqueville, who toured United States, described that in America there is hardly a hamlet which does not have a newspaper of its own. By 1830, the figure was one copy for every fifteen persons.¹⁸ The press was viewed as possessing enormous influence over public affairs. According to Charles Dickens, "The American Press has its evil eye on every house and its black hand in every appointment in the state from the President in the state, to a postman."¹⁹

As a further development, during the Jacksonian era, the new pattern of vituperative and personal attacks on political leaders of all hues, had the effect of diminishing the social difference which the common people accorded to their leaders. Political scientist Richard Dubin has termed the press of the period as "a great leveler", due to its role in helping desanctify public office, thus opening it to the unsanctified common man.²⁰

This partisan press was generally replaced by journalistic and economic, rather than political considerations and engaged in a more

¹⁷ Alex de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by Richard D. Heffner, [New York: New American library, 1956], p.94.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Charles Dickens, *American notes and pictures from Italy*; edited by Ernest Rhys, [New York: E.P. Dutton, 1907], p.245

²⁰ Richard Rubin, *Press, party and presidency*, [New York, Norton, 1981], p.45-46.

equalitarian relationship with politicians and a more autonomous role within the political system.

A movement towards decentralization characterized the politics of the pre-and-post civil war periods. Prior to the civil war, power devolved to sectional interests. The post-civil war period witnessed a preoccupation with local issues rather than national concerns.²¹ The tradition of utilizing the press as a tool for articulation and marshalling of support, ended largely as Richard Rubin neatly summarizes it in his book, *press, party and presidency*.²²

Skyrocketing costs for governmental printing, hints of scandals in the operation of government printing involving huge profits for newspapers, all this contributed to the intense criticism of the government's relations with the press.²³ Moreover, the post of the official printer for the houses of Congress, which had originated in 1819, had become a subject of bitter wrangling by partisans seeking to enrich their own ends. The congress, thus created in 1860 the government printing office to tackle all governmental printing.²⁴

Thus, a major tool of political leaders and parties in forging supportive relations with the press was gone.

²¹ Richard Davis, *The Press and the American Politics*, [Longman Publishing, 1992,] p.66-67.

²² Richard Rubin, *Press, Party and Presidency*, [New York, Norton, 1981], p. 74.

²³ *Ibid*, p.23.

²⁴ Culver Smith, *Press, Politics and Patronage*, [Athens, University of Georgia Press,] p.210-211.

In 1872 the Congress ended political patronage to press. The Congress noted that "it was questionable whether the dominant political party should aid those newspapers which only reflect its partisan views instead of being mirrors of public opinion."²⁵

The civil war served as an impetus to the acceptance of the journalist as a full-fledged profession. "Large metropolitan newspapers allocated significant financial resources to war coverage service as they viewed the conflict as an opportunity to prove the value of the press. The New York Herald, one of the most aggressive in war reporting, spent half a million in war coverage and employed more than 40 war correspondents in the field at any one time."²⁶

The widespread adoption of the telegraph gave journalists the ability to report military engagements as they were taking place. Thus providing the public with information available to leaders only. Many issues that emerged during the coverage of this conflict still confront government-media relations today. Much of the reporting was sensationalist and even "propagandistic", as reporters were inexperienced. As war continued the professional war correspondent appeared and reporting improved.

²⁵ Ibid, p.241.

²⁶ Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press in America*, [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1984,] p.200.

Censorship restrictions were initiated by the confederate and Union Governments. Limitation of paper, blockade by Unionists also played a role in the south. In the North, compulsory censorship scheme by prosecuting editors with a pro – south bias , by denying access to telegraph lines and mails, suspension of publications by the military, banning reporters from areas of war- these were some of the problems faced during the civil war.

The photographs and illustrations too told the story of war and became the images of war and the public mind. Thus, Civil war coverage, not only explains the links between the technological advances and Military and Journalistic relations, but raises the question of hows and whys of censorship during a conflict. It also raised the importance of imagery which resonates in the present day coverage of international conflicts covered by the Media.

Correspondent's stories included harrowing accounts of penetrating enemy lines and escaping out to deliver news dispatches. Editors enhanced the correspondent's status by printing bylines giving the reporter's name. Following the war, some reporters such as Richard Harving Davis and Henry Raymond became popular personalities.²⁷ Presidential candidates Horace Greeley and James G. Blaine had been

²⁷ Richard Davis, *The Press and the American Politics*, [Longman Publishing, 1992,] p.70.

editors. Journalists were appointed to federal government posts from clerk to cabinet official.²⁸

The newspaper and printer patronage was nearly moribund in the post civil war era. In particular, the establishment of Govt. printing office in 1860 obviated contracting out most printing within Washington. The last vestiges of the sponsorship were private printing of the congress debates, which ended with the establishment of the Govt. published congressional record in 1873. Patronage continued at the local level but it was all but moribund as a matter of federal policy.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the rise of a new genre of journalism called "yellow journalism". The term Yellow journalism originated with the use of yellow ink in comic illustrations. This genre was unlike the staid, unsensational style of New York Times and the New York Tribune. As Hearst explained, "It is our policy to engage brains and more as the public is even more thirsty of entertainment than it is of information."²⁹

Yellow journalism dwelled upon human interest stories of crime and sex. One aspect of it was the use of gimmicks to attract readers. These included sponsoring around the world trips and contests for

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Quoted in WA swanberg, Citizen Hearst, [New York, Scribner, 1961], p.90.

newspaper slogans and offering handsome prizes for solving noted crimes. A significant political event intensified criticism of the Yellow Press. President William Mckinley's assassination was linked to Mckinley's bitter criticism in the Hearst newspapers. "Non-Yellow papers noted accordingly, "The journalism of anarchy shares responsibility for the attack on the president. The selling of newspapers is not the chief aim when vilification is turned into an industry and platform black journalism as trade".³⁰

As time progressed, advertising constituted an ever increasing source of income for the press. By 1904, advertising accounted for 56% of the income of newspapers and periodicals. Between 1892 and 1914, newspaper and advertising sales multiplied three and a half times.³¹ This lead to an increased dependency of newspapers on the advertisers. Business relations with advertisers were regularized with formation of advertising companies and the Audit Bureau of circulations which provided periodic, accurate information on circulation figures.³²

Now, Journalism with its attendant dependence on capital was gradually moving towards professionalisation. Journalist organisations began to establish codes of ethics for journalism. A reaction to yellow

³⁰ Quoted in Allan Nevins, American Press Opinion: Washington to Coolidge, [Boston, D.C. Heath, 1928,] p.467

³¹ Frank O'Brien, the Story of Sun, [New York: Appleton, 1928,] p.206-207.

³² Michael Schudson, Advertising, The Uneasy persuasion, [New York: Basic Books, 1984], p.147-160.

journalism, the codes were an attempt to delineate the role of the press in society and the rights and responsibilities of the press.³³

The new generation of press attached less importance to partisan connections. William R. Nelson of Kansas city star wrote, "The most sensible appeal to the young voters is to not to surrender their consciences and maintain their independence of suffrage."³⁴

A major shift in the administration and media relationship came about with the efforts of President McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. They began the tradition of encouraging white house coverage. Political scientist, Jeffrey K. Culis argued that Roosevelt was the father of a rhetorical presidency, where the President acts as a leader of public opinion. Obviously the news media became a vital tool for such a role.³⁵

"Radio will make the long speech impossible or inadvisable.... the short speech will be the vogue."³⁶ Reginald Fessenden, a professor of electrical engineering at university of Pittsburgh, initiated the first radio broadcast leading to public broadcasts.³⁷

The government's initial reaction to radio was a laissez faire attitude. Later on after the passing of the radio act of 1927, the Congress

³³ See, Nelson A Cromford, *The ethics of journalism*, [New York, Knopf,] 1924.

³⁴ Quoted in Michael E. Negerr, *The Decline Of Popular Politics*, [New York, Oxford University Press, 1966,] p.118.

³⁵ George Juergens, *News from The White House*, [University of Chicago Press, 1981], p.85-90.

³⁶ John W. Davis, 1924, *Democratic Presidential Candidate*, in Edward W. Chester, *Radio, Television and American Politics*, [New York, Sheed and Ward, 1969,] p. 18-19.

The government's initial reaction to radio was a laissez faire attitude. Later on after the passing of the radio act of 1927, the Congress took a middle path preserving private ownership with a modicum of government regulation, primarily over technical facets.

Hoover commented, "This decision has avoided the pitfalls of political, religious and social conflicts in the use of speech over the radio which no government could solve - it has preserved free speech to this medium."³⁸

The emergence of Radio news broadcasting soon had an significant impact on print media. By 1930, daily newspaper circulation reached a figure of 40 million. The same year there was an estimated 14 million radio receivers, constituting all households.³⁹

Not only did radio possess tremendous reach, but the medium achieved a pervasiveness previously unknown among news media. According to a 1940's survey of Radio listeners, the average radio listening time was nearly five hours a day.⁴⁰

The newspapers could not halt the advent of radio but they changed their approach of news gathering and reportage. Newspapers

³⁸ Proceedings of the Fourth national radio conference November, 1925, in John Kitborss, edited by Documents in American Telecommunication Policy, [New York, Arno Press.]

³⁹ Alfred M. Zee, The Daily Newspaper in America, [New York, Macmillan, 1937], p.727.

⁴⁰ The people look at radio, Columbia University bureau of Applied Social Research, [Chapel Hill, N.C. University of North Carolina Press, 1946,] p.96.

began to concentrate less on late breaking news and more on exhaustive descriptions and analysis. News was compartmentalized and news summaries began appearing on the first page.

SUBSIDIZED NEWS MEDIA

The postal department was geared for more subsidized news distributing network, rather than facilitate individual correspondence. New communication technologies were also supported by the Governments. (Congress appropriated \$ 20,000 for Samuel Morse's early experiments). The Government's, public relations apparatus was a feeder of news and releases to dependent media.

The politics is not a matter of constitutional obligation or the first Amendment demands. One cannot discern out a coherent public policy towards the media. Given our understanding of the American experience, such policies and practices emerged in an incremental, particularistic, and inchoate manners, self interest oriented symbolic relations between the Govt. and media and not some nebulous philosophical questions of what kind of information is required in a democracy. All this is what governed the media trade.

Governmental dalliance with Media ensured protection of profitability and restricted competition. In the case of Radio, the commercial broadcasters, formed NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) in 1923

and were given formal institutional protection. Commerce secretary, Herbert Hoover was quick to quip “I think this is probably the only industry in the United states that is unanimously in favor of getting itself regulated.” Twentieth century too has witnessed a media friendly attitude on the part of the institutions.

(a) In 1939, congress specifically exempted news deliveries from minimum wage, overtime, social security and child labour laws.

(b) Congress has provided tax exemptions for certain kind of activities – “establishing, maintaining, increasing circulation” which covers nearly all that is media activity.

(c) The Newspaper preservation act of 1970, veils an “economically distressed Newspaper” from anti trust prosecution when it shares a physical, plant with the other body but has separate editorial business from the better off partner. And none of these measures have come about as mandated by the first amendment.

In highly over simplified terms, in the first wave or agrarian societies, most communications passed from mouth to ear within small and localized groups. ‘In a world sans newspapers, radio, or television, the only way for a message to reach a mass audience was by assembling a crowd. The crowd was, infact, the first mass medium. It sent a message upward to

its ruler. The size of the crowd was, itself a message. But the problem with this mode is that it is very ephemeral and transient.’⁴¹

The crowd was not the only pre technological mass-medium. In the west during the medieval era, the Catholic Church was the closest thing to a reliable mass medium and the only one able to transmit the same ‘sound byte’ to large populations across political boundaries. The sound wave system of wealth creation, based on factory mass production, needed speedy and distant communication mediums and which were soon found in the form of post, telegraph and telephone.

The new third wave system, by contrast, reflects the needs of the emerging post mass production economy. It customizes its image products and sends a kaleidoscopic variety of images, ideas and symbols to closely targeted population segments, markets, age-groups, professions, ethnic or alternative life-style flocks. This demassification of present day media products and practices has become a key characteristic of today’s cultural milieu.⁴²

In a knowledge /information based economy, the most important domestic political issue is no longer the distribution or redistribution of wealth and thus power, but of information and media that produce wealth

⁴¹ Tofler Alvin;power shift[bantam books,1990]pg.351

⁴² tofler Alvin;power shift[bantam books 1990] p 357

and thus clout. This is a change so revolutionary that it cannot be mapped by conventional political cartography. The politicians, activists and political theorists need to come out of their smokestack mind set. The need to develop effective responses in the face of a deluge of information and the instant reportage of events and crises as they unfold all over the globe. Time taking deliberations need to be replaced by “off the cuff” responses which suit the need of the hour and the sentiment of the day.⁴³

The Media, plays three pivotal roles. First, public attitudes might be influenced by the media – which essentially posits media as a “separate actor”. The other one is based on the argument that sees media as largely on accomplice of the Government policy, and more often supportive, than critical of the official action. Yet, a third role portrays the media and the Government in a “mutually exploitative relationship” which is very much of a symbolic nature.

The symbolic aspect of the handshake can be highlighted as “Politicians saw nothing unusual about using the media as a communications instrument addressing other national leaders and populations”. But, all that is incidental is their driving force which is Self interest.

The United States Constitutional guarantees of free press and free expressions have ensured a press largely sans governmental regulations.

⁴³ ibid



But, this does not inculcate flippancy and a media without norms and ethics. U.S. free Media, is at the heart of a vibrant society, but Media without some semblance of reins can threaten the rubric of a free society.

Some nations place the onus to rein in the Media on the regulatory powers of the Govt. But in advanced, first world states of the order of United States, the solution has been to rely on market forces, competitive institutes, moral responsibility and a highly evolved set of self controls that we have learned to call as Media ethics.

Media watchdogs have emerged as probable solutions to tame an errant and way ward Media. Citizen groups, interest groups and Journalistic associations have launched independent non-governmental efforts to monitor and keep an eye on Media quality. Though such organizations lack fangs but they are pretty effective in enforcing the principles of fairness, truth, and accuracy in reportage and related events.

Several media outfits have found it useful to create a position of "ombudsman", a semi-independent employee to whom readers and audience can direct their complaints and grievances. Thus, media can and has in the past, acted as a societal catalyst and a cultural crucible through which populations have been attempting to solve problems in the light of public glare and public responses in a just and transparent manner. In a democratic polity, media conjures up images of a Fourth nationalized

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branch of the state apparatus so, crucially important is its role and scope of functioning.

Some one once said that a person's perception of reality is a result of their beliefs. In today's age, many of these beliefs are in some ways formed with the ministrations of the mainstream media. It is therefore worth looking at what the media presents, how it does so and what factors affect the ways it is done.

A free and impartial media is a key pillar to a functioning democracy to help spread informed news, view and opinions. Yet International Media in all brands of countries is plagued with several problems. International news coverage is declining which is of concern at a time when the world is marking an attempt to globalize beatings, stringent censorship and death for leaking controversial news. This is the common rue among the Media personnel..

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AND INFLUENCES ON THE MEDIA

Probably every conflict is fought on two planes: The battlefield and the psyche of people via propaganda. The "Good guys" and "bad guys" can often both be responsible for misleading their populations with distortions, exaggerations, subjectivity, inaccuracy and even fabrications. In order to receive their support, enemy propaganda on Gobellesian lines is pretty

apparently, a negative sound byte emanating from the friendly nations often goes unnoticed.⁴⁴

Enemy propaganda on gobellessian pattern is a negative sound byte and can overwhelm an ill prepared and less accoutered opposition's media apparatus. "When war is declared truth is the first casualty." A principle familiar to propagandists is that the doctrine to be instilled in the target audience should not be well articulated as it would expose the messages to popular reflection and may instill disbelief and even ridicule among the recipients. The rout taken is one of drilling the target audience relentlessly, with the result that, the unquestioning internalization of the state doctrine becomes a reality.⁴⁵

It has been observed that journalism tends to decontextualise conflict by focusing on the irrational without zeroing in on the actual cause behind a confrontation. A balanced reading of the operation Desert storm brings to the fore a western messianic zeal to retain control over the oil fields as the real reason why they invaded rather than any nebulous ideal of preserving freedom ,liberty, and human rights.The coloring of the sides in stark black and white, popularly termed as 'Manichaeism', is another regularity to be found in such state sponsored media exercises.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ <http://www.globalissues.org/humanrights/media/military.asp>

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ Danny Scheter; Covering Violence: How Sould Media Handle Conflict, [July 18,2001]

The often one sided media analysis tends to sideline the reasons why acts of revenge and excesses were committed by the antagonist. The whole process of reportage also turns a blind eye to the still open channels of reconciliation. Military often tends to manipulate the media by restricting information flows and hence determines as to what audiences come to know.

During the Vietnam war, president Lyndon baines Johnson's order to initiate an escalation; air strikes against north Vietnam, exposes the media's sincerity in handling crisis situations. It was later confirmed by sources that U.S retaliated against torpedo attacks which never occurred. But Johnson's deceitful speech didn't earn him the brickbats from the American media. The august 5 New York Times proclaimed, 'the president goes to the American people last night with somber facts.'⁴⁷ The Los Angeles Times urged Americans, 'to face the fact that communists have themselves escalated the hostilities'⁴⁸. But the question is , isn't an apparent amnesia on the part of the American people responsible to some extent for letting the media overwhelm their 'collective psyche'?

ECONOMIC FACTORS IN MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Some Nations can influence and control their media greatly. In addition, Business mogals are becoming major influences on mainstream

⁴⁷ The New York Times, August 5, 1964s

⁴⁸ Los Angeles Times 5. 1964

media. In some places, multinational corporations own media stations and outlets.

Ownership is becoming more concentrated as mega mergers take hold. At the same time vertical integration via the big players elaborate avenues to cross sell and cross market either products for even more amazing profits. An effect although, is reduction in diversity and depth of content that the public can get, while increasing the political and economic power of corporations and advertisers. An informed population is a crucial element to a functioning democracy yet these factors often waste against this key requirement.

The American constitution is very clear in it's approach towards the freedom of press. 'congress shall make no lawabridging the freedom of speech or of the press.'⁴⁹ The name of freedom of press, the culture that has been developed down the decades, has been quite different. In one reading of the way reportage has progressed towards the twin concepts of liberalism and laissez faire, it has have redefined this freedom. The trend has promoted a near eulogisation of free trade practices, sidelining the Media's traditional vocation of standing firm by social issues and contributing to national development.

⁴⁹ Article 1, Bill Of Rights, The United States constitution, 1779.

The freedom of press to freely legitimize the market forces has become a much noticed norm. The word industry in the world media industry has come into being. The Media too churns out 'products' and services for its clientele, generally speaking newspapers and magazines are tangible goods and the broadcast programmes fall in the category of services. So a media corporation is not much different than a traditional industry. TIME WARNER INC. which is the largest media company in the world must sell its magazines, for example Time and Sports Illustrated. Media companies have to compete with each other too for custom, and with also a myriad of other companies. For instance, sales of evening newspapers in the U.S have declined substantially as early evening Radio and Television coverage has grown tremendously. When television began to expand in the 1950's cinema attendances fell alarmingly. The media too faces stiff competition from home Computers, Foreign holidays and a range of alternative uses of non working time.

Media moguls have been known to act as flagships of their parent corporate owners and seldom tend to expose the corporate malpractices. The reason is not indiscernible. Most Americans get their news from the four big television networks, ABC is owned by Disney. NBC is owned by General Electric. CBS is owned by the Westinghouse and FOX is Rupert Murdoch's. It's a rare occurrence that these corporations would report on trade unions,

on the wealth gap and on the fact that around 90 percent of budget cuts in the American national budget happen to be from the poor's kitty.⁵⁰

As a recent example, quite a few investors and executives were worth hundreds of million dollars and coronated as virtual geniuses during the current worldwide dot Commission boom. The inclination to see wealth as a yardstick of human worth goes back a long way.'They measure everything in gold standard,men as well as mules,'Joshua speed observed during a visit to California in 1876⁵¹.

The Enron issue is another case in point. The media generously accoladed the company on it's programme of electricity privatization-heralded as reform., from California to India.⁵²

'The Enron project was the first power project in india',Arundhati Roy wrote in her book, 'power politics', 'lot's of cash lubricated the fix'. When the deal was exposed for what it was , what followed were a few stray remarks here and there in the print and electronic media.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN MEDIA

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a Government without newspapers, or newspapers without a Govt. I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter" Thomas Jefferson, 1787.⁵³

⁵⁰ The Progressive Caucus, A Grouping Of 50 Congressmen Within The Democratic Party

⁵¹ Normon Soloman, American Jounalism,Media Beat,February 7,2002

⁵² ibid

⁵³ ibid

It can be argued that media in the neophytic stages were inexorably influenced and shaped by politics and policy. Such an assertion, at the outset may seem surprising, considering the legacy of the First Amendment that prohibits the passage of laws that would “abridge” the freedom of press, the media’ independence from Govt. involvement, and public broadcasting, far from being an independent and self-supporting entity, the evolution of American media has been coterminous with the political sponsorship of all hues, subsidization and governmental protection.

But other historical hypothesis have gained currency which were involved in an effort to trace the evolution of American media. “Technological innovations” is the rationale forwarded to account for the development of American media. Some credit the invention of the telegraph, and the subsequent establishment of wire services such as the associated press, in the 1840’s with inclining the Fourth estate to move away from lengthy partisan opinion to neutral bare-bones, political- commentaries. Innovations such as circular presses and later on linotype machines helped speed up news paper production and were responsible for instigating large scale productions, and more populist neutral content⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Michael and Edwin Emery, *The Press in America, n Interpretive History of Mass Media*[Englewood cliffs, new jersey,1992] pg 25

Yet this 'techno' hand in the metamorphosis of American media has been overemphasized. Even prior to the invention of the telegraph and the like, the press had started valuing recency, relying on "pony expresses" or "express steamships" to get the news from other zones. News bits scribbled on tissue paper, called 'slips' were to become the precursors of what would be sent over via "wires".

Beginning with the Boston News letter, with its mast head bearing the title "Published by Authority" in 1704, the newspapers have come a long way down the road. But in the late nineteenth century, the press was officially recognized as a "Separate Institution" whose functionaries had rights and privileges, rather than a disparate collection of individual newspapers, reporters, publishers, and editors, to be dealt with one at a time contingent to their political and business leanings⁵⁵.

Governmental instruments of "seditious libel" and 'Protection' of "parliamentary privilege" could pin down and persecute any ambitious journalist effort, under the garb of protecting public peace and order. The Government supported the news papers via official notice, announcements, proclamations, etc. The subsidized postal charges from the news men too was a sop offered to them.

⁵⁵ Charles e.Clark;The Public Prints; The Newspapers In Anglo American Culture[New York, Oxford University Press,1994]chapter 4.

But, instances of “crusading” Journalism could be found in an otherwise strait jacket system. But even, these “mavericks” were not the same in the strict sense of the word. The opposition was more often than not made possible by the splits in the ruling elites and once these fractions congealed , then the welfarist role of the scribes, too faded away.

In the days of the Founding Fathers, principles were left aside contrary to common knowledge. Apart from Alexander Hamilton and James Madison theorizing under the pen name of “Publius”.... Media manipulation was undertaken by boycotting and pulling advertisement from anti federalist newspapers to make them go bankrupt.

By the close of the century, advertisers, not politicians, bankrolled newspapers. Now the journalistic preoccupations were predominantly human interest stories and a lighter breezier tone with a near – to an irreversible eschewing of the ideological baggage. A Financially independent newspaper with a mass consumer base , commercialization and complex specialization became the rule of the game.

“The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, to write or to publish their sentiments, and the freedom of the press as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable”⁵⁶

⁵⁶Article 4 Federal Bill Of Rights

The history of American media in its beginning was centered around a debate. Thomas Jefferson, who was a votary of unbridled freedom of press was one pole and Alexander Hamilton, who countered him with his belief of censoring the press to prevent it from deviating into uncontrolled licentious behavior. He believed that it was impossible to define press freedom to everyone's satisfaction, so a free press can be secure only when it has the weight of public opinion behind it. Even Jefferson intended to veer around to a dilution of his stand in the later phase of his life when he mentioned some doubt on the workability of a totally uncensored press⁵⁷.

Social Darwinism became the guiding light of the great American experience with the press too sharing in the adventure. There was little room in the newspapers for people who merely talked. What they did was more significant to the editors than their points of view. It was the event that was the staple, as the early penny press was succeeded by the yellow press and the age of Muckrackers. Historians like Richard Hofstadter have shown that a strain of anti-intellectualism ran through the American history.⁵⁸

On many instances it was argued that the impulse was not of quite contemplation but applied research with clear-cut practical results. Men like Horace Greeley, a hero in Horatio Alger's work, was quintessentially a self

⁵⁷ Herbert Altschull; From Milton To McLuhan; The Ideas Behind American Journalism [Longman, 1990] p 125

⁵⁸ Anti Intellectualism In American Life [New York, 1976] see details

made man who turned into a press magnate with a paltry \$10 on his name at the outset.⁵⁹

Then accompanying this fascination with the activist man, the local flavour of the American press too was the order of the day. Newspapers began to become the conscience keepers of the community. The American dream of creating one town after another like Philadelphia was religiously propagated by the editors. Alex de Tocqueville found American newspapers to be 'incredibly large'. He found the newspapers to be replete with advertisements, brief political intelligence and other trivial anecdotes.⁶⁰ This pattern holds true even today. Moreover, the community newspaper was an instrument to forge national unity, specially in the ante-bellum south- a sectional unity., advancing into a future of unlimited bounty.

The ideal of pragmatism, first coined by Charles S. Pierce, a Harvard university professor became a cornerstone of American journalism. Its meaning is not limited to an 'applause for the practical' and "jeers for the theoretical", but a deeper emphasis on a method of inquiry, and dialectical analysis⁶¹.

⁵⁹ Michael and Edwin Emery; *The Autobiography* [Greeley' kennikat Press, 1971] p 1228-130

⁶⁰ Alex De Tocqueville, *Democracy In America*, [vol 2, New York, Vintage Books 1945] p 1933-194

⁶¹ Charles Hartshorne And Paul Weiss, *Collected Papers Of Charles* , vol 5, Harvard University Press, 1931 pg 18

The age of MUCKRACKERS too deserves a mention as it stands out as a symbol of the investigative spirit of the American press; the journalist as the people's Tribune. There followed a rejection of the Andrew Carnegie's gospel of wealth. The economic leanings of the existing press were exposed to be houses of corruption and malpractices by this new 'avatars' of American press. This meant that even the wealthy notables such as Andrew Carnegie were not exempt from journalistic investigations. It also meant that the time honoured virtue of wealth creation was leading to close scrutiny by the Media for the sake of the people. Indeed as the word itself suggests the muckrakers heralded a new age in reporting and publishing.⁶²

Economic explanations are also cited. In order to broaden mass base, the limitedness of the "six penny press" was gradually taken over by the "penny press" in the 1830s. Thus began the soft pedaling of politics and partisan issues. Michael schudson, in his very fine "social history of American Newspapers" has conveniently argued that for the penny press to succeed, the concept of news was transformed into an egalitarian ideal. But even schudson fails to come up with a clear delineation of how such *novae* ideals translated into political and journalistic practice.⁶³

In sum, the emphasis upon technology, economics, or ideas each seem to fall short of an explanation as to how the Americans bequeathed the

⁶² Andrew Carnegie, Democracy And Gospel Of Wealth [Lexington, 1968] p 1-8s

⁶³ Timothy E. Cook; Governing With The News; [university of Chicago press 1998], p 18

kind of media they have now. Instead, how technology , economics, and social ideas affect the media is often accomplished through political decisions , politics can encourage or discourage the development, reach, and availability of technology, influence the establishment of particular markets, and usher in the political acceptability of certain favored ideas. But as, they say history is not constant. There has been a shift contrary to most authors – from a regulated press through the mid- nineteenth century to a relatively unregulated media of today. More precisely, displacement of Government's relations to the news media has been from “ the sponsorship to subsidies.

President Theodore Roosevelt was a chief backer of this investigative strain of press but it underwent a change later. Even the President commented later on, ' who never writes save of his exposing muck, ceases to be a societal asset but becomes a potent source of evil'

These milestones in the development of American press culminated with the coming in currency of Marshall McLuhan's concept of 'global village'. The heart of his belief has been an assertion of the centrality of new age electronic media in public affairs and the instrumentality of media to bring about a better world. This gradually has sunk in as a salient feature in the belief system of the Americans. Morse, the father of telegraph, more than a century before McLuhan was insisting on a 'shrinking world'. He

forecasted that an artificial nerve system had been created, generating one neighbourhood of the whole nation.

In 1964, McLuhan added a supplement that the nerve system was no longer a figurative by-product of telegraphy but an actual extension of the human being. His coinage 'Media is the message.' became the guiding gospel of the present day Media. Technological progress and soft features; gossip about celebrities, highly dramatized stories of conflict and confrontation; computers and new media, have inflamed the optimistic utopian vision that has been present in the American psyche from its very outset.⁶⁴

Postman, on the other hand champions the pessimist strain in the American media, along with Harold Innis. He regards the advent of television as 'the third great crisis in western education' as all information is converted into entertainment and as an outcome is amusing itself to its cultural death. The dramatization and commodification of war; insensate programming violent on child psyche and a culture of immediacy of news and reportage are some of the burning issues which are major concerns of systematic media studies. McLuhan and Postman are truly, the precursors of these initial debates and have lent a critical spirit to the study of an ever spreading deluge of media and its products.

⁶⁴ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media-The Extension Of Man* [New York, Macgraw Hill, 1964] p 7 - 9

The media has become a new intermediary in the American Political system. Although the political role of the press has existed since the dawn of American politics, the role has undergone dramatic change.

“The press has substantial and specific impacts on policies and policy making in the Federal Government.⁶⁵ Seen in a more present context, the political process which leads to the election of the highest office in the United States, too is dependent on how the media portrays the different candidates. The images on the nightly news count for every thing in a Presidential election campaign and beyond.... In this culture, if something is not on news, it did not happen, it does not exist.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Martin Linsky, *Impact: How the Press Affects Federal Policy Making*, [New York: Norton, 1986,] p.203.

⁶⁶ Keith Blume, *The Presidential Election show*, [South Hadley, Mass: Hergin and Garvey, 1985,] p.2

Chapter - II

THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA IN THE UNITED STATES

The Mass Media are means of communication that reach the masses. They include News papers and Magazines, Radio and Television (Broadcast, Cable & Satellites) Films, Recordings and Books. The News Media emphasizes but the distinctions are not clear cut. Some media critics contend there is now a combination of two-a medium called "infotainment" that uses entertainment techniques to present the news. As evidence they point to evening news programs featuring happy talk between news anchors, to prime time news magazine programs such as 60 minutes, Prime time, 20/20 & talk shows with hosts like Rush Limbaugh, Larry King & Oprah Winfrey.

By definition, the Mass Media disseminate their message to a large and often heterogeneous audience at the same moment. Because they must have broad appeal, their messages are often simplified, stereotyped and formulaic. Certainly the Mass Media are big business. They live off high audience ratings and substantial advertising revenues, which are essential to their "bottom line" of big profits. But does profit spell political clout? Two factors are important here; the Media's pervasiveness and their role as a linking mechanism.

A LINKING MECHANISM

The pervasiveness of the media alone does not prove their political influence. But it does place the media in a position to be influential because they can reach so much of public so quickly. With a large population scattered over a large continent both the reach and speed of the media elevate their importance

The media have become the primary linking mechanism in American Politics- A way of connecting policy makers., candidates and the public in a national , largely electronic, communication network . Candidates talk to voters. Voters respond to candidates. POLICY MAKERS and constituents interact. And policy makers and other elite groups such as interest groups, communicate with each other through the media. The media do more than pass along information. The information transmitted can change voter perception of social reality and affect their responses to these perceptions .Policy makers affect Policy effectiveness from Media polls. Policy makers assess Policy effectiveness in part through Media coverage. And people rely on the media to evaluate Governmental performance and Policy.

Despite vigorous competition from the broadcast Media, Americans still read Newspapers. Newspaper circulation has held steady at about 63 million nation wide, or about one copy for every four people, for the past twenty years. The Wall Street Journal, with a circulation of nearly 1.8

million., has long acted as a national newspaper with specialization in business and finance.

Radio still tends to be a major disseminator of news and facts for the American populace. Only one household in a hundred does not have a Radio. Nine out of ten Americans listen to Radio everyday. Cars and Radio seem to go together. Americans get more than facts from Radio .Radio commentators and talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh ,Michael Reagan, Oliver North, and Gordon Liddy have committed followers.Talk show hosts have their own home pages on the World Wide Web and provide round the clock conversation. Some hosts are noted for their extreme views and conspiracy theories. In 1996 they were the source of personal attacks on presidential candidates, notably president Bill Clinton. Some commentators themselves became important political figures, as Patrick J. Buchanan did in 1992 and 1996,his regular participation on CNNs “crossfire” increased his public visibility before he ran for presidency.

Almost all Americans see television everyday, and most homes at least have two sets, each turned on for an average of seven hours per day. While television is primarily an entertainment medium, most Americans use it for news as well. Three out of four Americans watch Television news regularly. Television, perhaps more than any single other innovation, has changed the character of American Politics.The electoral campaigns now focus much more on image and appearance .Successful candidates must be

able to communicate with voters through this medium. Campaign managers must deal with the implications of television and even worry about the strength of railings at presidential news. Politicians increasingly communicate with citizens through what are called "sound bites" 15-45 second segments for the Television news. Politicians who are skilled in short and direct communication do well with this type of news coverage. Increasingly our politics and our elections are influenced by these 30second commercials. Thus, Television is very much in tune with the market forces. It is also very profitable. One reason is that Governmental limitations on competition permit monopoly ownership of broadcast licenses. Radio networks and news papers were the first to purchase the new medium and establish cross-ownership of permits.

THE NEWS PAPERS IN AMERICA

In the Newspaper business, although there are thousands of papers, the combination of economies of scale and the dynamics of the advertising market have steadily reduced numbers in local markets, so that by the 1990s there was only a single newspaper in 98% of US cities and towns that had any local newspaper at all.¹

¹ Edwin C. Baker, "Advertising and A Democratic Press" (Princeton: Princeton University, 1994), Chapter I

There are three national newspapers in United States. The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and USA Today and several others that aspire for that role, for example, the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times. They all compete with each other along with the news agencies and the government and set the agenda for the rest of the press and for broadcasters as well.²

The United States has never had a true national daily press. American politics is more local than in other countries. No national news medium can, by itself, serve the American voter. Consequently, there are 1,600 local newspapers and no truly national ones. The Wall Street Journal comes closest to a national paper, but it is a specialized one. The New York Times is only slowly expanding towards general availability throughout the country. USA Today is a national paper but it is a daily magazine that does not pretend to be a primary carrier of all serious news.³

The most pervasive change model in newspapers are typically to increase advertising and subscription rates, to introduce cosmetic alterations of page designs to give the impression of modernity and to quietly reduce the section of serious news. Readers have abiding interest in “serious” news

² See Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, “Manufacturing consent: the Political economy of the mass media” (New York, pantheon, 1988) relevant chapters.

³ Ben H Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, [Beacon Press], 1992, pp.16-17.

but editors tend to show them as they are more expensive than features. The reporters are paid by the local editors, they bring benefits and tend to form their own unions.

“Soft” features tend to be relatively inexpensive to procure as they can be bought from a syndicate and delivered by mail or wire from a machine that is cheap, and never form unions. Stephen Vess in a study of Washington correspondents found that chains have 75% of all American daily circulation, but have only 29% of correspondents working for individual newspapers, and their correspondents have relatively less education than those working for independent papers. The owners indiscriminately hire and fire their editors and publishers to bring about total control.

OWNERSHIP AND MEDIA MERGERS

Likewise in the land of democracy and liberal tenets, i.e. United States of America, a small chunk of most powerful corporate Giants took over most of the country’s Print and Broadcast media. They ushered in their own distinct style of control not by official edict or state terror, but seen in tone with the classical principles of economics and cross profiteering. They yield an overbearingly enormous clout among the ruling elites and thus more or less tend to be the architects of public policy.

Worldwide Media Empires have come to rule the roost in United States. They command international audiences larger than any political

leader in history. Even the gobbelesian network would be put to shame in comparison to what these twenty first century clans command, time warners for example, formed by the merges of time Inc. and warner communications, is the largest media corporation of the world. Its budgeting and technological pelf is larger than most Governments. Interestingly, its assets are greater than the combined gross domestic product of Bolivia, Jordan, Nicaragua, Albania, liberia and Male:⁴ It also happens to be largest magazine publisher in the United States, with Time Life, Fortune, and Sports Illustrated, among others. To end the awesome tally of statistics and facts, it is the second largest cable company in the World and also one of the largest book publishers.⁵

Data goes a long way in driving home an academic argument. Another interesting piece of information includes the fact that the much-publicized Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. boasts of the greatest geographic reach among all others. Murdoch controls more newspaper circulation than any other publisher around the Globe. Originally of Aussie origin, the:

- (a) Fox Broadcasting Network
- (b) 20th Century Fox movie studios
- (c) CBS/Fox Video, all are his prized assets.⁶

⁴ Edward Herman And Robert W Mcchesney; The Global Media The New Missionaries Of Corporate capitalism[Cassel Wellington House,1997]p 171

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ David Hutichton ' Markets Media and Mugals', Canadian Journal of Communication

A closer analysis would reveal that these bigfishes sheath their actual games in virtual scabbards of benevolence and benignity . “Market share” is one of their always sought after goals. Once they succeed in grabbing the lions share of the market than they arrogate to themselves the luxury of setting the prices and altering the product without fear of significant competition. In this case “market” is the American mass culture typified by citizen tastes and “product” is the news, informations, and popular culture not limited to the confines of US but in terms of the reach of US media machine it would bot to be hyperbolic to comment that, It hypnotizes nearly much of the human race.

For many decades the United States has been the dominant world power and a leading proponent and organizer of a neo liberal global order. Among the great powers also, the United States is the country in which market domination of the media has been most extensive and complete. It is the belief of many scholars that United State displays the model of a privately owned, capital dependent media towards which other countries are moving and will continue to move.⁷

There is a corporate conglomeration which nearly owns the whole media apparatus. There are four dominant companies that have half or more of the daily newspaper (seven years ago there twenty), three in

⁷ The Global Media: The New Missionaries Of Corporate Capitalism,[Cassel, Willington house, 1997], p.137.

magazines (seven years ago there were three), three in television and four motion picture production.

Some corporations are dominant in more than one medium. For instance Paramount Communications, one in looks and motion pictures.⁸

The dominant newspapers in the order of their daily circulation are:

(1) Bannet company: USA today

(2) Knight Rider, Inc: Philadelphia Inquirer, Miami Herald, etc.

(3) Dow Jones and company - Wall Street Journal and 22 Ottaway News papers.

(4) New York Times: New York Times and 26 others

(5) News Corporate (Murdoch): Boston Herald and 2 others

The owner companies are given with their newspapers with an decreasing order of circulation as the newspapers cannot be arranged on their revenues, which are hardly released.⁹

Apart from being private owned, these media organizations (newspapers, magazines, television, movies, etc.) have linkages. In it, one

⁸ Magazine Data From Advertising Age, 26, December 1988, With updating

⁹ 89 Facts About Newspapers (Washington D.C., Newspaper Publishers Association, April 1989).

member in the board of directors are the members in the boards of other Media organizations, often belonging to different companies.¹⁰

Televisions, in the jargon of Wall Street, is a “semi monopoly” not only because of the limited number of owners, but because in most cities, the dominant stations have virtually guaranteed high profits; the ratings simply determine which company gets the most.¹¹ Initially, no company was permitted to own more than seven Radio and seven Television stations. Under the political drive for deregulation, the Federal Communications Commission in 1984 permitted each company to hold 12 radio and television stations each.

The same dominant corporations in these major fields appear in other often newer media. Lu Isger, media analyst for the investment house, Paine Webber, has said, “The good companies must be integrated”. After Sony bought CBS records, it also purchased a company that had exclusive rights to 3500 songs. Time Warner, the largest media corporation in the world, owns copyright to thousands of songs.¹²

In the category of these multi faceted corporate giants, Gulf and Western deserves a mention. In Wall Street, it had a reputation of lusting

¹⁰ A 1979 study by Peter Drier, “Interlocking directorates, *Columbia Journalism Review* (November/December, 1979), p. 51-68.

¹¹ Erik Barnouw, *Concentrated Ownership; A Tower Of Babel*, Vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 196), p. 57.

¹² A Report in *New York Times*, 23 January, 1989 and *Los Angeles Times*, 4 January, 1989.

after any company that could be squeezed for profits or whose assets would expand its borrowing capacity for still more acquisitions. It became the owner of a disparate collection of more than 100 companies.¹³ Perhaps, when the United States government manufactured coins, the moulds were made by Gulf and western.

A survey by the American Society of newspaper editors found that 33 per cent of all editors working for newspaper chains said, that they would not feel free to run a news story that was damaging to their parent firm.¹⁴

Harold Roth, president of the book publishing firm, Grosset and Dunlop, was owned by an oil conglomerate. He called a news conference to defend his decision to publish memories of ex-president Richard Nixon after his national defamy in Watergate.¹⁵ The real tale is that Warner had given the books contract to Harold Roth and Warner too had made contributions to the committee to re-edit the president (CREEP). Thus, the connection.¹⁶

The new corporate ownership hastened the conversion of newspapers to primarily carriers of advertising. Advertisers want affluent readers between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine. Magazines and broadcasting want the same audiences. Broadcasters cannot keep the non-affluent and

¹³ Everybody's Business Almanac (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

¹⁴ Special Report: News and Editorial Independence. A Survey of Group and Independent Editors. Ethics Committee, American Society of Newspaper Editors, April, 1980.

¹⁵ New York Times, 28 May, 1978).

¹⁶ Ibid.

elderly to watch and listen to their programs, but the content is so designed to attract the younger, affluent viewers. The “unwanted American Population” discouraged by an advertising supported media is not small.¹⁷ Yet the secluded section of the audiences-younger than eighteen and older than forty nine constitutes about 54% of the Americans.¹⁸

If a sizewise and profit-wise assessment of the media “business” is carried out then, Time Warner is the largest media corporation in the world, with its 1997 sales approaching \$ 25 billion. It was formed in 1989 by a merger of Time Incorporated and Warner Communications Corporation.¹⁹ Music accounts for 20% of Time Warner’s business, as does the news division of magazine and book publishing and cable television news. The remainder is accounted by time Warner’s extensive entertainment film, video and television holdings.²⁰

Time Warner is a major force in virtually every medium and on every continent. Its holdings include the following:

(a) Twenty four magazines, including time people and sports illustrated .

(b) Fifty percent of SC comics publisher of Superman, Batman and sixty other titles.

¹⁷ Extract from “Statistical Abstract, 1981, pp. 26-27.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Dianne Mermigas, Time Warner’s Richard Parsons; Electronic Media, [January 22, 1996,] p. 48.

²⁰ Michael O Neal, “The Unlikely Mogul, Business Week, [December 11, 1995], p. 91.

(c) HBO, the largest pay Cable Channel in the world.

(d) A collection of over 6000 films 25000 television programs, books, music etc.

(e) Several US and Global cable television channels including CNN, CNNFA, Headline news, The Cartoon Network, TNT, etc.²¹

With sales of nearly \$24 billion, Disney is the closet challenger to Time Warner for the status of being the Americans and world's largest media firm. In the early 1990s, Disney successfully shifted its emphasis from its theme parks and resorts to film and television. In 1995, Disney made the move from a dominant content producer to being a fully integrated media giant with the purchase of capital cities/ABC for \$19 billion, one of the biggest acquisitions in media history.²²

Historically, Disney has been strong in animation. In order to maintain its dominance in the animation market, in 1997, Disney signed a 10-year joint venture with Pixar, the computer animation specialists responsible for the 1995 hit, "Toy Story I" & II. The deal with Pixar reveals that even the most dynamic smaller media firms need to align themselves with a media giant to prosper and service in a cut-throat market.²³

²¹ Helen Bunting, *Global Media Companies, Volume 2, Rest of World* (London, Pearson Professional, 1995), p. 215.

²² Thomas R. King and Elizabeth Jensen, "Disney brings personal touch to ABC's sagging line up", *Wall Street Journal*, [May 17, 1996], p. 34.

²³ Bruce Oswall, "Pixar and Disney set exclusive deal for five new films" *Wall Street Journal*, [February 25, 1997], p. B7.

Another media coup by Disney has been in the field of sports television. It has entered into a pact with Hearst and Peterson Publishing, to print ESPN's "sports weekly" in 1997 to be a branded competitor to Time Warner's "sports illustrated"²⁴ Disney also launched "X Games" and "Xtreme Sports" to latch on to the yet untapped market of adventurous sports which includes events of the order of skateboarding and bungee jumping. As "Adweek" notes these programs would not have been made possible without large scale advertising time sell-outs.²⁵

The media market is still in the process of rapid change and more launches, mergers, joint ventures can be expected before the dust settles. One reason for the turmoil in the scenario is the ongoing "digital revolution" which is eliminating the technological barriers that have divided media from telecommunications and both of them from cyber techniques.²⁶

The impending changes in the wake of the digital revolution will be great "Everything will be different", US Federal Communications Commission, Chairman, Reed Hundt states, "The change is so extreme that many people have not grasped it".²⁷ A development to pinpoint towards future is that several telecommunication and software firms have entered

²⁴ Scott Donaton and Chuck Ross, Peterson, ESPN Plot weekly mag, Advertising Age, [October 21, 1996.]

²⁵ "Let the Extreme Games, Like, man, begin", Adweek, [June 24, 1996,] p. 22.

²⁶ James, Sterngold, "Digital Studies, it's the economy stupid", New York Times, [December 25m 1996,] p. 23.

²⁷ John Brinkley, "Defining TV's and computers for a future of high definition", New York Times, [December, 2, 1996], p. 61.

into joint ventures with big and small media firms. Microsoft chairman Bill Gates notes, “our industry will be changing the way people do business, and even the way they entertain themselves”.²⁸

ADVERTISING

On a cursory look, it might be read as mass media being the instrument of selling and propagating the products and services of the manufactures. But, there is more to it than what meets the eye. American mass media are ideally meant to exercise their traditional role of mediating among the societal forces, but “at a time when they have become an integral part of one of these forces”.

William S Paley, founder of the CBS has said – “I have theory that television has never been evaluated properly. Television, I would say, isn’t on advertising medium, it’s a selling medium in the stricter sense of the term. Media consumers, that is (the Hoi Polloi,) pay artificially high prices for goods advertised through their media. And the media are no longer neutral agents doling out “space” and “time” for merchants to promote their wares but are now vital instruments needed by the corporate bigwigs to perpetuate their economic and political power and pelf.

²⁸ Paul Taylor, “Suppliers surf the internet waves”, Financial Times, Special section on Information Technology, [December 4, 1996], p. 1.

Main stream media too has come up with a very logical and hard hitting rationale for the phenomenon “With no ads, who would pay for the media? The good fairy?” commented Samuel Thurm, senior Vice President, Association of National Advertisers. The publishers propounded the doctrine of providing a “free lunch” to the consumers but in the theater of the media there are economic sleights of hands employed Americans do not get their newspapers television books and movies at less than cost.

In the 1940, daily newspapers averaged thirty one- pages, of which advertisers occupied 40% or twelve and a half pages, and the readers dished out 2 cents for the whole paper for eighteen and a half pages of matter.²⁹ Comparing this scenario with sixty – six pages, of which forty three pages ever advertising and the price being 20 cents for the complete paper, the readers in 1980 were not getting the paper less than cost. They were making up for the cost of advertisements. The concept of “Free lunches” for the audiences is automatically belied.³⁰

As corporate monopoly has increased and the pressure for more advertising revenue has seen an increment, expression of extreme politics has taken to back seat. Programs, whether right or left, never really strayed from can trust positions and none hold anti corporate ideas. This has

²⁹ Ben H Bagdikian; the Media Monopoly[Beacon Press] pg135

³⁰ iibid

produced social sterility and science on fundamental fares behind major news events.³¹

The American Association of Advertising found in a ten-year study from 1964-1974, a significant decrease in the public belief that “advertising results in better products for the public” or that it raises the standard of living. There was a common belief in the public that advertisements often perused people to buy things which they don’t need and are an insult upon people’s intelligence.³²

In 1977, a survey, by Louis Harris of “Public Attitudes”, towards leadership of major American events and activities, found advertising at the bottom of the list. The public seems to be repeating what March Hare says in Alice in Wonderland, “you might just as well say that “I like what I get” is the same things as “I get what I like”.³³

One firm advises advertisers on whether their products should appeal to the left (analytical) or the right (emotional) side of the human brain. They tell advertisers that the advertisements for products of the order of perfume and beer should be pitched to the right side of the brain and ads for cars and insurance should be directed to the left side.³⁴

³¹ Ben. B. Bagdikian, “How Editors Pick Columnists”, *Columbia Journalism Review*, [Spring, 1966], p. 40-45.

³² “Ten Year Contract in Opinion About Advertising: A Find of American Association of Advertisers”, *Broadcasting*, [24 March, 1975,] p. 29.

³³ Extract from [9 January, 1978], p. 28.

³⁴ John Mariani, “Can Advertisers read and control our emotions”, in *Television Today*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1980], p. 107.

Another firm uses, infra-red eye scans to record rapid eye movement in response to images in television commercials.³⁵ Chuck Blore, a partner in the advertising firm Chuck Blore and Don Ruchman, Inc., has said “Advertising is the art of arresting the human intelligence just long enough to elicit money out of it”³⁶

When parent groups and others complain to broadcasters about the impact of sex and violence on the young broadcasters traditionally argue that sex and violence on television do not change human behaviour. The answer has been contradicted by the Surgeon General of United States. Presumably, the most sophisticated corporations would not continue spending billions of dollars if they did not believe that they were altering human behaviour in their favours. The dictum of the all pervading influence of advertising on media of all sorts holds true to its minutest of details. Samuel Thurm, senior vice-president, Association of National Advertisers, commented, “with no ads, who would pay for the media? The good fairy?”³⁷

In the first years of mass, television, whole programs were produced and controlled by single advertisers. These are known in the broadcasting history as ‘the Golden age’ because they were coherent and unintrusive

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Advertising is an art” Broadcasting, [21 September, 1981], p. 36.

³⁷ Eron Nations Business, [October, 1979], p. 88-89.

commercials. It was the Dramas, authored by people like Paddy Chayefsky and Gore Vidal, which the advertisers used to hanker after.³⁸

The vital change came from the networks and popular stations instituted the 'spot' and ad the second, thirty second slot instead of one company being the sole sponsor of a program.³⁹ The thirty second commercials had advantages for goods whose sales depended largely on creating quick emotional associations rather than providing product information.⁴⁰

Mass/media advertising is no longer solely a means of introducing and distributing consumer goods, though it does that. It is a major mechanism by which a small number of giant corporations hold disproportionate power over the economy. Increasingly media are not only needed but they are owned by the corporate giants.⁴¹

Paul Miller, when he was chief executive of Garnett, once told his peers, "And let us remind our audience, in our promoting advertisements, we help people live better and save money. This fact needs constant selling".⁴² CBS, has aptly commented, "I have a theory that television in particular, has

³⁸ Erik Barnow, *The Image Empire* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 81-90.

³⁹ *From Broadcasting*, [31 January, 1977], p. 28.

⁴⁰ *From Los Angeles Times*, [26 November, 1981,] p. 1.

⁴¹ Bureau of Census, *Historical Statistics*, vol. 2, p. 855.

⁴² Paul Miller Quoted In *Editor and Publishers*, [16 September, 1961.]

never been evaluated properly. Television, I would say isn't an advertising medium, it's a selling medium.⁴³

One of the recent trends in the field of advertorials has been the advent of advertorials. In 1993, the New York Times, sent out a solicitation letter to advertisers which read as follows: "In an effort to educate the public and influence Washington decision makers, the New York Times has planned advertorials presenting the economic and social benefits of NAFTA".⁴⁴

The values pushed by the enormous sums spent on advertising are material acquisition and consumption and not moral behaviour or community living. US social analysis points to the striking and continuing long-term decline in civic involvement by large segments of the populations. Although the commercial media hardly bear sole responsibility for this, they play a definite role.⁴⁵

Cross promotion and cross selling is another means of perpetuating monopoly over media. Huge media conglomerates of the order of Disney, Time Warner and Viacom focus on publishing a book at one level; a movie released on the book is produced at one level, toys and videos are made at

⁴³ William Paley Quoted In Broadcasting, [31 May, 1976,] p. 36.

⁴⁴ Edward S. Herman & Robert W. McChesney, *The Global Media*, [Carrel, Wellington House, 1997], p. 140-141.

⁴⁵ Robert Pumans's "The strong disappearance of civic Americans", *The American Prospect*. [Winter, 1996,] p. 34-38.

another level. The flow of cultural artifacts from these pop cultural giants becomes of increasing importance in the general cultural environment.⁴⁶

As with public affairs, the US commercial system eventually ghettoized children's programming with Saturday and Sunday morning fare. Then in 1983, The Regan Era Federal Communications Commission, declared that the broadcasters had no responsibility to children.

The situation deteriorated after 1983. According to Dale Kunkel, when "Captain Kangaroo was removed after 28 years on television, to a single regularly scheduled weekday children program remained on any of the three commercial networks.⁴⁷ The entertainment was subordinated to merchandising 'a story concept had to include a host of characters complete with various accouterments and technologies, all of which would become saleable products'.⁴⁸

MEDIA-MALAISE

"Attack Journalism" said to be common, undermines politicians and political institutional morality. Encourages politicians to campaign negatively by attacking their opponents. This combination tends to usher in a pervasive sense of cynicism, and distrust of modern politicians,

⁴⁶ Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChersney, *The Global Media, The Global Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*, [1997, Cassel, Wellington House], p. 142-143.

⁴⁷ From A Revised Eyebrow To A Turned Back: The FCC and Children's product related programming; *Journal of Communication*; [1998,] p. 97.

⁴⁸ *Out of the Garden*, Chap. 587, p. 197, .

institutions and politics as a whole.⁴⁹ Moreover news is a perishable commodity. Yesterday's events are washed away by today's headlines, as the media pursue new news in the race to break a fresh story. There is more of news, because it is collected globally and broadcast almost instantaneously.

Most events and developments are covered in an increasingly brief and superficial way, and the public is presented with a ceaseless flow of fast changing and barely explained events – news bites as the media nomenclature goes – which roll over each other in a bewildering array. This fast forward affect creates political confusion, viewer fatigue, alienation and distrust among the recipients who lack the information, understanding to make sense of this ensuring 'media- blitzkrieg'.

In the United States, experimental and survey research argues that television news tends to de-motivate and immobilize people politically and to make elected officials and public institutions less accountable to and interested in the role that is assigned to them.⁵⁰

Neil Postman in "Amusing ourselves to death: public discourse in the age of show Business" is of the view that mass media can at best only amuse and entertain; at worst it can confuse and alienate politically, de-legitimizes

⁴⁹ Kenneth Newton , Mass Media Effects; Mobilization Or media Malaise International political science review, [august 1999,]p577-578

⁵⁰ ibid

the political system and undermines democracy.⁵¹ In the common sense of the term, the modern mass media has a malignant effect on modern democracy tending to induce political apathy, alienation and a distinct loss of social capital – in a word, “Media malaise” . Some theorists argue that it is the result of media content, others that it is the consequence of the form of media, especially television. A more optimistic and positive way of analysing the media apparatus would be to stand by the positive effects of media ‘ Mass media with rising educational and awareness levels help to inform and mobilize people politically, making them more knowledgeable and amenable to new ideas and thought currents.

MEDIA VALUES

As time became saleable and its price rose, the pressure for attaining high ratings increased, the T.V. historian, Erik Barnouw, has noted, "The preemption of the schedule for commercial ends has put lethal pressure on other values and interests. A primary affect was the steady trend away from "controversial" and modestly rated public service programmes and toward entertainment⁵². Richard Burnce found that by 1970, public affairs coverage had fallen to 2% of programming time and the entire spectrum of public interest programming was far below that

⁵¹ Neil Postman ,*Amusing Ourselves To Death;Public Discourse In The Age Of Show Business*[London methuen,1989]

⁵² Erik Barnouw, *The Sponsor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.95.

provided by public broadcasting system in Canada, Great Britain and elsewhere in the west.⁵³

Media executives have always insisted that they merely give people what they want David Sarnoff, ex-NBC head, defined, “public interest” as whatever the public chooses to watch on television. Former CBS Chairman Frank Stanton said, “A programme in which a large part of the audience is interested is by that very fact in the public interest.”⁵⁴

The maturing of commercial TV in the United States has had several significant negative effects on the political process. As commercial time has to be purchased from the broadcasters the quest for political office has become expensive. This powerful communications instrument has become a campaign imperative.

Second, the commercialization of broadcasting has further weakened democracy by decolorizing (nationalizing politics,) as appeals made in one place or to one group may be immediately communicated nationally. Thus particular appeals particular groups can no longer be made by candidates without first calculating the possible effects on other groups in their electoral coalitions.⁵⁵ The ideal of collective socio-political action is weekend and political participation tends to be reduced.

⁵³ Richard Bunce, *Television in the Corporate Interest* (New York: Praeger, 1976), p.27-31

⁵⁴ From Leo Bogart, *Press and Public* (Hillsdale, N.J., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981), p. 248.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

TV news coverage of election time is also constricted and oriented to photo opportunities and entertainment value (personalities, horse racing). Frank Mankiewicz and Joel Swerdlow have pointed out that genuine intelligent discussion and with 1 minute and 15 seconds allotted to each candidate on evening news, issues are ruled out. George McGovern charged that (in 1972) that the Nixon administration was corrupt, but Nixon did not have to confront the charge on television until well after the election.⁵⁶

Public broadcasting was marginalized in the early 1930s, the defeat of an amendment to the communications act of 1934 that would have reserved 25% of broadcasting space for educational operations, confirmed the triumph of private broadcasting.⁵⁷ A small segment was reserved for non-profit broadcasting in the 1950s but federal sponsorship did not come about until 1967, and one of the functions of the public broadcasting became to relieve commercial broadcasters of their public service obligation that they did not want and were sloughing off from.⁵⁸

Perhaps the most important is the argument that media giants are responsive mechanisms and in contrast with state bureaucracies, they are devoted to serve the audiences, which is akin to serving oneself. There are, but, a number of problems with using market as the basis of mass media

⁵⁶ Frank Mankiewicz and Joel Swerdlow, *Remote Control* (New York: Ballantine, 1979,) p. 101.

⁵⁷ E. Krasnow and E. Longly and H. Terry; *The Politics of Broadcast regulation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982,) p. 194-196.

⁵⁸ E. Krasnow and E. Longly and H. Terry; *The Politics of Broadcast regulation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982,) p. 194-196.

anywhere. The US media treats people as consumers, not citizens so that serving a public service function is deemed to be outside its purview. The media does not make people sovereign in the sense of allowing them to choose from what is offered. "Famous US wit and analyst A.J. Liebling commented that the country has a free press in the sense that anybody in the ten-million dollar bracket is free to found a paper in New York or Chicago and anybody with around a million is free to do the same in a place of media care size like Worcester, Mass. As to people, they are free to buy a paper or not, as they wish".⁵⁹

Instead of struggling to obstruct or turn back media centralization and commercialization, the forces of resistance have sought to lobby for improved performance of private media and struggled to create alternative media.⁶⁰

THE RESPONSE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

The most vibrant response against the strides of media going the market way has been the rise of community and public access radio and television stations and programs, Global Alternative Media Associations, (GAMA). GAMA describes its core task as 'working to break the monopoly of media giants'.⁶¹

⁵⁹ The Press, [New York, Balantine, 1961], p. 15.

⁶⁰ Global Alternative Media Association, Internet Post, 1996, FIC@oln.cpomlink.org).

⁶¹ *ibid.*

In a pioneering case in United States, M'Bana Kantabo, a 31-year old black and blind man from Illinois, organized black liberation radio in 1986. Operating illegally on a one-watt transmitter within a range of one-mile, he was widely emulated. A "Free radio movement" emulated and numerous micro radio stations have gone on air, since then. The Federal Communications Commission tends to block such "private stations" while assiduously approving merger after merger of media bigwigs.⁶² Television has been harder to democratize because it is expensive to program and gaining access to distribution is difficult and expensive.

CHANGING TRENDS IN THE MEDIA

Apart from the above discussed monopoly of media there are other relevant aspects of the mainstream media that warrant a discussion. There has been a discernible trend in the post of the mainstream media which sheds light on a public welfarist and a vigilante strain of it all. Some investigative and political reformist magazines of the yore were the most prestigious in the land—Harper's, Scribner's, Century, etc. The muckracker's magazines, exposure of systematic bribery of govt. by banks and industry, were an important force in the political movements that elected mayors, governors, and finally, a reformist president, Theodore Roosevelt.⁶³ This watchdog strain of America received an abrupt jolt in the shape of J.P. Morgan and the

⁶² Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChesney, *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*; [Cassel, Wellington House, 1997], p. 202-203.

⁶³ Timothy E. Cook; *Governing The News-The Political Development Of American News Media* [university of Chicago press] see details

Rockefeller interests simply installed their own managers and the ruse was the privately arrived at assumption that the country's public was tired of reading exposes of banks and businesses. It was a watershed in American Journalism and domestic politics⁶⁴.

History seldom repeats itself precisely and so the holders of media along with the audiences are a different breed in a different time. Compared to the years before world war II there has been a rollicking enhancement in the quality of the American media products, thanks largely to a remarkable alteration in the perceptions and exception of the American public to a great extent.

World War II and the pearl harbor phenomenon ended the long cherished and adhered to American ideal of isolationism and wiped out any illusions that any society as significant as United States can ease off into a nonchalant insulation.⁶⁵ Ever since the message has been clearly defined and the consequent awareness has created a public demand for more quality and relevant policy views and the attendant programming.

Subsequent quintessential shocks like the Vietnam war, the gasoline shortage of the 1970's, the hijackings of the 80's and the time changing September 11th have removed any remaining doubt that the lives of Americans are in more ways than one intertwined by remote forces. The

⁶⁴ . ibid

⁶⁵ K R Narayanan;;Media Society And Polity, Mainstream ,[May 3 1997]

demand for better public information during the second war furthered by an almost revolutionary move, the passage of the G .I. Bill promised free higher education for the 14 million men and women who had served in the armed forces.⁶⁶

The perception of university education being an elite privilege ended and began a gradual but telling transformation of the intellectual, occupational, and cultural character of the American population. The American masses widened their informational and cultural experiences and true cosmopolitanism set in.

Journalists have been part of the great change. Even the journalists tend to be better educated and are more concerned for professional ethics than would have seemed possible fifty years ago. The conventions against lying, fictionalizing and factual inaccuracy are strong and the norm these days. Collection and the reportage of accurate facts is a high priority in American reportage. The variety of suppression of dramatic and anti-institutional events is another noted strength of American Reporting tradition.

Despite raised standards in journalism, American mainstream “news” is still heavily imbued with routine conventions widely accepted as “objective”.

⁶⁶ Article-War, Propaganda And Media In <http://www.global issues.org>

An over dependence upon official sources for news is another drawback. The likewise dissemination of the official releases and statements of white house press conferences and nearly taking them to be the last word on the unfolding events, is a practice much too common in the media galleries.⁶⁷ Some media analysts point out several other anomalies in the mainstream media practices. They accuse the media of bringing in a relative lack of social context in news, which shreds the news of much of its substance. Then, there is a glaring pursuit of selective “pieces” which leaves some subjects inadequately developed and making another news piece donning the mantle of a centrespread.

The quick empathy that power centres have for each other is well demonstrated by the case of Kermit Roosevelt, a former CIA operative who wrote a book called, “countercoup” the struggle for control of Iran. It was the authors insiders version of how intelligence agencies overthrew a left leaning Iranian Premier Mohammed Massadegh in 1953 and reinstated the Shah. The issue was control of all precious oil. The publisher McGraw Hill was coerced into recalling all the copies from the stores as well as from the reviewers.⁶⁸

When we talk of mass radio, then “Masses” is a term which needs a better elucidation and not everyone is comfortable with the term. Raymond

⁶⁷ Terry M Moe; The Politics Of Bureaucratic Structure [Washington D.C, brookings institution 1989]p 267-280

⁶⁸ Ben B Bagdikian; The Media Monopoly [Beacon Press, 1992]p 39

Williams famously remarked that “Masses are other people. There are in fact no masses as such”. But, the concept of reading the term as a homogeneous motley crowd of unthinking people, rather too close to a mob, is a bit objectionable.

SHOULD MEDIA BE SHUNNED?

Here, two schools of thought are of note. Cultural pessimists and cultural optimists. Cultural pessimists bear a gloomy view of mass culture and cultural change, their main thrust being the preservation of hierarchical social structures and media. Richard Hoggart can be taken in the same tradition. He insists on cultural robbery. Most mass – entertainment are in the end what D.H. Lawrence described as anti-life.” They are full of corrupt brightness and moral evasions. They tend to take a world view in which “progress is concerned as a race for material possessions and freedom as a ground for endless irresponsible pleasure”.⁶⁹ These products lead to a vicarious, spectator’s world. They offer nothing which can really grip that brain as heart.⁷⁰

The other school of cultural optimists contend a different set of norms Mathew Arnold commented apt. I ought to have my share of the worlds

⁶⁹ David Hutichon’ Media Policy,[Glasgoow1993,] p19

⁷⁰ ibid

knowledge in tune with my capacity and bent of mind. I claim to be taught and informed, more than one craft for the benefit of the community.”

Media policy makers were very well aware that for many critics the media meant inevitable cultural debasement so the program for regulating media out-put and its overall influence had to be a balanced one. Despite various brave effort to insist on the educational and cultural potentialities of media – David Sarnoff, the charioteer of America’s first network broadcaster, the National Broadcasting Company, (NBC) commented “broadcasting represents a job of entertaining informing and educating the nation and should therefore be distinctly regarded as a public service” But very soon, the salesman became the trustee of public interest, with minimal supervision.

Apart from the news media, in the current milieu the uncontrolled influx of wave after wave of American cinema has become a major issue among the Europe and the Canada. This perpetuated a whole series of sops to indigenous movie industry. The compelling desire was to see the nation telling its own stories on its own screen. This very natural xenophobic attitude can be attributed to a very Ortegean or a Nietzsche an way of thought, and cinema censorship is seen as critical to a maintenance of order.

But, in my view a process of cultural diffusion would spread appreciation of arts across social classes, and new strains deriving from the new media were capable of producing works of value. All these ideas were

fed into early, policy discussions about the development of both broadcasting and the cinema.

We have delved in depth over the overarching influence of businesses on media, but it would be, in my view, too simplistic and uni dimensional a reading to associate the media and corporate nexus as something satanical and totally utilitarian. Media also goes a long way in accoutering the people with vital “infotainment” which is a prerequisite in citizens of democracies as they also offer us representations of life in our societies. Special laws have been enacted to deal with problems that could result if there is not a sufficient number of independent sources of news and info to guarantee pluralism of ideas. The phenomenon of globalization passes challenges in the media feed, as it does in other areas.

THE FREEDOM OF PRESS

Harking back to the American experience and its rotted ness in the traditions of liberalism and enlightenment, several founding fathers swore by the freedom of press, indeed the first amendment to the constitution, states that :“Congress shall make no law, abridging the freedom of speech, or of press.”⁷¹ The most committed proponent of press freedom in the early days of independence was Thomas Jefferson. He has many detractors in the press,

⁷¹ The first Amendment The American constitution

and sometimes he as very weary of what he described as their abandoned spirit of falsehood .

But, Jefferson's basic position was very clearly articulated 'I am persuaded that the good sense of the people will always be the best army. They may be lead astray for the moment, but will soon correct themselves. To prevent divergent mass tendencies is to give them full information of their affairs through the change of the public papers, and to contrive that the same papers should penetrate to the whole mass of the people.'

But, Jefferson also believed that people who received these papers should be capable of "reading and interpreting them : people were at that time hard pressed to discern out any partisan bias in reportage but as he had feared the dawn of American press perpetuated a partisan political tradition which continued unabated till more or less the era of big business.

John Stuart Mill, too stood for a liberal and varied pattern of thought dissemination. He has articulated his thoughts very succinctly in "One liberty" in a chapter titled "Thought and discussion".⁷²

In America, an effort was made to size up the problem of establishing a balance between the freedom of press and governmental regulation. The solution has been the so called "social responsibility theory" which modifies

⁷² John Stuart Mill; On Liberty, Chapter-Thought And Discussionss

an indulged libertarian approach. It acknowledges that economic logic leads to a concentration and produces regional and national monopolies. A way out is to ask the media to strive harder to report fairly and be welcoming to a kaleidoscopic variety of opinions whether the institutions and the corporate owners agree to it or not. This may be easier said than done. Substantial store is also set store by professional codes of practice, to which journalists and proprietors are expected to adhere. It is here when media ethics drop anchor.

ELECTRONIC JUVENILE ABUSE

Relative to adults, children are seen to lack the knowledge, the experience and the maturity that would enable them to differentiate between what is virtual and what is real. This is perceived as an inherent condition of childhood. They tend to take what they see as an accurate reflection of real life and reel life as a trustworthy guide to behaviour. Thus, they are considered by some American media researchers as “Active audiences”. There are live instances of this direct behavioral effect.⁷³

The recent avalanche of Reality television in united states has lead to many inspired attempts by journals to emulate what all is depicted. The concomitant impact of an entrenched “Gun culture” in United States is another fall out of the what popular mass media dishes out to the people.

⁷³ Liberty, Morality And Sexual Censorship[Casssel Inc] In Chapter-‘The Dangerous Psychologic Of Media Effect’, p35

The great debate in United States on the legalization of carrying a gun on one's body is intricately linked to what media dishes out. The recent, often reported, massacres of teenagers by the teenagers are nothing but a direct reflection of the psychological impact of the media offerings on the young and unsuspecting younger section of United State's population.

Violence is another aspect of the media practice. Although TV violence does build audiences, its huge presence is not based upon its popularity at home, but rather on the fact that its dramatic ingredients are 'most suitable for aggressive international promotion'.⁷⁴ Professor George Gerbner and his associates have since 1967 compiled an annual television violence profile and violence index. They have found that an average seven out of ten prime time programs use violence, and the rate of violent acts runs between five and six one hour.⁷⁵ Half of prime time dramatic characters are engaged in violence and about ten percent kill. Children's weekend programming remains saturated with violence.⁷⁶

THE PRESIDENTIAL PROTOTYPE

The role of Media in covering presidential campaigns and further white house domestic and Foreign policy decisions has become a perennial

⁷⁴ Paul Fashi, "TV Violence Adds Punch To The Overseas Market", Washington Post National Weekly Edition, [February 3-19, 1995], p. 21.

⁷⁵ George Gerbner, "Marketing Global Mayhem", The Public, [1994], p. 74.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

and exclusive element of the American mass culture. The focus on a single protagonist, the hermetically sealed press room, the resources used into going public and staging visually compelling events-are all part and parcel of an year round media feast.

One aspect of this typically American Media exercise is the most intriguing. The presidential actors design mass media strategies to counter the deficiencies they encounter in accomplishing their tasks, including those bequeathed to the institution by the constitution. The working with the media is simply not for ego-gratification, self-aggrandizement, or public popularity, it is now part of the job of Governing. The officials are able to manipulate news and might win the daily media battle, but end up losing the war in toto, as standards of news worthiness begin to become the prime criteria to evaluate issues, policies and politics, so, the need of the hour is that the most responsible and endowed person in United States should not be judged by his successes as a performer but more by policies that work. What is needed is a more responsible and discernible mainstream media reportage.

TV news coverage of election time is also constricted and oriented to photo opportunities and entertainment value (personalities, horse racing). Frank Mankiewicz and Joel Swerdlow have pointed out that genuine intelligent discussion and with 1 minute and 15 seconds allotted to each

candidate on evening news, issues are ruled out George McGovern charged that (in 1972) that the Nixon administration was corrupt, but Nixon did not have to confront the charge on television until well after the election.⁷⁷

MEDIA POLICY

In retrospect it can be contended that United States as such needs a more coherent, well balanced and well schematized media policy by which the contours of the media in the future can be sorted out. The media scholar Leo Bogart has commented “The crazy quilt of regulations that constitute our ad hoc national media policy, one that even its most dedicated interpreters find hard to make sense of, much less in any rational way.

First, subsidies to media should be continued but increasingly expended and targeted towards more economically vulnerable media outlets and organizations. But recent debates towards initiating politically sponsored media, news and news analysis should be given a more time before suggestions and inputs from the media scholars make it a more ripe one. Such efforts have already begun in 1994 with a Republican party news program, “Rising Tide” was kicked off amidst much enthusiasm.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Frank Mankiewicz and Joel Swedlow, *Remote Control* (New York: Ballantine, 1979) p. 101.

⁷⁸ Oscar H. Gandy Junior-*Beyond Agenda Setting Information Subsidies And Public Policy*[Norwood, N J 1982]see details

In the congress annual appropriation bills routinely include a clause ‘No part of any appropriation contained in this act shall be used for publicity purposes not authorized by the congress. These moves tend to restrict the capacity of the executive branch to communicate about its activities and engagements which is, an important part of governance.

Subsidies can be continued; direct grants, low interest loans, tax breaks, tax incentives, etc. There is no impending need to bring about an urgent budget raise as some scholars opine, In this view, there are several sources of income which are yet to be tapped A tax on news paper advertising would probably be both more constitutionally viable and laudatory than a tax on large newspapers and media conglomerates.⁷⁹

Given the allegations of commercialization and an establishment of monopolies in the field of media, “The fourth estate” still remains a throbbing and much needed cog in the wheel of the American mass culture and the societal web”. The contention that “Bureaucracy” is more suitably termed as the “fourth estate” than the media web, is a strain of opinion which confuses more than clarifies, Still even the hardest skeptic would be hard pressed to accept media as an “intermediary institution” - most comparable to the American twin political party system or the interest group system, if not a full-fledged fourth Branch.

⁷⁹ *ibid*

Arguably far some, the harmful fallouts of media, might be a challenge for societal and media watchdogs but the intrinsically significant public service function of the U.S. Media cannot be shunned away with ease info taintment i.e. a combination of providing a free flow of information on governmental policies, national and international issues-at stake; events unfolding inside and abroad the nation at a relentless pace, constitute a necessary lifeline of the American populace. This combined with a retro effect of initiating public debates on vital issues, is another socially and politically conducive impact of media practice. Entertainment (television and cinema) is another pivotal contribution of mass media doled out to audiences leading to cultural enrichment and refinement. A bit of open-eyed and sensible regulation added to the whole admixture makes for a welcome and vital media apparatus which is the backbone of a vibrant, liberal, progressive and post-modern United States of America.

Chapter – III

SELECTED MEDIA SURVEYS AND PUBLIC OPINION ON GULF WAR

We live in a dirty and dangerous world. There are some things the general public does not need to know about and should not. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows”.¹

The Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 came as a watershed in International politics in more ways than one. It was for the first time that the cold war gladiators, United States and Russia were joining up to fight a common foe in the form of an Invading, tyrannical Iraq. The decades long and energy sapping cold war had ended and the erstwhile satellite states of Eastern Europe had shed their taboo for the liberal and western ideals of open trade practices.

Freed from its preoccupation in a volatile Europe, United States had an opportunity to divert its energies towards middle east, in pursuance of President George Bush's declared “new world order” objectives.

In the pre-second world war years, the European states of the order of United Kingdom and Netherlands tended to be the arbiters of the middle east oil resources. This control shifted from the European colonialists into

¹Washington Post Owner Catherina Graham Speaking At CIA's Langley Headquarters In 1988, As Reported In Regardie's Magazine, January, 1990).

the hands of United States of America after the second war. But even the U.S. position of preeminence over this valuable gulf oil assets gradually changed to a situation of "Dependency" over the years. The oil price crisis of 1973 and 1980s are perfect pointers in that direction.

The U.S. dependency on Gulf oil is not comparable to that of other powers. But U.S. with 5% of the world's population consumes 25% of the total black gold. Still, The Gulf countries' reserves of oil makes these countries coveted entities in the International Geo-strategic and Geo-economic networking.²

An effort has always been underway in U.S. to balance the economic benefits of using low-priced imported oil with the security costs of ensuring the free-flow of the same oil. This has led to a renewed emphasis on alternative fuel technologies, reserves of oil to be maintained for crunch periods and switching to non-gulf oil resources when the conditions warrant.

The Bush administration maintained that apart from delivering a death blow to the hegemonic invasion of Iraq, the American and western oil interests were also at stake. This was ample excuse to foil Saddam Hussain's designs. Some commentators have argued that even in the absence of a liberated Kuwait, an unimpeded oil supply would have

² Rohins Philips, *The Future of the Gulf, Politics Of Oil In The 1990s* En. Papers, no. 25, En. And Environmental programme, Regal Institute of International Affairs [Darmout, Dart Publication Company 1999] p. 123

continued for a long time to come. For Iraq is as dependent on the oil as west is: more than 90% of its export income and 61% of its GDP are derived from oil.³ Some Analysts opine that it does not matter to oil consumers whether the oil is in Iraqi or Kuwaiti hands. Whoever owns the wells must be made to sell it at the world market price⁴

Invoking the mere oil factor would be too perfunctory a reading of the reasons why U.S. challenged Saddam's regional ambitions, Intricately linked to the oil supplies issue is the massive investment of around three trillion dollars of Petro Dollars by the Gulf states like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc. in the American bourses and capital markets. Any hindrance in the flow of these petro dollars would hurt the American economy, which would in turn stagnate Industrial and manufacturing in the supply for oil. The spin off would be a reduced intake of oil by United States and a resulting less revenue for the oil rich countries. The fewer petro-Dollars would be invested in the US and a vicious cycle of stagnation would creep in, culminating in losses for both the oil producers and the oil consumers.

After a brief overview of the factors which necessitated an American coalition incursion in the Mesopotamian desert, it would be a worthwhile exercise to look into the internal dynamics of the Gulf war. Who sustained the Government war effort? Where did the rationale behind

³ Paul, Arts, Demo Ses & the Gulf war, Third World Quarterly, Vol. 13, No.2, 1992.

⁴ Robert Brenner, why is the United States at War with Iraq? New left Review<[Jan Feb 1991] p. 129.

carrying on the battle in hostage conditions, come about from.? All this has to be looked into in the light of past US incursions into Korea and Vietnam which have left more than a bitter taste in mouth of American policy makers and think tanks.

During the Persian Gulf war, history was not just the framework in which war occurred but became dramatized as part of the meaning of war itself. When the Gulf war began the most recent images of U.S. involvement in a large scale foreign war were those of tortured U.S. power in the movie "The Deer Hunter" (1979) the futility of death and destruction in Vietnam as portrayed in Oliver Stone's, 'Platoon' (1986) and the larger than life 'Rambo' amidst an inept, bureaucratically Foreign U.S. military in First Blood, (1982).

These media and cinematically constructed images of war did not form ideal staple for U.S. media and Court to prepare a platform for another war effort. So, the immediate task on U.S. Media hands was to erase the bad memories of the past and more particularly to extricate the American psyche out of a time-hardened "Vietnam syndrome". Infact, their hidden agenda was soon too much exposed for it was; creating a patriotic pro-war fervour in the countries which would set the most determined anti-war activists of the Vietnam era, on a path of self doubt.

President Bush took upon himself the task of setting afloat the new approach of "a new world order" based on the principle of Unipolarity and

sensible American multilateral intrusions all over the globe. He himself promised repeatedly that this would not be “Another Vietnam”.policy decisions were to be taken in the light of the effects of Public opinion on the war effort. So, a battle was to be waged on the domestic front too with the apparatus of modern media rather than with guns . The institutional war efforts portrayed by the media “as broader ideological moves to redefine U.S. identity and strength in a post cold-war world where the U.S. affluence and domination face erosion in the face of the rise of rogue states, terrorism , European and Japanese economic ascendancy.”⁵

The Persian Gulf War was different from all previous war effort as it argued more for the “triumphant technology” rather than for the war itself. Images of the order of: Patriot missiles being launched, jet fighters taking off, radio feedback of smart bombs and traces of bomb fire atop the Baghdad Skyline made it a “living room war.’

But, for all the talk of providing instantaneous news bytes to waiting home audiences, the Media, particularly the news scavenging reporters were lambasted and even ridiculed for all they did “When it came to paddy the conflict, “Saturday night live” in its first episode after the war began, chose not the Iraqis, but the American reporters who in daily televised

⁵Susan Jeffords & Lauren Rabinovitz; *Seeing through the Media: The Persian Gulf War* [Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick New Jersey], p. 21.

press conferences were ignorant of military security, operations and objectives.⁶

In the same strain, Michael Crichton, author of "Jurassic park," proclaimed the new state of reporting as the "Media Saurus", a fossil animal due for extinction. Critiques like Howard Kurtz of the Washington post lamented the "media circus." Politicians, too, cursed media growth cynicism,, a sort of "gotcha Journalism", designed less to extract information from government officials than to skewer them for their words, their deeds and intentions.

In more ways than one, satellite communication begot "Tabloid Television"but it also encouraged C-span, with reportage being conducted without the fetters". Talk Radio witnessed a resurgence in popularity not because radio was new but because television had gone tabloid, creating a vacuum of debates on the issues.

If world War II was the acme of media military relations, surely Vietnam was the nadir in respect of official press releases. But in Vietnams case, as the war dragged on the dissonance between the statements of the American spokesman and the scenes witnessed by American correspondent grew, the uneasy bedfellow, that the media and

⁶ Neuman Johnna, Lights, Camera, War; The Persion Gulf War,[St. Mortalists Press , New York, 1996] p. 214.

military were, began to part ways. Media personnel could not digest the old cliché of Government. having the “right to lie” as uttered by the Assistant secretary of Defense , Arthur Sylvester, in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

As Media images had emboldened an already broad based anti-war protest during the Vietnam war, the US Military planners sought to reach out for public support during the Persian Gulf conflict. Once the Bush Administration declared about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. “This will not stand,” then the administration had a hard sell to undertake in convincing the American people that United States had enough stakes in the conflict.

Amidst the tensions, a media orchestrated war rhetoric ensued which eulogized war as redemption for America in the name of God and the country. Bush maneuvered efficiency to convince the congress into kow-towing along with the war effort with the “oil factor” being used as a “raison de etre.” The congressional debates had given the President an available tool which was utilized by Bush and his aides as a platform to make their case and rebut the anti-war opposition.

An interesting footage in which Saddam Hussein was shown asking a British child Hostage Stuart Backwood, “did Stuart have his milk today?” “Chilled public opinion in the western capitals, cementing Saddam’s image

as tyrant on the world stage. One can only imagine how the odds would have changed if Saddam would have had a better feel for public relations.⁷

Media surveys have accentuated patterns when favorable public opinion is generated on an issue. Arthur Siegel, a social science professor at York University, described four levels of varieties, adopted by Hitler and Stalin. As some people suggested that the World Trade Center was attacked by Israel to embarrass Arabs. The second variety does not see any harm in a false sound and light as long it is plausible. The American allegation that invading Iraqi soldiers pulled out incubators from a Kuwait hospital and left the infants to die on the floor, is an instance of the second variety of sound byte.

The third strategy to be truthful in reportage but withhold other side's point of view from being entertained, was enunciated by the Mainstream U.S. Media's attempt to snuff the voices of an anti-war alternative Media. The fourth and the most productive is to be truthful in reportage with the attendant losses and gains, which the Media found difficult to adhere to in the face of the institutional pressures.⁸

Since war is unpleasant, military discourse is full of euphemisms to generate public support in the wake of any engagement. "In the 1940s, America changed the name of the war department to the Department of

⁷ Neuman, page 224

⁸ Booth Gillin, U.S. Intensifies The War Of Words, The Philadelphia Inquirer, [October 21, 2001].

Defense. Under the Reagan administration, the M-X missile was renamed the “The peace keeper”. During the war time, civilian casualties are referred to as “Collateral damage’ and the word “liquidation” is used as a program for murder.⁹ Such Media surveys go a long way in a rational analysis and cost headed dissection of how Media casts a web over the unsuspecting audience.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador’s daughter was the original source which exposed the Iraq excesses related to the incubator incident. But, as it turned out, the informer was deliberately presented as a nurse and had not been in Kuwait for years. Someone has aptly commented that that as always a dead baby story in war always finds a place in mass circulation.¹⁰

This does go on the record as a defense of the Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait but it does raise a question on the accountability of the America mainstream media. The effect is to demonise the enemy to the hilt and create a sense of urgency with no space and time for diplomacy. The automatic conclusion from the Mainstream Media been that one who critique them, must be “One of them”. This narrow view does not lead to a diversification of the discourse. Dom Helda Camara’s quote captures this

⁹ Aaron Delwiche, Propaganda Anaysis, School Of Communications,[Washington Univeristy, March 12, 1995.]

¹⁰ [Http://www.globalissues.org/thehumanrights/Media/military](http://www.globalissues.org/thehumanrights/Media/military)

succinctly. “When I give the food to the poor they call me saint, when I ask why the poor have no food, they brand me a communist”.¹¹

The Media is ubiquitous. More than a hundred years ago William Make Peace thackray called the fourth estate as a “ great engine” that never sleeps. Being everywhere marching and dug in with the armies , journalists have reported war afte war.. In the United States, the Mexican war introduced the filed correspondent system of enterprise journalism . George Kendally editor publisher of the new Orleans picayune in the 1840’s on scene in Mexico, assigned reporters for the first time to cover on the spot military action. Reports from the front also influenced public attitude toward war readiness and diplomacy associated with war – subjects that later came to be known as the National security aspects of U.s. Foreign Policy. “No one epitomized the war correspondent better than Ernie Pyle, whose columns in the second world war brought to the home front the drama and the daily life of the U.S. Soldier.¹²

With the establishment of the U.S. Department of Defense, the epicenter of all American war news became the Pentagon. The location became one of the four geographic cornerstones of Washington journalism, the others being the White house, Congress and the Department of State.

¹¹ <http://www.Globalissues.org/Humanrights/media/military.as>

¹² The Robert B. Sims; the Pentagon Reporters; National Defense University Press; [M.C. Nair Washington, DC, 1983;] p. 5.

THE CNN FACTOR

A few weeks before the hostilities broke out in the Gulf, an NBC producer found himself in a Baghdad government office. When he was officially received, he walked into the minister's office to find the Iraqi official watching CNN. Larry king live.¹³

The story might be apocryphal, but the fact that the Persian Gulf war was a media event, is clear. The political and military authorities on both sides needed and used the Media to help their causes and to sustain their war efforts including generation, of favourable public opinion. The story of CNN demonstrates the importance of the twenty-four hour war, around the clock, international television news service. But Ted Turner's CNN's role was more complex than being engaged in the creation of a digitized soap opera experience.

As the Media set agenda and convey viewpoints and CNN was the only International Media left in Baghdad after the hostilities broke out, it's role was more complicated and had profounder implications. Later Arnett, war horse of the Vietnam, era, a former Associated Press correspondent, was left alone to beam back what Saddam Hussein had to say to the world.

The debate which ensued raised the question that why did the American Media allow Saddam Hussain an opportunity to put his views across to the an American audience. He did not extensively utilize his own

¹³ Dennis Mc Dougal, They are watching in Baghdad Los Angeles Times, Jan 15, 1991 UK

national Media and relied on CNN for the purpose. The answer lies in a basic fact that what most of what the world reads, watches and hears – is a product of the services of news Media of the United States and Western Europe.¹⁴

Even today in Asia and Middle East for example AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP are the most important sources of News for the Asian press even when they have their own news correspondents in various news centers.

International Television is a recent function of satellite broadcasting. Once the war began Iraq was excluded from the satellite “ARABSAT.” The only way open to Saddam Hussain to beam television coverage across the screens of the world, was through CNN.

CNN was not set up as an international broadcaster. It has assumed that role only by a kind of accident of technology. Before the Persian Gulf war, it was a plain profit reaping company rooted in the politics, business and culture of the United States. Furthermore, CNN by default began airing rough unedited footages to fill up the news “holes” in the round the clock information service. So it happened to provide special access to newsmakers like Saddam Hussain, Hosni Mubaraks and king Hussein’s press conferences before the war. This ad hocism clicked world

¹⁴ Susam Jeffords and Lauren Rabinovitz, *Seeing Through The Meida: The Persian Gulf War*; [Rutgers University New Jersey, 1994], p. 108

wide and during the course of the war CNN newsbytes became the most sought after entity of the Gulf war.¹⁵

The tight censorship imposed on the Media by limiting them to “Pools” further raised the value of CNN reportage as it balanced discreet U.S. government releases. Then perhaps the Iraqis knew of the “Vietnam syndrome”, the idea that North Vietnam had won the war on the television screen of United States. Saddam did anticipate that once the Media started beaming back images of bombed Iraqi homes and bombarded children, the western and U.S. resolve would weaken in the face of an adverse public opinion. As it turned out the war turned out to be a short time affair and did not give enough time to Saddam to cobble up support around the world or inside United States as the new victim of the United States.

The primary lesson from the CNN blitzkrieg was a Media managed war propaganda. The realization that journalists and broadcasters from the United States reinforce a particular form of International order began to seep in, that in a way, mainstream reporters reflect U.S public opinion, U.S. values and often U.S. foreign policy intent.¹⁶ American technology not only won the war on the battle field, but also over the Media.¹⁷ VOA (voice of America) though it succeeds in putting programs

¹⁵ Robert Weiner „live from Baghdad: October News at Ground Zero (New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 281.

¹⁶ Urho Kekkamen, speaking at the Tampere symposium on the flow International flow of television in 1973.

¹⁷ Taylor, War And Media, p 266.

on U.S. and other countries network it did not have a voice in the Arab States as their Media tend to be Government monopolies so CNN's news bytes opened up new vistas of news and analyses during the Persian Gulf War with much ease.

Now more than ever, should not you be watching CNN?¹⁸ In a crucial sense a prominent CNN advertisement historicizes, the Persian Gulf war when it had hardly even begun, identifying the war as an event which already had an official chronicler. What was novel was the presentation that part from the war itself, the coverage too qualified as being historical. It was historic in the sense that it was fought "live" on the small screen like any another basketball game, differentiating it from the Vietnam war, which was fought on "News film" rather than live.

The "historicity and "liveness" of the reportage initiated a much apparent self consciousness about the act of reporting. This coexisted with an inability in the coverage to clarify events as they are still in the course of happening and do not carry the coherence of a concluded sequences, were put forward as competing truths, in the discourse of the reporters, only to cancel each other out.

The cumulative effect being the cosmetic production of anxiety and excitement among the recipients.

¹⁸ January 17, 1991; CNN'S First Self Promotional Advertisement Before The Formal Coverage Began.

Another tactic subtlety adopted by the CNN was public display of maintaining journalistic standards for what constitutes "Truth"- with the Iraq war machine began firing its scuds on Israel. The on the spot reports by CNN reports were being cut short by interruptions from US based anchors whose sole purpose was to confirm what had been already reported by their Israel based correspondents.. For instance many a times there followed from U.S. based sources, a rebuttal of the earlier claim that nearly all the scuds had been successfully brought down by the American patriots which was a major reporting spectacle in the the reportage.

The coverage was unique in the respect that with a paucity of clear and well defined images of bombs exploding and sites being destroyed, CNN's Peter Arnet, Bernard shaw and John Holliman tended to fill up their coverage with their own activities on ground zero. They even reported to the audience that they hung out the telephone to let the people get a feel of the real war. Then variety was added to their reports by displaying colored road and city maps, and middle East maps to make up for their lack of usual repertoire. Even the identity of the three CNN reporters one white American, one African American and one white New Zealander contributed to the charge of CNN as a global network, casting over them a veneer of multi-culturalism and internationalism.

CNN's reportage was spiced up by including two different strains of viewpoints on the ongoing bombing. The usual description is grounded in metaphors identified with usual pleasure fireworks, fireflies and sparklers. These combined surgical strikes and smart bombs, confers on the war a sense of positive achievement.

But this sense of exhilaration was countered by Bernard Shaw's snide critique of the bombing. "If this was surgical becoming, then I don't like being close to the operating table", comments Shaw and sublimely rebuffs other comments like "It is a remarkable experience to be here, Gadies and Gentleman and the night sky is again lit let up with beautiful red and orange tracers". Yet despite his darker evaluation of the experience, Shaw carries on the show to give a picture of "conscientious" reporters at work on location.

Apart from the technicalities and subtleties involved in the CNN's news coverage another significant fact of reportage deserves a mention. The Television news played a key role in domesticating dissent by rearticulating political outrage against the war as personal anxiety and reconfiguring the evil to resist as the need to "support our troops" Also, the image of military families quietly coping with the war turmoil served as a key icon for the manufacturers of appropriate public response.¹⁹

¹⁹ Susan Jeffords and Lauren Robinovitz, *Seeing Through The Media. The Persian Gulf War*, [Rutgers University Press, New Jersey 1974] p. 155

Anti war protest and was labeled as a social disease, reminiscent of the "Vietnam syndrome". There was a mythical argument that the Vietnam debacle occurred because of want of support at the home front. What followed was a gendered mapping of the home front. The discourse of family support for the troops feminized and personalized the "home" front. The strategy of news reports was to begin the capsule with statements of ambivalence, anger and opposition to the war on the part of the interviewed family members. However, by the end of such segments, the interviews had resigned themselves to coping with fears.²⁰

Thus, CNN and other news networks made use of personalized News. It involved wrapping up a days news by cheerful stories at the end of the broadcast to leave the viewer with a pleasant sense of security.²¹ All this was mean to divert the attention away from the problem of the state's propensity to be trigger happy in the Gulf and the state making an attempt to legitimize the war effort by both Idealistic and programic excuses. "Yellow Ribbon" Journalism was how Media pundits nomenclatured this brand of reportage and programming.

Media, instead of crudely dividing war supporters and protesters placed both under the same umbrella. Now, Media translated "support" translated to mean uncritical acceptance of existing realities and one

²⁰ Same as susan one p 156

²¹ Dianne Rucinski, Personalized Bias In The News, *Communication Research*, 19, No. 1 (1992) p 91-108)

ultimate powerlessness to change them. One psychiatrist advocated wearing of yellow ribbons as a symbol of group identity which would act as a therapeutic motif of consolation in order to encourage adaptation to the crises rather than protest against it.²²

In one such Media exercises, CNN correspondent Norma Quarrels, manages to provide a disparaging vision of a young immature, anti war protester contrasted against a group of mature, homely women and children gathered for a photo session and letter writing session on valentine day. In this symbolic interplay of characters, protest is defined as the willful abnegation of community spirit and belongingness.

During the Persian Gulf war, the "hard body" image of soldiers that saved America from communism and the "soft body" that repairs its internal psychic landscape, was forced to co-exist, with a same representation contrast. This exteriority and interiority of the U.S. combat apparatus went a long way in creating the American war experience. Thus, nineteenth century articulations of the masculine, as coterminous with the public and the feminine with the private sphere, thus dissolve into a more complicated gender configuration.²³

²² Russel Banks, The New York times, Real white, blue, Yellow, [Feb> 26, 119]

²³ The Cost Of Exclusionary Practises In Women Studies" Signs (winter 1986) p. 290-303

Patriotic Woes

Much of the production of social consensus and media offering during the Persian Gulf war was formed around the idea of what it meant to be "American". The Media kow towed the stereotypical line that it was the "un-American" anti-war protests which made the country loose the war in Vietnam and later on destroyed the life of many a Vietnam veterans. As a consequence, the Media dictated definition of what constituted Americaness became more coercively enforced.

As United states was going through an anxious period of redefining the population owing to mutliculturalism , changing racial distributions, immigration - the Media purported to create an illusion of unity through the support of troops. The mainstream media went about its own "Genocide" in their elimination of groups and entire populations whom their government does not wish to see.

In an essay written during the war, Cynthia Enloe highlighted the ways in which women were both ignored and redefined to share the U.S. government's war effort. As Enloe points out, the lives of Phillipine, Sri Lankan and women domestic workers were pushed under the carpet and also the manner in which they were abused in Kuwait. Even the white U.S. women were overnight turned into epitomes of patience and support for troops which was tantamount to being "American" and "Patriotic".

Another war analyst, Therese Saliba, holds the view that in general Media created stereotypes of Arab women to remain subservient to their American, liberated counterparts. Based on advertisements, the Donahue Show and Time magazine articles, Saliba argues that such representations not only reinforced already existing patterns of anti-Arab Racism but also silenced dissenting voices of Arab women in their efforts to resist constructions of a Saudi National identity.

The most deafening silence of the Persian Gulf war, was the silence of the voice of the Iraqi civilians. In the view of some observers, the military imposed blanket cover on reporters in the war theater, kept the audiences oblivious to the plight of Iraq thus making the war less "real". What bombarded the living rooms were lethal patriots in flight, yellow ribbons, journalists and Israeli gas masks, etc.

As a political fallout of the whole national identity forging exercise, the war could not carry President Bush to a second term. The brouhaha over the great American victory could not contain the anxiety over jobs, health, etc. but this failure came at the cost of more than 100,000 dead Iraqi soldiers and a merciless annihilation of a national infrastructure. This time around U.S. might not suffer from a Persian Gulf war syndrome but in all certitude a dismembered and war torn Iraq has been left stranded negotiating for medicines for children in exchange for its oil.

A story which later Arnett covered, was the bombing of a baby milk power production plant in Abu-garib district of Baghdad. Arnett writes, "The building was barely recognizable, the sheet aluminum walls had been ripped off., the small signpost at the entrance base left with a crudely lettered sign, "Baby milk plant" in English and Arabic".²⁴

CNN's reportage with a hint of sarcasm at what American bombs were doing, brought out an angry and immediate American responses. The President claimed that the factory was actually "A production facility for biological weapons" a claim backed by General Schwarzkopf and General Colin Powell. They insisted that the factory was a façade and CNN was described by White House as a conduit for Iraqi disinformation.

Thus, there was a strain of realism and honesty in what CNN reported. But, it did involve a tight rope walk between the American establishment and the Iraqis. But, Peter Arnett himself only admitted to his audience, "You don't have to watch us. You can turn us off. We are a product for sale like any other product. Our sales depend on customer satisfaction."²⁵ "Still, he hotly contends the view that in view of a domestic constituency, Media panders to "Patriotism", the Nation-State System and National Interest. In fact, the Media coverage has gone global and less parochial in more senses than one. Serious attempts have followed to give

²⁴ The Media and the Gulf War: An Eyewitness Account "Peter Arnett; [The Emirates Center for strategic studies and Research, 1997,] p 24-26.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 32

the other side of the story, too. But, it still cannot be denied that CNN has an insider status because after all is said and done, CNN is American owned and run News organization.

Interestingly enough, in President Bush's years, he learned to use the CNN powers superbly. The White House deliberately crafted press briefings and press conferences in the knowledge that antagonists in the crisis region of the day Baghdad, Moscow, Damascus- they learned U.S. policy directing through CNN. The American assumption that the responsible officers of those countries were watching was very much true.

Apart from the much talked about American reportage of the "Event", an analyses of how Kuwait coped with the invasion, can provide interesting insights. One observer notes" Perversely, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has benefited telecommunications... The invasion has enabled Kuwait to plan a future network that provides a greater resistance and stability to such events".²⁶

When Kuwait was invaded Kuwaiti abilities to communicate with the outside world became controlled. One of the defining characteristics of the occupation was the Iraqi desire to destroy any Kuwaiti ability to represent themselves, i.e. to bring about a disintegration of the Kuwaiti National Identity and culture. In the service of this goal, the Iraqis destroyed the satellite earth station at Umma al Aysh. The National museum was

torched and Archives containing records containing records of Kuwaiti history and public discourse were burned or destroyed²⁷

Satellite phones were activated clandestinely. Not only were they a vital means of communicating and coordinating resistance activities, but also a mechanism through which Kuwaitis could sustain an Identity reforging exercise. John Levins observes , “ Within days Kuwaitis were printing leaflets and newsletters on their home PC's, photocopying them and distributing them by hand or Fax”.²⁸ Though located in the hotbed of Islam, contrary to common perception, censored foreign satellite television channels are freely viewed The survey concludes that, domestic media did not fare well on the credibility front.²⁹ A Survey conducted by Jamat al-minayes, professor of communications at Kuwait University, found that out 73% of 350 people surveyed watch television every day., only 13% stated that they watch Kuwait T.V., while 68 percent said that they rely on the Middle East Broadcasting center (MBC) and other popular foreign channels. The Governmental response is the to opt for an "open skie's policy" and it regards watching satellite stations as a personal choice. It also advises that those who don't agree should not buy dishes The strategy

²⁶ Communications In 'The State Of Kuwait', A Special Supplement To Communications MEA (Herts: The Information and Technology Publishing Co. 1993) p 14-18.

²⁷Wheeler Deborah, Kuwait National Identity, Middle East Journal, [Vol. 54, No.3 summer 200] p 435-436

²⁸ John Lvins, Days of Fear: The Inside Story Of the Iraq Invasion And Occupation Of Kuwait [Dubai: Motivate publishing 1997], p. 265.

²⁹ Al -Menayes, P. 127-129

is not to shelter individuals from foreign centres, but to use contact with alternative discourses as a means for reinforcing local values.³⁰

National identity is defined by major life changing events, the discovery of oil, the Iraqi occupation., being liberal Muslim, being born a Kuwaiti etc. The presence of foreign Media in Kuwait does not interrupt Kuwaiti national consciousness . Still, developments like some students communicating beyond gender boundaries are still viewed with reservedness.. But , this satellite openness is a symbol of Kuwait's ungrudging acceptance of globalization of discourses. Foreign Media penetration thus is not symptomatic of a loss of cultural autonomy , but rather illustrates a compulsion to have the latest technologies and global Media texts immediately available for the purpose of developing Kuwait national capabilities to their fullest.

Journalists are much less formal than academics. It is said that journalists write the first rough draft of history... and its left for the academics to spend the rest of their lives correcting it. But, the rough draft should not be beyond correction. American Media did have a day in promoting the war rhetoric and the reportage too happened to be considered very often but an all American ownership of the media and a strict military censorship were the reasons why Media performed the way it did, during the course of the war.

³⁰ Mohammed El Hadary, "No plans to control satellite" Arab times [25 March, 1997,] p. 1

Military censorship of the press not only limited what views were actually beamed, of the conflict, but altered the sense of the 'reality of the war'. The Pentagon's censorship policy resulted from news Industry protests of the total press exclusion in the Grenada episode of 1983. The Press objected so strongly that the Pentagon instituted a commission headed by major General. Winant Sidle, retired chief of Army information. It recommended that future wars be covered by pools of news representatives selected, controlled and censored by the Military.³¹ It was a sort of Precensorship imposed on the Media which allowed the Pentagon to predetermine that what will be seen and not seen, of the war. The Sidle commission made the Gulf war in a way of an prewritten script, since the unpredictabilities, irregularities, atrocities of war were predated from the reader's text.

There were two major propaganda themes masterminded by the Pentagon influenced Media . First, was that it was valiantly waged war against the world's fourth largest army with highly trained elite Republican guards. Second, the war provided an opportunity to the Military Industrial Complex (MIC) of United States, to test its high tech-digital and electronic war equipments.³² The so called "smart bombs "were precision bombs" and were supposed to be hitting chosen targets.

³¹ Malcom W. Browne, "The Military V/S The Press " New York Times Magazine,[March 3, 1991,] p. 27-45

³² Andre Gunder Frank", Third World War: A Political Economy Of The Gulf War And The New World Order, Third World Quarterly,[Vol. 13, No.2, 1992,] p. 272.

But, as it turned out only a minuscule percentage of such bombs were hitting the targets. Also, International Herald Tribune, in its heading "Desert Mirages" carried the news that the U.S. over estimated the size and ability of the Iraqi armed forces. It was a deliberate attempt to justify the carpet bombing of both the military and civilian assets of Iraq. Another major revelation after the war was that that majority of the much hyped Patriot Missiles struck only the sound propulsions and did not destroy their warheads, and Scuds finally did score reasonable hits. "The American Patriots may have caused as much damage as it prevented"

Very often the military apparatus performed the media role, until the "pool" arrangement broke down, small number of reporters were shepherded around under carefully controlled condition. The military managed the Media as much as a modern Presidential campaign does, releasing carefully controlled doses of information for setting up carefully planned photo opportunities.

American technical progress was graphically displayed. These images created the general impression that the war was a bloodless, press button battle in which only military targets were destroyed. The official military refrain was that war planners were taking extreme pains to minimize "collateral damage", that is, harm to civilizations in Iraq and Kuwait, particularly in cities.³³

³³ Paul to Walker, Eric Stambler

There were areas where the US had resorted to "surgical" bombing. The US never provided target lists and casualty suffered. The press briefings gave the impression that the allied forces were trying hard to maintain a high moral ground. The military command made it appear that they were reasonably scrupulous in selecting and attacking targets to minimize harm of civilians.

Academic Journalism failed even more embarrassingly to offer any meaningful resistance to military censorship. The army was not ashamed of killing but only of being seen "killing". Pentagon was shown trying to squelch knowledge of what the guns "saw" and as the Media was handicapped. It was a fact that during the Persian Gulf war "only the guns saw the real war".

Americans treat human life as the most precious, Marlin Fitzwater stated the official white house response to the bombing of the Baghdad shelter on Feb, 13, 1991. But, Laurice Garret, the Medical Reporter for Newsday, commented, "I viewed the unedited CNN feeds the following day, they showed scenes of incredible carnage. Nearly all bodies were charred into blackness, among the corpses were of those at least six babies and ten children. Some rescuers vomited from the stench of the still smouldering bodies."³⁴ . Although the U.S. Public apparently widely supported military

³⁴ Fitters Remarks: less of civilian lives is truly tragic, Los Angeles Times, [Feb 14, 1991,] A1

censorship during the Persian gulf war- The survey found that a majority of nearly 2 to 1 felt that military censorship is more important than the media's ability to report important news .³⁵ A number of news organisation 's including the Nation, Village voice and Harper's, sued the defense department in a U.S. District court in New York for imposing unconstitutional restriction during the Gulf conflict. The suit was dismissed. The Pentagon press guidelines have been revised. After eight months of negotiations, the principle of "independent" reporting was endorsed and pools were limited. But, it still insists that stories must pass a "security review", which is still censorship with a censored name.³⁶ Media, metaphorically speaking enabled citizens to identify their participation as being only in the technological world and therefore not responsible for the production of the death-world. Thus, Media kept people from seeing unpleasant images that they would not like to include in their cultural and day to day experience. This illusion tends to mask the actual horrific products of this specific war and to maintain the continued efficient Industrial military complex that is so fundamentally a part of the U.S. economy.

³⁵ Laurice Garrete , "The Dead" Columbia Journalism Review [30.may.1991]

³⁶ Thomas B. Rosentie, "Americans like Press Media but still lack censorship, Postwar Poll Says, [Los Angeles Times, March 25, 1991], A 9

Chapter - IV

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA SURVEYS OF THE PERSIAN GULF CONFLICT

Alternative media broadly speaking delves on a specific, topical area in a critical, avant grade and welfarist manner. It is structured to subvert society's defining hierarchical social relationships and is profoundly different from and as independent minded of the major social, economic and political institutions as it can be. An alternative media institution sees itself as part of a project to establish new ways of organizing Media and social activity. Its further these as a whole, and not just it's own preservation.

" what sets apart the mainstream media apparatus from the rest is its stress on maximizing profit and sells an elite audience to advertisers for its sources of revenue".¹

Generally speaking, it virtually functions in accord with and to help reinforce society's defining hierarchical social relationship and is generally controlled by institutions of the order of business magnets and corporations.

There may be mitigating circumstances constraining the extent to which an institution seeking to be progressive can forgo profits and surplus and reach beyond elite audiences. Social and market pressures may make it

¹ <http://www.shoreworld.com> AN ARTICLE Given At Z Media Institute, June 1997 by Naom Chomsky.

hard for people to push in alternative discourses on all fronts at all times. But, striving to stick to these fronts should be a condition of being alternative, or a separate term ought to be used to describe such media bodies.

According to Michael Albert, a prominent alternative media observer, some generally accepted criterion need to be applied while categorizing media as alternative.² The organisation should pursue and promote the same values and norms internally pursued, particularly those of openness, dialogue and transparency. The relations with other alternative media projects should be supportive. The agenda should not be self-preservation but a wholesome advancement of the alternative project".³

The income differentials and conditions of work in the alternative media in America are much egalitarian and exploitation free. Wherever an excess of authority and decision-making has been besotted it is normally justified. "As some surveys have shown, alternative media workplaces and products do not replicate the kind of oppressive genders labour and radial equations which are the norms in the real society outside."⁴

² www.2may.org.

³ Kerssler Lauren, In Time Of Dissent; Up The Creek Without A Paddle: An Article In "Main Currenets In The Mass Communication, Warren K. Agee And Edwin Emery, [1986. Harpers and Row Publications Inc.] (p. 92-93).

⁴ Ibid.

They are the forgotten men and women of journalism. No schools or prizes are named after them. Yet, they are as significant in our appreciation of American Journalistic tradition as are generally, Hearst, Pulitzer, Ochs, Luce and the rest of the giants.

Dissident press has had a separate but an often not so well defined a tradition owing to its existence in the dark alley ways of persecution and a realism of public ignorance. While the penny press was offering colourful stories about crime, conflagrations and the vicissitude of urban lies black, Americans were fighting for basic human rights in the pages of their own newspapers.⁵ Mainstream media's war strategy has been always astutely fought tooth and nail by the alternative media organisations of the order of mother Jones, Z magazine, etc.

"From 1827, when two freemen, began publishing "Freedom's Journal", to the 1980s when slick magazines reach millions of readers, blacks have published more than 2,700 newspapers and periodicals. over the years, the American feminist movement has spawned counters publications from pre-civil war journals that reached only a few, hundred readers to today's sophisticated magazines that reach millions.⁶ Populists worked for discontented farmers in the south and west published prolifically. anarchists,

⁵ Kerssler Zauren, In Time Of Dissent; Up The Creek Without A Paddle; An Article In "Main Current In The Mass Communication", Warren K. Agee And Edwin Emery[, 1986, Harpers and Row Publication Inc.] p. 92-93.

⁶ Ibid.

socialists, communities and their dizzying array of splinter groups too published prolifically in the early 1900s.

Most dissident journalist worked in obscurity for little or no salary. Their publications were shoestring operations reaching small audiences who were already supporters of whatever cause was being advanced. Their threat were thought to be so minor and local communities and governmental agencies merely ridiculed or ostracized, the journalists. Those which were large and loud suffered worse fates. Towns people burned their print shops and federal agents threw editors in jail.

Still the clandestine march of the alternative media has continued unabated. Their determination and zeal to risk persecution --- to get their idea out to the masses, is a major cause for alternative media's sustenance. But, some torch bearers were not the real initiators in the real sense. They founded and maintained their own way of reaching out to people not only because they believed in a cause, but because the mainstream press of the day ignored or reduced that cause.

Traditionally, the mainstream press has spoken to and for the homogenous middle generally united by belief in the current political, social and cultural ideas of the day, the audience of the conventional media receives a rather narrow spectrum of thought that reinforces these beliefs.

Sometimes the conventional press purposefully excludes idea at odds with contemporary discourses because these thought patterns seem threatening, distasteful or outrageously rebellious. When in the 1840s a black wrote a reply to one editor the explanation meted out to him was that the sun shines for all white men and not for colored men. Feminists were dubbed “the hans, cats crowing hens, unsexed females and dangerous home wreckers”,⁷

In other cases, the press seems to ignore dissident groups as their actions do not seem to get along with current definitions of news. Groups of people experimenting with new lifestyles in utopian communities like Brook farm, Oneida or New Harmony were simply not considered newsworthy. Another simmering issue of the early US experience, was that the life of Urban immigrants did not receive coverage in the citie’s prominent newspapers.

Also the dissidents were more often politically naive and incorrect. They did not plan out the kind of public acts speeches, conventions, press conferences that the mainstream press routinely covered. These deficiencies tended to keep the early alternative media adrift and away from the au currant discourse in the United States. But, the people involved in the alternative endeavor were determined malcontents who wanted change and

⁷ Ibid, p. 94.

idealists who believed change was possible. Many were simultaneously leaders and chroniclers of their cause.

Demographically, they were as varied a group as one could imagine. For many, Journalism was not a profession to earn a living but it was a righteous path to a better world. Apart from the institutional persecution, a continuance of financing was a major bottleneck in their efforts.

Publishers had three potential sources of revenue: support from a group as an individual, subscription, single copy sales and some scant advertising income.⁸ Women's journal a leader in the fight for women enfranchisement was funded by various suffrage groups and clubs. National economist, a one-hundred thousand circulation populist paper, was underwritten by the powerful Texas Farmer's alliance. The Daily Worker, a prominent English language communist news paper received seed money from the Soviet communist party, and was financially supported by the left throughout its publication life.

The task of alternative media becomes all the more difficult, as communication theory postulates, people tend to suck out those message they already believe in, through the process of selective exposure. But, the greatest obstacle which all Alternative media organisations faced was that their ideas and strain of ideology was almost antithetical to the American

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way of life. Utopianism, anarchism, populism, socialism and pacifism during the two world wars was attached the substratum of the American ethos: Private ownership, consumerism, competition, liberalism and the Grandiose project of the United States as the sole superpower in a post cold war world were the order of the day.

Regardless of what the citizens and the regime wanted to hear or not, the First Amendment of the country's constitution gave them an inalienable right to express themselves. One definition of this off-the-leak strain of media can be that when the founding fathers talked of the freedom of speech, they did not mean the freedom to talk to one self. They meant both the freedom to speak and the opportunity to be heard.

The argument freedom of speech being used in favour of the alternative media products has been vindicated to a great extent in today's context through the internet. The unbridled and often unregulated deluge of anti-establishment information and analysis comes in various hues and colours. One end of the spectrum is populated by respected, widely accepted though controversial apostles of alternative media like Naom Chomsky and Robert Fisk. The other often extremist and blatantly anarchist versions of the "fellow" variety, which doles out anything bordering on perversity up to the verge of sheer sensationalism. It is this irresponsible avtaar which needs to be checked and made accountable in the larger benefit.

In the most relentless bombing campaign since world war II, the US lead coalition systematically destroyed Iraq's military and economic infrastructure inflicting terrible suffering on the Iraqi. This can be one reading of the Persian Gulf war which stands in opposition to a largely pro-war mainstream media portrayal of the conflict. The Pentagon "disinformation leaks of a quick victory on the first night of the war, created a euphoric sense that the coalition forces were scoring a quick knockout victory, or "blow-out" as certain media commentators called it.⁹

The spectacle of the scud/patriot clashes dominated T.V. war coverage during the early stages, made the US defence apparatus look bad. On Sunday, January 20, General Schwarzkopf said in a T.V. interview that the coalition had destroyed all fixed scud missile launchers. The same day Iraq fired ten missiles at Saudi Arabia. The US military's failings in the Vietnam war, the Iran hostage rescue mission, the occupation of Lebanon, the Grenada invasion and the Panama invasion all bespoke of the possibility that they might make a mess of things in the Gulf as well.¹⁰

Popular culture had firmly established Saddam as "the man you love to hate". In fact, a cottage industry emerged of anti-Saddam artifacts, including Gulf balls with Saddam's head painted on them. T-shirts and cartoons in news -papers vilifying him. A national examiner story, headlined

⁹ From Douglas Kellner Home page - <http://www.grus'ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/killner.html>

¹⁰ From Douglas Kellner Home page - <http://www.grus'ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/killner.html>

a "shaker: Saddam's love child lives in US. He is joining army to kill his father", was a perfect example of how mainstream media villified Saddam.¹¹ Cartoonist David Levine drew a sketch on the op-ed page of the New York Times, labelled the "Descent of man", starting with a humanoid Caucasian image of Clark Gable and passing through apes to Saddam Hussein with flies buzzing around his head.¹²

Throughout the crisis in the Gulf War, Iraqis were presented as the foreign "other", to the moral, rational and civilized coalition forces. This dichotomy between the irrational Iraqis and rational west builds on the orientalist discourse by Edward said.¹³ Further, reason is attributed to civilization and modernity while its other is equated with barbarism. This perspective also legitimized violence against the "barbaric" non-western foreign other.¹⁴

On January, 19, CNN correspondent Peter Arnett revealed that Iraqis were holding American prisoners of war (POWs). The next day, CNN reported that Iranian television had claimed Iraqi television showing blindfolded POWs being paraded through the streets of Baghdad. CBS ran the same story but with a rider that Iranian TV was not known for its veracity so independent conformation of the news piece was needed.¹⁵ On

¹¹ Story in National Examines, February 12, 1991

¹² From A Story In The New York Times On February 1, 1991.

¹³ Edward Said, Orientalism

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Taken From NBCs "Today" Program On January 19, 1991.

January 21, the POW issue was the top story of the news and was widely discussed for days to come. The videos of the bruised and scarred POWs, specially that of Navy's Lt. Jeffrey Zaun, whose puffy and scarred features became the symbol of POWs plight, were featured hourly on network news and even on the cover of a national news magazine.¹⁶ (Taken from News Week, Feb 4, 1991).

Lt. Zaun stated, referring to the victory celebrations in the US, "I don't ever want to kill anybody again. This country did not get to see the cost of war. I did."¹⁷ Loot, a magazine reported in captions, "U.S. Pilot shot down in Iraq regrets human cost of war."¹⁸ The Times headline however read "American Fighter shot down and recounts Horrors after capture. The first caption accurately sums up the substance of the Zaun interview, while the Times caption is pure propaganda¹⁹.

There are also instances of U.S. media voices attempting to bring out the crudity of Iraqi propaganda machinery. One amusing example was a report that Iraqi radio was propagating a message for the American GIs. "GI you should be home while you are away, movie stars are taking your women. Robert Redford is dating your girl friend. This was widely reported as Iraqi crudity in the New York Times, Washington post, CNN, NBC and

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¹⁷ From New York Times, June 11, 1991.

¹⁸ From SLOOT, July-August, 1991, p.9)

¹⁹ The Times, June 11, 1991.

Time magazine. The Joke however was on mainstream media because the story was originally told as a gag on the Johnny Carson show on August 22, 1990, and was taken up by mainstream media as a true story.²⁰ US propaganda was too replete with the same outrageous lies, which were generally believed by the public.

In fact, United States too was systematically violating the Geneva conventions while it was self-righteously condemning the Iraqis. Sources later revealed that US had run commando raids into Kuwait and Iraq before the war, using troops disguised in Iraqi uniforms and equipment - a clear violation of the conventions.²¹ The United States systematically violated article 56 of the Geneva protocol 1 of 1977, which states, "Works or installations containing dangerous forces, namely, dams, dykes and power generating stations shall not be made the object of attack."²²

The casualties were recorded on the American side, too. The military did everything possible to make sure that the image of the conflict as a clean, precise and bloodless war, remained intact. The Pentagon forbade the disturbing images of wounded soldiers. The US reception center for dead soldiers at Dover, Delaware, was off limits to the media. A grisly tale of dead US GIs emerged when reporter Jonalthan Eranblia infiltrated the Dover

²⁰ Extral Magazine, May 1991, p.17.

²¹ Summer 1991

²² Ibid

mortuary and provided graphic accounts of mutilated bodies.²³ From the military standpoint, the American airforces sorties and success rate figures were fundamentally misleading and contradictory. Newsweek reported that allies had flown 20,000 sorties, out of which only 11,000 combat sorties did not attack ground targets. Only about one plane in four, carried strike munitions.²⁴ For most of the sorties, success only meant dropping bombs or missiles. News week claimed that the satellite pictures suggested an effectiveness rate of "somewhere between 66 and 75 percent."²⁵

Throughout the war, the British did not exaggerate their success rate claims as the Americans did General Powell and General Schwarzkopf asserted in a briefing that the whole Iraqi nuclear weapon capacity had been neutralised. But, in August 1991, there were revelations that schwarzkopf bombers had failed to detect the 'Big Bun' that Iraq was building to shoot missiles at Israel.²⁶

Another personal attack on Saddam Hussian was based on the tales that Saddam had taken to mental treatment during the war. General Schwarzkopf himself helped circulate these rumours that doctors are treating him with tranquilizers and he is a very distraught man".²⁷

²³ From San Francisco Bay Guardian, March 6, 1991.

²⁴ Newsweek, February 4, 1991.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ See Washington Post, National Weekly Edition, 1991, October, 21-27.

²⁷ US News and World Report, February 11, 1991

Another instance of sensationalisation followed at the bombardment of the two nuclear reactors at Tuwaitha, near Baghdad. Dr. Frank Barnaly, a nuclear Physicist and defence analyst commented, "The two reactors have no military significance at all. They produce radioactive stopes for medicinal purposes."²⁸ Later the International Atomic Energy Authority indicated that the reactors were only research establishments.²⁹

The Persian Gulf war also witnessed a major threat to the environment consequent to the oil well fires and oil spills polluting the economic and river waters. Leonard spector begged the Bush Administration not to bomb Iraqi nuclear plants because of the dangers of lethal environmental contamination.³⁰

ABC's "World News Tonight" had the first comprehensive report on the war and environment and Ted Koppel further developed the theme on 'Nightline that evening. The report suggested that after the war, the Iraqis could blow up 1,000 oil wells. Saddam Hussain had bobby trapped the wells. Dr. Paul Crutzen from the Max Plank Institute in Germany claimed that such a scenario could lead to a fall in the temperature by 10 to 15 degrees celsius when oil is used as a weapon.³¹

²⁸ See in Observer, Jan 27, 1991

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See in New York Times Op-Ed Piece, January 17, 1991

³¹ From ABCS "World News Tonight, "January 18 on War and Environment

In the past too, after the horrific environmental destruction of Vietnam, the Pentagon was forced to follow an environmental code. Bush Administration signed an order exempting the Pentagon from the environmental code.³² When environmental issues came to the fore in the Gulf War, the Bush Administration brought out a new order on January 25, 1991 that there would be no release of any environmental information to the press or public.³³

It was reported in the *Aviation week and space technology* that "a massive and disorderly attack" was launched on an Iraq nuclear facility. The bombs were launched from a big distance. This refutes General Schwarzkopf's claim about the precision used in bombing, nuclear, chemical and biological facilities.³⁴

It remains for future historians to judge how rational and healthy, Bush's actions in Gulf war were. Saddam Hussein had already been labelled as an "environmental terrorist". A British military briefing admitted that coalition forces had destroyed 50% of Iraq's oil refining capacity.³⁵ Ramady Thomas reported in the 'Earth Island Journal' that months after the end of

³² See Tom Wickers Op-ed column in *New York Times*, April 3, 1991.

³³ Article by John Horgan, *Scientific America*, May 1991.

³⁴ See Arkin, Durrant and Chernie's piece in "*Aviation Week and Space Technology*", April 22.

³⁵ Political Ecology Group; *War in the Gulf: An Environmental perspective* (San Francisco, California, The Tides Foundation, 1991).

the war "large quantities of oil were seen spilling from bomb-ruptured pipes at the Ahmadi Oil Terminal"³⁶

Much of public discussion about mass medias role in the Persian Gulf war focussed on conflicts the Press had with the military and politicians. Should the Pentagon have controlled so closely the ability of reporters to work in the field? Should Cable news network continued its broadcasts, once the war was underway? Some analysts talked of public giving a clean chit to the mainstream media portrayals.

But from a different perspective, opponents of the war saw the media as engaging in blatant Gulf war cheerleading and marginalizing of the peace and justice movement.³⁷ The question was that did the mainstream media manufacture consent in support of the war effort?

It is a widely accepted fact that "reality can no longer be viewed as simply a given set of facts, it is the result of a particular way of constructing reality. Stuart Hall examines how ideology and power are part of that construction, how signification becomes a site of political struggle.³⁸ As he points out the ideological orientation that results may not be readily observable. The media must be sensitive to and can only survive

³⁶ See Rony Thomas in *Earth Island Journal*, Summer 1991.

³⁷ From *Z Magazine*, 1991, p.2

³⁸ Hall, S., *The Rediscovery of Ideology: Return of the Repressed in Meid Studies* (London: Methucn; 1982), p.64.

legitimately by operating according to a certain framework of "what everyone agrees to in the consensus".³⁹

The critical importance of controlling definitions can be seen in two other examples, the use of terms 'atrocities' and 'chemical weapons'. Kuwaitis have been generally portrayed as the victims of an Iraqi aggression, but the instances when they turned the heat on innocent Palestinians for being Iraqi collaborators are also reported. "Palestinians were burned, hit with typewriters and had their fingernails pulled out".⁴⁰ Also "doctors treated scores of men who had been severely beaten, slashed and in several instances, shot. . . execution style."⁴¹

Another times story explained the Kuwaiti action as a ground swell of anger and revenge. If not admirable, the Kuwait behaviour was at least understandable. This was the general tendency among the media. Time also used the term 'revenge' carried out by Kuwaitis who had remained in Kuwait during the occupation while "Iraq's pillaged and raped their land". In all the media coverages, the label 'atrocities' was never applied to any Kuwaiti retaliatory action.⁴²

The issue of using a stronger action against Iraq. If Iraq resorted to chemical gassing of neighbouring states and Kurdish reels too, was tactfully

³⁹ *ibid*, p. 87.

⁴⁰ From "Kuwaitis Beating Palestinians, reports say, Statr Tribune (March 7, 1991), p. A7.

⁴¹ Lorch, D, 'Palestinians in Kuwait reported shot and beaten', New York Times, 1991), p. A7.

⁴² Kramer, M. "Choas and Revenge", Time, (March 18, 1991), p. 28.

handled by the US Media. Most Americans seemed to have a hazy understanding of 'gas' used in world wars and took it as bad. "We are right there, in the country and we don't think we can let Saddam Hussain use chemical weapons and not do anything about it" one official was quoted as saying.⁴³

The US tended to stay among from the status of 'Napalm' bomb controversy. Some media reports categorised it as not being a chemical weapon, deserving different consideration.⁴⁴ While others clamoured that Napolam 'should be classified as a chemical weapon and banned'. But, this appeared as a brief line at the bottom of the news report.⁴⁵ This had an impact upon the US strategists. They downplayed the issue of chemical weapons and concentrated instead on the high-tech wizardry of 'smart bombs' and laser guided bombs. The media as a rule, did not question the military on this point.

D.C. Hallin argues that the prevailing ideology that dictated the course of Vietnam war, was very much alive and kicking during the Persian Gulf conflict, too. Those assumptions include:

1. War is a national endeavour that requires unity.

⁴³ Tyler, P.E. "US Said To plan Bombing Of Iraq's if They Gas Rebels", New York Times (March 10, 1991), p. A1.

⁴⁴ Beyer, L., Coping With Chemicals, Time (February 25, 1991), p. 46-47.

⁴⁵ Browne, M.W., Allies Are Said To Choose Napalm For Strikes On Iraqi fortifications', (February 27, 1991), New York Times, p. A8.

2. War is a grand American tradition.
3. War is manly and rational.
4. Winning is what counts⁴⁶.

From the coverage of the Persian Gulf conflict it seems little has changed since the last two decades or so. The press simply covered opposition to the war when it could no longer ignore the deep divisions in the society. In the Persian Gulf war, such large scale opposition with representatives from powerful institutions never formed, as politicians ran to jump on the pro-war band-Wagon and the anti-war movement struggled against an overwhelmingly pro-war citizenry.⁴⁷

The mainstream media discourse during the coverage of the conflict tended to become very one-sided. The media portrayals had stark characteristics during their reportage and analysis. It included:

(a) The almost exclusive use of “expert” commentators from the ranks of retired military, national security community, and the established academic community.

(b) The absence of serious and substantive coverage of the anti-war perspective beyond superficial coverage of a few demonstrations.

⁴⁶ Hallin, D.C., *The Uncensored War: The Media And Vietnam* (Berkeley, California, 1986), p.142

⁴⁷ Rowe, John Carlos, “Vietnam Effect In The Persian Gulf War”, *Cultural Critique* (Fall 1991), p.121-139.

(c) The failure to provide the historical context, especially the post-world war I colonial division of the Middle East, that was vital to understanding the basic issue of Kuwait's relationship with Iraq.

(d) The failure to aggressively pursue the diplomatic moves of the United States before the Iraqi invasion.⁴⁸

The language which was used in the press and broadcast media in the conflict portrayal too had a hidden and symbolic meaning added to it. Headlines taken from two headlines in the Pioneer Press, "Allies storm forward.", were peculiar in the war setting. "Storm" was a popular verb as well as part of a proper noun in this war. Most commonly, the media wrote about "Iraqi aggression" against Kuwait, while the United States swept through the war like a desert storm. These labels were not arbitrary but contrived.⁴⁹

The US military action just as easily could have been labelled as aggression, and in fact was seen that way by many middle eastern people as well as anti-war activists in the United States and around the world.

D.C. Hallin points out in his book, "The experience of a Chicago Tribune story" on U.S. military strategy, "I removed the sentence, "the Iraqi

⁴⁸ Viorst M; The House of Hashim, New Yorker (January 7, 1991), p.32-52. And (Emery M, How the US avoided peace, Village Voice (March 5, 1991), p.22-27.

⁴⁹ De Parle J; Keeping the News in Step: Are the Pentagon's Gulf War Rules Here to Stay? New York Times (1991), p.A5 and (Pioneer Press: Allies Storm Forward (February 25, 1991).

army is being flattened like soft dough under a pastry roller. This was an interesting simile, which would have pleased the military commanders. But it marks the reality that the soft dough is the soft flesh of human beings.⁵⁰

The same author considered changing the phrase “U.S. military’s stunning success to “the ability of the US military to destroy much of the Iraqi infrastructure and kill an unknown number of civilians.” He dropped the change as he did not want to press his luck with the slot editors.⁵¹

“First, we are going to cut it off and then we are going to kill it”. The above statement was made in February 1991 shortly before the launching the ground phase of the Persian Gulf War. Many people outside the military circles took it as only a metaphor and not an actual course of action. Reality proved otherwise. The US lead western coalition engaged in the most devastating aerial bombardment in history”.⁵²

THE FEMINIST RESPONSE TO THE WAR

There is a body of feminist literature not directly related to peace but it is relevant to feminist works. Carol Gilligan, in her work, contends that

⁵⁰ Hallin D.C.; *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (Berkeley California, University of California Press, 1986), p.144-146.

⁵¹ Crughton, Jone, “War at Home, *Mother Jones*, (May/June, 1991), p.22-23.

⁵² Collen Ranach, “Feminine Peace Researchers, Culture and communications, in “Media Development (Journal of the World Association of Christian Communication), (London, No. 2, 1991).

different moral development of women make them more prone to peace than men.⁵³

Robert Holt, a psychologist engaged in peace research contends that “the overwhelming consensus of behavioural scientists rejects the notion that something in human nature makes war inevitable”. Holt’s central argument is that war is primarily part of a vast “cultural complex”. Comprised of value systems, and ideology, all of which are conveyed by the mass media, mass culture and education.⁵⁴

One of the most well known analysis of military language circulating in feminist and peace circles was written by Carol Rohn. Rohn spent a year with all male members of the defence. She commented after the stay that Death, destruction and war were all reduced to an ice cold, rational discourse with a definite subtext.⁵⁵

In a recent issue of the Feminist Magazine “Ms”, Cohn wrote that Gulf war has apparently inspired military briefers to new heights of obfuscation. Cohen’s conclusion is that language is designed to hide one

⁵³ Gilligan, Carol, “In a Different Voice” (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), See details.

⁵⁴ Holt, Robert, “Converting the War System to a Peace System In Some Contributions from “Psychology and other social sciences”. Paper prepared before a conference of EXPRO, May 1987 at [Cohasset, Massachusetts).

⁵⁵ Kohn, Carol, Decoding Military Newspeak, p. 88.

central fact that war is a contest between states, in which the fundamental activity is destroying human creations, and injuries and killing humans.⁵⁶

In January 1991, as the US congress debated on whether or not to go to war, there were some signs that feminist discourse had filtered through to the corridors of power. On January 11, 1991, Congressman Joseph Kenney II, made an impassioned plea from the floor of the house. “There is a misguided machismo mentality in America now, a John Wayne attitude, that says how one should conduct our foreign policy. We ought to be the bully boy”.⁵⁷

Judging from the recent opinion polls conducted during the recent Gulf crises, Louis Harris of polling fame had noted that “decisively, women oppose a war. It refers not to a gender gap but to a ‘gender gulf’. Prior to the onset of war, in early December, the gap between men and women favoring US intervention was a full 25 points.⁵⁸ If the Gulf war was only a prelude to increased military actions in the third world – women will be very much effected by the new wave of militarism.

The Gulf war also perpetuated the myth of the “wartime family”. The US military had husband -soldiers married to women soldiers and single

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Reardon B, *Serchism and the War System* (New York, Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1985), p 110-115.

⁵⁸ The Gender gulf, New York Times, December, 1991.

parents. Yet the soul of the institution, male only, “combat” remains intact. At the same time, the military reliance on 200,000 women in uniform has given the US military a new clock of legitimacy.⁵⁹ Thus, the institution does not seem to be much of an anachronism. It can even claim to be a means for women to achieve full political status as people” who die for their country”. Today’s military is no longer the “other.” It can be used as an instrument for building and entrenching a US-designed not-so-new world order.⁶⁰

The tabloids in the US depicted celebrity -opponents of the Persian Gulf war less respectfully. The Star’s February 5, article, “Lynn Redgrave blasts sister Vanessa over pro-Iraq rantings” held a threat of career reprisals for Vanesa Redgrave.⁶¹ The controversy erupted when actor’s guild filed a grievance against the producers of Zettice and Zovage on Vanessa Redgrave’s behalf for not allowing her to continue her role. The producers later confessed that her anti-US statements on the war would not let the national tour to succeed.⁶²

Another incident brought to fore the role played by celebrity dissent. Jane Fonda’s statement on the Gulf war saying that “I’m still against war. I don’t want the soldiers to die so that gas moguls can gouge on us at the

⁵⁹ Susan Jeffords and Lauren Rabinowitz, ed., *Seeing through the media, The Persian Gulf War* (Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 1994), p. 221.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Zynn Redgrave blasts sister Vanessa over pro-Iraq rantings”, *Star*, February 5, 1991.

⁶² Mervyn Rothstein, “Redgrave rebuffed on “Lettice “Tour”, (*New York Times*, August 20, 1991).

pumps.” This brought out a vituperative attack from her to be- husband, Ted Turner .

Judged by standards of serious journalism, the war coverage in the tabloids was horrifying. The intellectual tradition of professing horror at the sensationalism of popular newspapers is an old as popular newspapers themselves. Judged from what tabloids doled out during the gulf war, the standards of serious journalism area became a pretentious bore. The former boundaries between news and gossip, respectable and trash information have decomposed beyond repair.

THE BLACK MEDIA RESPONSE

The historical perspective that black press maintained in evaluating US participation in past wars remained prominent during the Persian Gulf war. The April 1991, *Emerge* noted “We (blacks) have always died in US wars and summarized black participation in every US war since the revolutionary war.”⁶³

Jet, *emerge* and *black enterprise*, all addressed the issue of Persian Gulf war patriotism as “black patriotism.” *Emerge* . a black magazine, in the April 1991 issue, opened with a full page promotion saluting black men and women on duty in the Gulf and wishing them a speedy and safe return home.

⁶³ Mare Crawford, “We have always died in US wars”, (*Emerge* April 1991), p. 17.

Another story in pointed out a recent survey by the National opinion research center that found that 51% of white respondents believed that blacks were less patriotic.⁶⁴

In an article in the April, 1991 Black enterprise, Earl Graves called for the full support from people to honour black troops returning from the gulf. He also recognised a need in the editorial for a more equitable United States where Black Americans would choose military service as a matter of choice and not out of economic necessity.⁶⁵ Jet in particular addressed the controversy over sending black mothers to war and discussed the difficulties children encounter when their mothers are pulled away to war saying, “we are winning the war but loosing the family”⁶⁶

The large number of Blacks in the Gulf war, became an issue in The Black media. Blacks compose 12% of the total US population but made up 30% of all combat troops in the operation Desert storm. In one brief summary, a military analyst estimated that 35% of all qualified blackmen between the ages of nineteen and twenty four were in the military as compared with 17 per cent of all white qualified men in the same age group.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Simeon Booker, “Black participation in the war”, Jet, February 25, 1991), p. 96.

⁶⁵ “After the War, support our troops,” Black Enterprise, April 1991),

⁶⁶ (Richette Hollywood, “Should Moms go to war”, Jet, March 4, 1991), p. 6-10.

⁶⁷ Blacks in the Gulf, Black Enterprise, April 1991, p. 12.

The Black media also zeroed in on General Colin Powell, as a black leader and role model for the population. Several articles in “Jet”, included coverage of him as a celebrity – Powell’s withdrawal from Martin’s Luther King parade in Atlanta to a movement in the senate to award Powell the historic fifth star.⁶⁸ Jet, featured black journalist Bernard Shaw, for his heroic coverage in the Persian gulf war.⁶⁹

All the articles and coverages involving the Gulf war offered readers a distinctive perspective rooted in some level of black identity. They represent a marginal site of chosen resistance to mainstream ideology and as a catalyst for change, making black voice, the empowered voice.

⁶⁸ “General Control”, Jet, April 1991, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Black Journalist Report, “First Bombing of Baghdad: Feels Like Center of Hell”, Jet, February 4, 1991, p. 4-6.

Conclusion

Most conventional assumptions about power, in western culture at least, imply that power is concerned with quantity. Various regimes at a micro level and individuals at a macro level wield different degrees of clout in their respective circles. But, in the present context of the information age, the quantum of brute power has lost its relevance. What may be the most important factor in a world ruled by Media's image makers, is the quality of influence. In fierce struggles sweeping through our Governments, Countries, Business, those who understand "Quality" have a decided strategic edge.

Power grows out of the barrel of the gun, is a dictum which has nearly lost its relevance. "Money talks", is another by-word which drives millions all around. But, human history has revealed that none of these entities have proved successful in isolation. A deft amalgamation of the twin strains of brute force and wealth have moved on, if not completely, but to a great extent. Knowledge or the possession of information and novel ideas with an appeal for the masses have emerged as the most effective aphrodisiac for gaining clout and exerting it in all its conceivable aspects.

The view that the Mass Media system has great capacity to influence public opinion and behavior has both advocates and detractors. The media delivered messages and images tend to coincide with existing belief systems with the consequence of promoting a mainstream discourse of thoughts and behavior. Mass media also diligently and subtly initiate new ideas and

debates on untouched subjects on which people have already not formed opinions.

What began in the United States as a Fountain head of the revolutionary spirit against the excesses of British masters , has traversed a checkered road down the decades. After the Patriotic Press had fuelled America into an age of freedom and liberty, questions were raised about the extent of role that would be assigned to the press.

Thomas Jefferson and James Madison emerged as the best friend of the Press in the then American political and social milieu. A Press without fetters became a cause celebre. Jefferson as the champion of Free Press went to the extent of declaring that he would prefer newspapers without Government rather than a Government without newspapers. These words are generously displayed as placards on the walls of journalists and editors all over the land. But with a rider that prints and broadcasts based on falsifications and inimical to the public interest shall be made liable to the law of the land.

With a deluge of the same sounds filling up the public psyche, other alternative sounds tend to get drowned. These days in theory just about everyone has freedom to speak. But, freedom to be heard is another matter. Varied sources of information and genuine diversity of view points should reach the audience on an ongoing basis.

The war on terrorism and the Persian Gulf conflict is a case in point. The Bush Administration efficiently and clinically utilized the mainstream media establishment to derive a veneer of legitimacy for its war efforts in 1991. The operation Desert Storm was eulogized as a great battle to the end between the good and the evil; the Christ and the Anti-Christ. The great American odyssey to purge the Persian Gulf of the evil of Saddam Hussein acquired messianic proportions.

The real sub-text of the Persian Gulf conflict, i.e., oil interests were relegated on to the backburner by an eager Mainstream media. The fact that the United States had a stake in ensuring an uninterrupted supply of oil for its and western world's domestic consumption, was replaced by whipping up Patriotic frenzy, unleashed by a mono-minded media.

The United States needed a God-send development to rid the American Psyche of the Vietnam fiasco which had engendered a Vietnam syndrome. The establishment grabbed the Persian Gulf war hysteria and the consequent allied victory to redeem itself in the broader sense of the great American experiment.

The Persian Gulf war too saw the phenomenal and unprecedented rise of cable News Network (CNN) as a major instrument in the hands of the Bush Administration to drum up support for the war effort. Emotionalism and Patriotic fervor was systematically whipped up in the homeland to legitimize the American intrusion in the Gulf war. The excuse of extricating

on old friend (Kuwait) out of the rut was a sound footing on which the American foreign policy was based on.

The media blitzkrieg that ensued during the course of the war was another factor worth studying. The media carried on its personal satellite war on event management lines. The dangers and vicissitudes of reporting war and its depiction before the audiences become more important than the actual reporting and analysis of the American bombing and the short ground war. The spectacle of the grand success of the American technology became the grist for the mills of the American Media. The often beamed shots of roaring Patriots intercepting Iraqi Scuds and reporters reporting with a backdrop of tracer lit sky, reduced war to the status of a routine baseball game. Infact the Persian Gulf war ended up as a media manufactured war all meant for vicarious public consumption.

The United States has been quintessentially associated with the liberal, market oriented ideals bordering on to crass capitalism and commercialization of all aspects of Public life. The U.S. media too has not been left untouched by the market forces. Since the dawn of the era of big business in America, coupled with gradually dwindling subsidies on media, corporate ownership of Mass Media has become a norm rather than an exception.

The principal components of the U.S. media are namely : Newspapers, Radio and Television, Books, T.V music and other

miscellaneous constituents . They all exist to make profit and taken as whole they are highly lucrative enterprises, few other industries are as profitable. Dry statistics are helpful but they are not of much help in revealing the kind of internal competition that these media moguls also go through.

Vast technological changes, a shifting marketplace, public alternative criticism and political uncertainty are some of the pains in the back which are a common reference point among the corporate media. The corporate interests run in tandem with the ruling interests and the conclave is so strong that several excesses and corporate bungs often go unnoticed. The reportage too cannot indulge in a self expose as it is owned and run by the same corporate Mugals.

The sector of the media, sometimes called as the Agenda setting media are the ones with big resources at their disposal. They set the framework in which everyone else operates. They are the likes of dailies like Washington Post, New York Times, CBS and the like. Their managers constitute the political class. They are actually involved in the political process in an on- going manner. Most of them are linked to or owned by big houses like., General electric, Sony, Westinghouse, etc.

Different media do different things. In fact it is the newspapers and the entertainment media comprised by the likes of Hollywood, soap-operas, which tend to direct the masses, the real audience in the United States. The

first printing Press to be brought to America was from Spain in 1535, more than hundred years before the British colonists brought their printing Press to Harvard University in 1638. The initial usage of the Press was to Print government notices proclamations as well as catechisms to be used in converting the Indian tribes and the local inhabitants to Catholicism.

These development lead to the development of Alternative voices in the American discourse. The initiators in this regard were the Blacks, colored people who began raising voices through their limited means to highlight the discriminations and inequalities pervading the sinews of American social and political structures. The Black Media paved the way for the propagation of the civil rights sentiments in the United States. Alternative media voices working separately as different newspapers magazines and cable channels along with dissenting strains in the mainstream media have contributed to the strengthening of the movement . The resultant impact has been an attempt to break the profiling and stereotyping of people and incidents to form a broad based and truly representative media. They have had their share of persecutions and fetters imposition, but a sheer determination on the part of their founding father have lead them on. The existence of Alternative media in the United States is itself an indicator of how multicultural and Kaleidoscopic America is and different voices find an expression in an open environment which is conducive for an all round improvement and enrichment.

Alternative media serves as a vent through which popular angst , frustrations and disappointment with the establishment and its policies, can be released. A Mainstream critique brings to light the grisly facts and details before the masses which keeps the authorities and the society from committing excesses.

Media studies is not a difficult terrain to tread on as the media output of all sorts is an ongoing process. It's products are dished out every day, every hourly for public consumption. So, any attendant analysis of what's in the running and what is being hyped and what is being not, forms an interesting, exciting and on the whole an easy exercise to pursue and bring to fruition .

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