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IMPACT OF MEDIA ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
(1990-2000)

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Jerusalem – Palestine

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, family and friends, for their guidance, support, love and enthusiasm. Without these things this thesis could not have been possible.

Nidal Fayez T. Foqaha

Declaration:

I certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of Master is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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Date:

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ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF MEDIA ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY (1990-2000)

With the end of the Cold War with the communist bloc following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the United States (U.S) had no more communist enemy to fight. Thus, a substantial change had taken place regarding U.S national interests and its strategic priorities.

This thesis consists of six chapters addressing the impact of media on American foreign policy making process. Chapter One sets forth the methodology, theoretical framework, limitations and basic assumptions as well a brief summary of the thesis. Chapter Two (Review of Literature) lists the different literatures pertaining to the subject matter of the thesis. It reviews the works of other authors who already tackled the topic from different perspectives. Chapter Three (Media Power Effects) sets forth the various media power theories that constructs the theoretical framework of the thesis. Chapter Four sheds light on the main impact of the media, especially as an agenda setter. Chapter five (U.S. Military Interventions Abroad) reviews the three main American military interventions abroad in the period (1990 – 2000). It reviews American interventions in Iraq, Somali and The Balkans, and discusses reasons, nature and consequences of those interventions. Chapter Six

(Conclusions and Recommendations) outlines the conclusion and recommendations reached after completing the thesis.

Within the framework of the American military interventions abroad, the primary study question intends to check whether there are any effects of the media on foreign policy-making process. For this purpose, the researcher examines the impact of media on three cases: The first case is the first gulf war (1990 - 1991) to end Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The second, is the American intervention in Somalia (1991 - 1994); while the third is the American intervention in The Balkans (1994 - 1995). The three interventions took place within a short period of time, where the American administration mainly intervened for protecting the values of human rights and democracy.

The declared purpose of the three interventions show that the United States intervened for ethical purposes; however, many believe there is hidden agenda. The media played a crucial role in the three interventions mainly by mobilizing and shaping the public opinion towards each case in a supportive way for the military intervention. Accordingly, the researcher concludes that media has an impact on the foreign policy-making process, where this impact became decisive with the existence of American national and strategic interest.

ملخص

أثر الإعلام على سياسة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية الخارجية (1990-2000)

مع إنتهاء حقبة الحرب الباردة بعد إنهيار الإتحاد السوفييتي في عام 1989، وجدت الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية نفسها القطب الأوحد على الساحة الدولية. هذا الواقع الجديد أحدث تغييراً جوهرياً على المصالح القومية الأمريكية، وعلى الأولويات الإستراتيجية للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية حول العالم، الأمر الذي شجع الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية - كونهما القوة العظمى الوحيدة في العالم - على المبادرة تجاه جملة من التدخلات العسكرية في الشرق الأوسط، وأفريقيا، وأمريكا اللاتينية وحتى في أوروبا.

في هذه الدراسة، جرى بحث أثر الإعلام على سياسة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية الخارجية من خلال ثلاث تدخلات عسكرية في الفترة الزمنية 1990-2000، وهذه التدخلات جرت في منطقة الخليج العربي (حرب الخليج الثانية 1990-1991) وفي منطقة القرن الأفريقي (التدخل في الصومال 1993-1994)، والتدخل في منطقة البلقان (ضمن تحالف الناتو 1994-1995)، وفي ظل غياب قوة عظمى أخرى في هذا العالم. حدثت التدخلات العسكرية الأمريكية الثلاثة المذكورة في غضون فترة وجيزة من الزمن، وكانت تبرر، بشكل رئيسي، من جانب الإدارة

الأمريكية بأنها تدخلات لحماية قيم الديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان التي تشكل الركن الأساس للمجتمع الأمريكي. التدخلات الثلاثة تظهر أن الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية ترسل أبنائها لأسباب أخلاقية معلنة، وهي كما أسلفنا سابقاً حماية حقوق الإنسان، لكن تبقى الأجنحة المخفية من إقتصاد ومصالح إستراتيجية دائماً موجودة. وفي هذه السياسة، لعب الإعلام الدور الأبرز من خلال تحشيد وتشكيل الرأي العام الداعم والمؤيد لهذه التدخلات، مما دفع بصناع السياسة إلى إتخاذ زمام المبادرة بإرسال القوات الأمريكية في مهام عسكرية للخارج، خصوصاً مع توفر المصلحة القومية والإستراتيجية الأمريكية.

إتبعنا هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي في البحث، إضافة إلى منهج دراسة الحالة من خلال متابعة حثيثة لمجريات الأحداث قبل، وخلال وبعد الحرب الأمريكية على العراق، إضافة إلى الظروف التي سادت عشية التدخل الأمريكي في الصومال، وحيثيات التدخل لغاية إنسحاب قوات المارينز الأمريكية من مقديشو بعد عام، إضافة إلى طبيعة وخصوصية التدخل الأمريكي في البلقان، حيث الموقع الجغرافي للمنطقة في أوروبا ودور الناتو الرئيسي فيها. وفي هذا الإطار، تم أخذ أثر الـ "سي إن إن" كنموذج حي لأثر الإعلام على صناعة القرار في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

وقد خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى وجود أثر معتبر للإعلام على السياسية، حيث يعتبر الإعلام في عصرنا هذا أحد مقررات السياسة في العالم عموماً، وفي الولايات المتحدة، خصوصاً، وذلك من خلاله دوره البارز في تشكيل الرأي العام حول قضايا بعينها، وأهميته في التنقيف الإجماعي والسياسي، وتغييره لأولوية الأجندات السياسية، ودوره في تسريع عملية صناعة القرار. ولأن الإعلام أصبح أحد مقررات السياسة في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، يوصى في أية دراسات لاحقة بأن يتم البحث في مصداقية ودقة وشفافية وحيادية شتى وسائل الإعلام، كما ينبغي دائماً التحقق والتأكد من مصدر المعلومات الموجودة على شبكة المعلومات، لعدم وجود رقابة مسؤولة عليها. كما يوصى أيضاً ببحث ودراسة آليات ودوائر صنع القرار في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، خصوصاً بعد إندثار التهديد الرئيسي للمصالح الإستراتيجية الأمريكية، وحلول بعض التهديدات التي يحركها الإعلام محله.

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ACRONYMS

CNN	Cable Network News
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
ABC	American Broadcasting Company
NPR	National Public Radio
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
WWW	World Wide Web
USA	United States of America
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
PR	Public Relations
USSR	United Soviet Social Republics
UN	United Nations

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms shall have the meanings assigned thereto, unless the context requires otherwise: -

CNN Effect	It is the effect that continuous and instantaneous television may have on foreign policy, namely the conduct of war.
Cold War	A term used to describe the relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the period 1945-1989 that was characterized by increased tension that stopped short of outright military conflict
Foreign Policy	Policies directed to matters beyond a country's borders, especially relations with other countries.
Majoritarian democracy	Government by majority of the people.
Mass communication	The process by which individuals or groups transmit information to large, heterogeneous, and widely dispersed audience.
National Interest	Interests specific to a country's goals and ambitions whether economic, military, or cultural.
Mass media	The technical devices employed in mass communication, including print media and broadcast media.
Newsworthiness	The degree to which a news story is important enough to be covered in the mass media.
Pluralist democracy	Government by people operating through competing interest groups.

Political socialization	A complex process through which individuals become aware of politics, learn political facts, and form political values.
Public opinion	The collective attitudes of citizens on a given public issue or question.
Public policy	A general plan of action adopted by a government to solve a social problem, counter a threat, or pursue an objective.
Vietnam Syndrome	A term used by people with conservative and right wing politics in the United States to describe U.S foreign policy after the United States involvement in the Vietnam War.
Yellow journalism	The distorted, sensational reporting of stories that became popular toward the end of the nineteenth century in the United States.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mass media has been playing a substantial role in shaping the public opinion, setting the political agenda and socializing people in regards to issues of both domestic and foreign policy. In 1898, the United States of America declared war against Spain for several reasons; however the role of media, or so-called "yellow journalism" was clearly marked. Through the dishonest and exaggerated reporting, William Randolph Hearst managed to provoke the public sentiment against Spain, hence creating the conducive atmosphere to war. Hearst even clearly instructed his photographers: "You furnish the picture... I'll furnish the war!" in a clear statement of his intent to put the United States of America into war with Spain. Hearst's actions were the first to mark the role of mass media in defining the country's foreign policy, yet the example of the Vietnam War is more obvious. In Vietnam, American journalists and reporters contributed to putting an end to Vietnam War by publishing many pictures of killed American soldiers and civilian Vietnamese, the issue which raised the American public sentiment against the war¹.

In the age of information technology, in which the role of media has tremendously increased, a great debate has emerged on the relationship between mass media and foreign policy making-process, and the impact the former may have on the latter. To this effect, a theory has risen to explain this issue, called the "*CNN Effect*", which "*represents the collective impact of all real-time news coverage on audience or readers*

¹ Janda Kenneth et al., *The Challenge of Democracy: Government in America*. (Princeton, N.J: Joughton Milfflin Company, 1992), PP 211-213.

... leading to immediate public awareness and scrutiny of strategic decisions and military operations”².

This theory approaches the issue of media capability to influence the political agenda and shape public opinion, which in turn influences the decision makers to respond to domestic and global events.

Warren P. Strobel talked about the “CNN Effect”, and defined it as “when television’s instantly transmitted images fire public opinion, demanding instant responses from government officials, shaping and reshaping foreign policy at the whim of electrons”³.

Before entering into details, it is necessary to set forth some important elements in the foreign policy-making process in democratic countries, including the United States of America. These elements include public opinion and attitude, as well as what national interests a nation may have in such foreign policy, and significance of the same to the national security.

Within this context, one must raise several questions: Why does the United States of America enter into conflicts and crises overseas? Why does the United States of America change its policy from isolationist into interventionist? What are the determinant

² Margaret H. Belknap, “The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?” USAWC Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, March 2001, P 01.

³ Warren P. Strobel. “The CNN Effect”. The American Journalism Review Supplement (May 1996), P. 33.

factors for intervening abroad? For the United States of America, these issues are determined by America's national interests in the course of implementing the overall National Security Strategy (NSS).

President George W. Bush revealed America's international strategy in his speech at West Point, New York on June 1st 2002 saying:

“Our nation’s cause has always been larger than our nation’s defense. We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace – a peace that favors liberty. We will defend the peace against the threats from terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent”⁴.

This means that America will fight terrorism and work to prevent attacks against itself and its allies, as well as promoting the values of peace, freedom, development and cooperation all over the world. This will entail intervention abroad, including militarily as the case was in the Balkans, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The spread of mass media, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the internet turned the globe into a small village, where the events in one remote area may influence other areas. Hence, this gave significance to the mechanism and speed in which

⁴ United States Government. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. (Washington, DC: The White House, September 2002). pp 1-2.

decisions are made, until it no longer became possible to delay a decision for the next day, week or month, as the effect of such an upholding could be very destructive.

Significance of the Study

This thesis tackles the relationship between media and politics, and the impact the media may have on the U.S foreign policy. Conducting research on this subject is very significant since media has become a determinant element in the policy making of democratic nations, which have an influential public opinion.

The significance of the study stems from the amount and speed of changes recorded in the information domain, including the sector of mass communications. Nowadays, it is easy to know what is going around you. It is really that easy, because it is only one click away. Thus, more impact will be placed on the foreign policy decision-makers, who will be under the pressure of the public, who in turn is directly affected by media reports from around the world.

Throughout the recent decade, particularly after 1990, the United States of America conducted more than five interventions around the world. Following September 11th, 2001, the U.S.A launched a comprehensive war against terrorism, so far represented in two outstanding operations: Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. In view of these facts, it is crucial to know how

decisions are made, and what roles media and public opinion play in the decision-making process.

In summary, the recent years witnessed a significant revolution on the methods of information and news distribution. Now news is available from around the world for twenty hours a day, seven days a week and twelve months a year in various forms and means.

This substantial change occurring in the media sector of the United States of America played a pivotal role in socializing the public about the events around the world, thus formulating public opinion. This study intends to show the impact of media on foreign policy, as well as answer the question of whether there is an impact or not, and the nature of such impact.

Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to identify the impact of media on U.S foreign policy. This process entails first verifying whether media has any effect on the foreign policy making process, and then evaluating the amount of this impact by the case study method. Within this framework, this research will review the impact of media on shaping public opinion, and how such public opinion influences the foreign policy makers in a democratic society, like the United States.

Research Questions

The main question pertaining to the topic of this research paper is: *Does mass media have impact on the foreign policy-making process? And if so, how?*

This question can be answered in a more efficient manner by breaking it into several sub-questions, which will be handled within this thesis. The secondary questions generated from this question are: Does media have effect? Is there any significance of such effect? Do media have any effect on foreign policy? The answers to these questions provide sufficient evidence supporting the findings of this thesis. In answering these questions, it is intended and indeed necessary to examine in detail the capabilities of the media in order to either prove or disprove that an effect can be achieved. In addition, by answering this question it may be necessary to look at the technical developments that have taken place which have facilitated an increase in speed and timeliness of media reporting. There is no intention to become embroiled in the technological competencies and complexities of the latest media equipment but simply to illustrate, if necessary, the current media capabilities. However, no one doubts that developments in the domain of satellite broadcasting, dissemination of news, and the introduction of the World Wide Web (www) facilitated the process of reporting news, and gave audience around the world free and easy access to news reports.

This study will attempt to analyze the evidences and arguments that either support or refute the central question of the research. By this compilation, my primary purpose is to know whether media influences the foreign policy making-process in America, and to what extent such influence, if any, would be. The process will be accomplished through taking case studies of media coverage during times at which the United States of America

conducted military intervention abroad, specifically, the cases of U.S.A. interventions in Iraq, Somalia and The Balkans.

Basic Assumptions

Initially, the primary assumption of this study is that public opinion has an effect on policy-making process, whether domestic or foreign. Whereas media plays a crucial role in shaping the public opinion, and the public opinion sets the political agenda, consequently media derives the decision makers to take a stand⁵. In democratic countries, it is well-know fact that the public elects officials to represent them. Therefore, elected officials will be accountable to the public; hence they do their best to meet their demands and needs⁶.

In view of the above, one could argue that politicians are always following up any changes in the public opinion. Elected officials – when becoming aware of any change in the public opinion and mood towards an issue – change their attitudes towards the same in order to avoid any reaction by the public in so far as that change does not prejudice the nation’s national interests.

In regards to who the media has an effect on, it is assumed for the purposes of this thesis that media can have a direct effect on governments or the people. Media may

⁵ Janda et al, *Op. Cit*, p 151.

⁶ Macridis, Roy C. (ed.), *Foreign Policy in World Politics*, 6th ed, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), pp. 165-169.

directly influence the people, who in turn may have influence on the government. Within this context, media impact on a government may cause changes to foreign policy either on the grounds of a perceived national requirement, or because they believe that the electorate would require some sort of change on the part of the politician. In this thesis, the media effect is taken in general terms, since what is more important to this study is the existence of the effect⁷.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The issue of knowing whether anything does or does not have an effect on the decision making process is not easy to define without carrying out the necessary research. However, in case of conducting any such research, the findings will apply only to the researched field and cannot be generalized. Governments make their decisions with the best interest of their citizens in mind. In other words, decision makers made their decisions to satisfy the desires of the people who elected them. However, the case is not always such, and there are many determinant factors that have impact on the decision making process. Accordingly, the answers reached in this thesis are not conclusive and absolute like the answers reached by other studies due to different impacts and influential elements. Thus, this study will attempt to prove or disapprove the existence of media effect on the decision making process by the American administration with regard to the foreign policy issues.

⁷ Janda et al, *op.cit*, pp 148-152.

This thesis will address the impact of media on U.S foreign policy for the period 1990 – 2000. For this purpose, I have reviewed the impact of media on U.S. foreign policy by studying and analyzing the CNN Effect on foreign policy making process in the United States of America, through the effect media may have on shaping the public opinion and setting the political agenda. This issue definitely leads us to the issue of the U.S military interventions abroad at the end of the last century, mainly the interventions in Iraq, Somalia and the Balkans. Hence, it becomes clear that the research sample is limited to these three places, where each has its particularities. Furthermore, the research sample is characterized by overseas U.S. military interventions justified on humanitarian grounds, whether by providing aid, preventing massacres or toppling dictatorships, as promoted by the American media.

Accordingly, the author of this thesis utilized the descriptive method of research through the close monitoring and follow-up of the events before, during and after the war in Iraq, as well as for the circumstances prevailed at the eve of the American military intervention in Somalia, the particularities of such interventions up to the withdrawal of the U.S marines from Mogadishu one year later. Yet, the model of the American intervention in the Balkans is more sophisticated, due to the nature of the war and the role of NATO in the region.

Through the descriptive method of research, it is necessary first to define the problem and suggest the relevant assumption, as detailed above, then to commence the

process of data collection. Data were mainly collected from books, relevant researches, articles, news articles and internet pages.

Following the thorough process of data collection, I have compiled the data into categories using the survey method and then conducted a case study of the U.S. military interventions in Iraq, Somalia and The Balkans. Within this framework, the causes of U.S. military intervention in the above three regions have been justified based on analyzing the media impact on foreign policy, as provided by Livingston in his study “*Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention*”, which can be easily utilized to understand the aspects of media impact on the U.S. military foreign policy, particularly in regards to the interventions conducted abroad in the period (1990 – 2000)⁸.

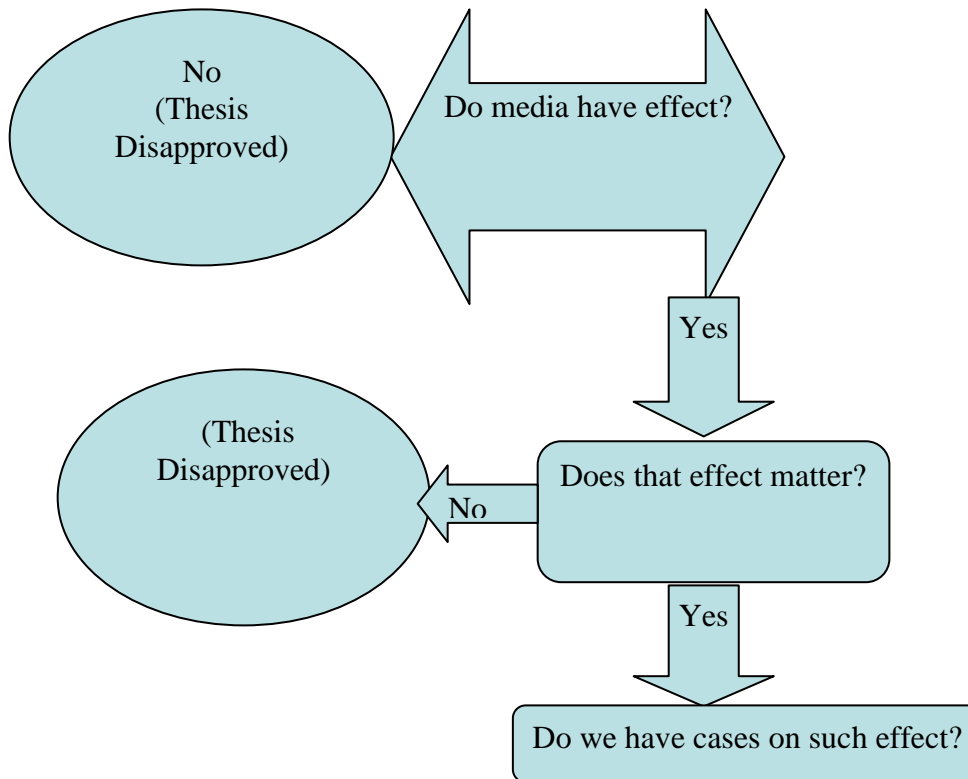
The primary question raised in the thesis is “*What are the media impacts on the foreign policy making in the United States of America?*” To this effect, the thesis will discuss the above question from several aspects, by tackling the direct impact of mass media on government, and on public opinion, as well as the impact of public opinion on the foreign policy making process, and other elements which could be ancillary to decision making. In this regard, secondary questions will also be raised and answered within the flow chart of this thesis. These questions could be as follows: Does media have effect? If “no” thesis disapproved, if “yes” another question will be raised, which “does

⁸ Steven Livingston. *Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effect According to Type of Military Intervention*, Research Paper R-18, (Harvard: The Joan Shorenstien Center, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, 1997), p 2.

that effect matter?”. If “no”, then the thesis is disapproved. If “yes”, the author will later present cases on this effect. For further clarification, see figure (1) below, which illustrates the thesis methodology flow diagram.

Figure (1): Methodology Diagram

Source: The Modern Media: Impact of Media on Foreign Policy⁹



Nonetheless, in order to prove or refute the thesis one must define the effect the media may or may not have on foreign policy making, an issue which will be reviewed below.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

⁹ Simon J. Hulme, *The Modern Media: Impact of Media on Foreign Policy*, Camberley: British Army Command and Staff College, Surrey, 1996), p. 26.

Mass media has a limited capacity to affect some issues and aspects of the U.S. foreign policy whenever national interests do not exist. Within this context, the media may have several effects. The first effect is media as accelerator. In this modality, media has a role in shortening the time of the decision-making process¹⁰. The second effect is media as impediment. This takes two forms, as an emotional inhibitor, and as a threat to operational security¹¹. The third effect of the media on foreign policy making is that the media as an agenda setting agent, as it is presumed that the coverage of humanitarian crises puts the issue in the foreign policy agenda and drives intervention¹².

Accordingly, mass media has become one of the most influential elements of power in any field, whether political, military, or economic. This power is viewed either from the perspective of bias for a specific party or influence to achieve the certain goals. This thesis intends to define the power of media in both political and military areas, since such two areas reflect the U.S. foreign policy. It is understood that during the information revolution, media has become a determinant agent of the political agenda and shaping public opinion about any issue, whether domestic or foreign. Chapter three will review some variants that constitute the theoretical framework of media power, namely liberal pluralism, the new right, and cultivation theories. Each of these theories provide a different account in terms of perspective on the impact and importance of mass media, but they all support, to varied degrees, Livingston's examination of the media effect.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Livingston , *op.cit.*, p. 3

¹² Ibid.

Limitations of the Study

In order to tackle the subject matter of this thesis, limitations of coverage trends, time, place, and resources will be reviewed.

The first limitation of this thesis is the coverage trends. The thesis will review the impact of news media on the U.S. foreign policy, through three military interventions abroad. The thesis doesn't tackle the impact of politics on media, nor the coverage trends media outlets may have while covering certain issue. Although the implementation of national foreign policy involves the use of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power, this thesis will illustrate a change in foreign policy using a military example. For the purpose of this thesis, "foreign policy" means military interventions abroad, particularly military interventions in Iraq, Somalia and The Balkans. Also, due to the global identity of contemporary media, "media" is used here to describe mass media all over the world, though the American media is the most influential.

The second limitation of this thesis is the time. This thesis tackles the impact of media on U.S foreign policy for the period 1990 – 2000, a period of ten years only. Ten years is a very short time to determine the impact of media on U.S foreign policy, mainly where such limited period witnessed three major U.S. military interventions, further to the fact that the United States have become the sole super power in the world as of 1990.

The third limitation of this thesis is the limitation of place. It is not easy to study the impact of media on the U.S. foreign policy while you are living outside the United States. Hence, monitoring how U.S. foreign policy is handled from outside constitutes a real limitation to conducting this study.

The fourth limitation of this thesis is the resources. The resources available on the subject matter of this thesis are limited to some extent. The last decade witnessed several developments. The Soviet Union disappeared as the main foe for the United States, and accordingly the U.S. national and strategic interests have changed. The last decade also witnessed a remarkable development in the area of information, by emergence of satellite and internet as advanced media tools. Such tools have started playing role in making foreign policy. Yet, the literature available on the impact of media on U.S. foreign policy is still limited.

General Review of the Thesis Chapters

This thesis consists of six chapters addressing the impact of media on foreign policy making process in the United States of America. Chapter one (Introduction) is considered a preliminary to the thesis, where it sets forth the methodology, theoretical framework, limitations and basic assumptions as well a brief summary about the thesis. Chapter two (Review of Literature) lists the different literatures pertaining to the subject matter of the thesis. This chapter reviews the works of other authors who already tackled the matter from different perspectives. Chapter three (Media Power Effects) sets forth the various media power theories that apply to the thesis. It also sheds light on the main effects of media, especially as an agenda setter. Chapter four (U.S. Military Interventions Abroad) reviews the three main American military interventions abroad in the period (1990 – 2000). This chapter reviews the American interventions in Iraq, Somali and The Balkans, reasons, nature and consequences. Chapter five (Conclusion & Recommendations) illustrates the conclusion and recommendations reached after completing the thesis.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many books and articles provide a sufficient amount of information to show that there is a close relationship between media and foreign policy, and that data indicates that the media has a strong impact on U.S foreign policy, particularly on military interventions abroad¹³. It is worth mentioning that most of the literature on the subject of this thesis tackle the relationship between the media and U.S foreign policy, while the issue of media impact on foreign politics is not widely discussed. In the recent years, a number of books have focused on dealing with the relationship between the media and U.S. foreign policy, and the extent of foreign policy makers' response in democratic communities to public opinion.

The Post-Cold War era is distinguished by American hegemony and military interventions all over the world. The recent decade has witnessed several military interventions by the United States of American throughout the world, particularly in Iraq, Somalia and the Balkans. Within this framework, Bennett and Paletz, in their book ***Taken By Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War (1994)***, provide an accurate and thorough examination of the media impact on U.S. foreign policy. The book includes articles written by twenty writers and analysts who reviewed the role played by media and public opinion on the development of the United States foreign policy-making decisions in the Gulf War, known as the “Desert Storm”.

¹³ Wilson Dizard, *Digital diplomacy: U.S. foreign policy in the information age*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001), p. 5.

The book traces the flow of news, public opinion and policy making from the rise of Saddam Hussien to power in 1979 including the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and ending with the defeat of Iraqi forces in Kuwait. This book clearly shows how media has become a pivotal factor in the foreign policy-making process. The articles edited in “*Taken By Storm*” examines the media debate which took place leading to the war, as well as the news coverage during and after the war, how the process of gathering news shaped the content, and the extent of media impact on public opinion and hence on decision making process, as well as on decision makers themselves. Also, the book shows how government works on utilizing the coverage of the war on its side¹⁴.

Taken By Storm sheds light on how journalism played a role in determining whose voices and what views are heard in the foreign policy coverage. The distinguished analysts and experts who participated in this book tackled the relationship between media, public opinion, and American foreign policy making in the late twentieth century¹⁵.

Global Television and the Shaping of World Politics (2001) by Royce J. Ammon provides in-depth analysis of the relationship between the news media and the shaping of politics, mainly in the United States. This book clearly reviews the impact of media on the American foreign policy, in regards to a series of events which have taken place around the world during the 90s, to which the news media managed to crystallize an

¹⁴ Lance W. Bennett et al (eds), *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994).

¹⁵ Ibid.

American position. Within this framework, the author talks about the so-called “telediplomacy” that accompanied the information revolution era. In this era, information are delivered to the decision making cycles in America through media, and the foreign policy decision making echelons started to deliver its message efficiently and quickly to any targeted government or country around the world.

The book also reviews one of the important effects media have on the American foreign policy, media as an accelerant to the decision making process. This book indicates that it is no more possible to wait in front of this flow of information coming from around the world, and that it is not justified at all for the American administration not to take a position towards so many cases around the world, especially the humanitarian cases like civil wars, riots and starvation.

In this book, Royce J. Ammon also reiterates on the fact that a substantial change has taken place on the diplomatic paradigm prevailed in the United States. The first paradigm “old diplomacy”, was distinguished by a method of practice that relied upon privacy and secrecy, a paradigm existed from the Renaissance until the World War I era. Yet, this paradigm has been succeeded by a new diplomatic paradigm, which is the “new paradigm”, which distinguished by methods of practice that rely upon openness. This change, according to Ammon, is attributed to the change in methods, where the world has passed from the era of print media to the era of television and electronic communications¹⁶.

¹⁶ Royce J. Ammon, *Global television and the shaping of world politics: CNN, Telediplomacy and Foreign Policy*, (North Carolina: Mcfarland & Co, 2001).

Damn Lies & the Public Relations Industry (1995) by John S. and Shelden Rampton presents a good example on how public relations sold the war in the Gulf. The book reviews the circumstances in which the former Iraqi President Saddam Hussien has invaded Kuwait in 1990, and how he entered in a long destructive war with Iran as well as killing thousands of his own people without the United States of America raising any objection. Even one week prior to invasion of Kuwait, US Ambassador April Glaspie showed sympathy with Hussien and urged him to appear on the American news channel ABC to explain Iraq's policies to the American people¹⁷.

The book also describes the way in which wealthy Kuwaiti families and young men were living through the national capitals of the world before the occupation of Kuwait. However, with the entrance of the Iraqi forces to Kuwait, the Kuwaitis commenced a public relations campaign by recruiting the most important public relation firms in the United States. The author claims that tens of millions were paid for the public relation campaign, in which even Senators and Representatives were recruited. The public relation firms started using the media to market the American war on Iraq as liberation of Kuwait by the Americans. Several press conferences and gatherings were organized with Kuwaitis just arriving from Kuwait to talk about the atrocities of the Iraqi occupation army. To this effect, a book titled *The Rape of Kuwait*, talking about the Iraqi

¹⁷ John C. Stauber et al., *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You: Lies, Damn Lies, and the Public Relations Industry*, (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995).

occupation of Kuwait was published. Copies of the book were purchased by the Kuwaiti embassy and distributed among American troops. *Damn Lies & the Public Relations Industry* considers the witness of a 15 year old Kuwaiti girl as the single most crucial aspect. In her testimony, Nayirah said that she saw the Iraqi troops entering the hospitals in Kuwait and taking babies out of the incubators, leaving them on the cold floor to die¹⁸.

This story was efficiently used and repeated by the American politicians, including the President, as well as the public relation and media outlets, to lobby for the war. According to the author, this story, which is completely untrue, played a crucial role in mobilizing the American public opinion in favor of the war against Iraq. If it were made evident that the story is a complete fabrication, and that Nayirah is a member of the Kuwaiti royal family and her father is the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States of America, many Americans would understand how media is manipulated to support the military action¹⁹.

In *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention* (2002) Robinson provides an insight into the so-called "CNN Effect": the saturation of western viewers with non-stop, real-time news footage from civil wars, which constitute a powerful plea for action. *The CNN Effect* examines the relationship between the state and its media and considers the role played by the CNN Effect in a series of "humanitarian" interventions in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Rwanda. Robinson challenges traditional views of media subservience and argues that sympathetic news coverage at

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

key moments in foreign crises can influence the response of Western governments. The book clearly states that television images of people suffering from civil war, famine, disease and natural disasters affect the public opinion and, consequently governments. TV, by providing footage of suffering children and innocents, mobilizes the governments into a policy of intervention for humanitarian reasons²⁰.

Also, Warren Strobel, a senior editor at *U.S News & World Report*, provides an insight into the impact media may have on U.S foreign policy. In his article "The Media: Influencing Foreign Policy in the Information Age" (1996) published in the *U.S Foreign Policy Agenda*, March 2000, Strobel makes it clear that U.S foreign policy is not made by the media, but in the information age, it can't be made without it. Thus, media is an integral part of the mechanism of the U.S foreign policy-making process. According to Stroble, U.S. foreign policy makers always feel the American public's attitude from the media, their advisers in the field of public affairs, and from their own experience²¹. As such, media reports are part of the elements which affect any decision maker in the United States of America.

However, in her article "The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?" (2001), Margaret H. Belknap discusses the relationship between mass media and the foreign policy making-process, and the impact the former may have on the latter. Belknap points out that a new reality has been created since the Vietnam War, in which

²⁰ Piers Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention* (London: Routledge, 2002)

²¹ Warren P. Stroble, "The CNN Effect". *The American Journalist Review Supplement*, (May 1996).

decision makers have to take into account the issue of exposure to media 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This new atmosphere has a significant effect on the process of decision making. To this effect, a theory has risen to explain this issue, called the “*CNN Effect*”, which represents the collective impact of all real-time news coverage on viewers or readers. The “*CNN Effect*” approaches the issue of media capability to influence the political agenda and shape public opinion, which in turn influences decision makers to respond to domestic and global events. Within this context, Belknap questions the decision of President Bush in 1992 to deploy American troops in Somalia after watching media reports showing starving Somali refugees. Less than a year later, according to Belknap, President Clinton decided to withdraw the American troops after watching media reports showing American soldiers dragged through the streets of Mogadishu.²²

These issues clearly confirm the power of media.

The relationship between media and military is a significant element in Margaret Belknap’s article “The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?”. Media seems very committed to publicizing the story, within its business of reporting the news that sells. However, the military feels strongly responsible to withhold information whenever it is life or death issue. Hence, a clash seems to be taking place between media and the military. “The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk” also reviews the media-military evolution from the Vietnam War until the current war on terrorism in Afghanistan. Whereas the Vietnam War was marked by the first television coverage, it was also the last war where reporters enjoyed access to the operations field without

²² Margaret H. Belknap, *The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk? USAWC Strategy Research Project*, (US Army War College, March 2001).

editorial censorship. In that war the American public watched the American soldiers in real killing and being killed, displacing Vietnamese civilians and destroying Vietnamese villages and towns. The example of Desert Storm was different than in Vietnam. In Desert Storm the Americans benefited from their interventions in Vietnam (1961-1975), Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989), and succeeded in establishing good relationship with the media in a widely covered war²³. The role of media in the Somali intervention (1992) was different, where the whole operation seemed to be plotted by media. In Bosnia and Kosovo (1995), the relationship between military and media witnessed a turning point, where the idea for embedding journalists first arose. In doing so, the American army hoped that embedded journalists would produce positive stories that serve the army by lobbying for American public support²⁴.

Within this context, Monica Pena "News Media and the Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process, CNN or Washington?"(2003) wrote about the media effects, saying the first effect is media as accelerator. In this modality, media has a role in shortening the time of decision-making process. The second effect is media as impediment; this takes two forms, as an emotional inhibitor and as a threat to operational security. The third effect of the media on foreign policy making is that the media acts as an agenda setting agent, as it is presumed that the coverage of humanitarian crises puts the issue on the top of the foreign policy agenda and drives intervention. "News Media and the Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process" puts special focus on the amount of coverage any event may enjoy. Within this context, media relevancy to what is going on could be verified

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

through the aspect of coverage, or lack of coverage. According to Pena, in some cases there is a tendency by media to cut back the amount of coverage as a response to lack of public interest²⁵.

Monica Pena considers that media and foreign policy making process influence each other, either directly or indirectly. However, the degree of mutual influence is proportional to other conditions, such as newsworthiness from the perspective of media, and policy uncertainty from the policy making point of view. The issue of the American national interests in the foreign policy making process is very pivotal. Pena states that existence of a national interest is a pre-condition for any American intervention abroad, and defined it as the shared priorities regarding relations with other nations²⁶.

Doris Graber, professor of political science at the University of Illinois at Chicago, wrote *Media Power in Politics* (1984), Doris Graber provides an insight into the impact of exposure to mass communication. *Media Power in Politics* discusses the effects of media on public opinion, and how public, in turn, strongly impacts the decision makers. In the United States of America, media is the main source of political information and it plays the role of information supplier to the general public. Graber makes it clear that all that Americans know is what they read in newspapers and watch in TV, and what is presented by news become the issue the public regards as important²⁷.

²⁵ Monica Pena. *News Media and the Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process, CNN or Washington?* Online Journal No. 32, April-May 2003, (cited 20 Feb 2005). Available from the World Wide Web: (<http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx>).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Doris A. Graber. *Media Power in Politics*, (Washington: Congressional Quality Press, Inc., 1984).

Graber believes that the portion of news that receives media attention, and the way this news is presented has important impact on the political level. From this perspective, governments around the world seek to control media, either formally or informally²⁸.

Media Power in Politics tackles the issue of media effect with the chain of effects created from exposure to mass communication. These effects resulting from the media are “*Awareness* → *Information* → *Attitudes* → *Behavior*”, indicating that the process of exposure to media ends by taking an action²⁹.

Furthermore, in her book *Media Power and American Politics* (1993), Doris Graber provides an insight into the impact of exposure to mass communication. In support of her argument, Graber makes reference to the role played by the muckrakers in the American political life, when they managed to uncover many wrongdoings by public office holders, and hence rectifying these. According to her, journalists have three ways to create political action. The first is that journalists can write stories about public policies with the intention of engendering a massive public reaction, which might lead to widespread demands for political remedies. Journalists may also write to arouse political elites, who are office holders or wield strong influence on office holders. And finally, journalists, with collaboration with public office holders, may prepare news stories that serve to introduce the desired political actions. She illustrates the process of news making

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

by journalists as journalistic investigation that ends with publication, which raises the public opinion, which demands for policy initiative that ends with policy consequences³⁰.

Concerning foreign policy in particular, Graber believes that media plays an effective role in defining that policy. Americans, by nature, do not prefer to watch foreign news, even preferring to follow an entertainment program to watching a very important interview with a world leader. Yet, when their interests are at stake, the issue is completely different. During the Vietnam War, the number of American journalists residing in Vietnam, as well as the number of foreign news viewers, is larger than their number after the end of the war. The example of the Gulf War (1991) provides further evidence of this, when the American public turned to CNN once again³¹.

Ray Heiber, in his book *Impact of Mass Media: Current Issues* (1995) approaches the issue of television pictures' impact on the public in America, as well as the public's role in influencing decision makers. *Impact of Mass Media* indicates clearly that the media influenced the U.S. military intervention in Bosnia, by creating a supportive public opinion for the war, which was the issue that forced the American administration to fight it. This supportive opinion was made through TV pictures and news reports broadcasted from the field. According to Heiber, without such pictures,

³⁰ Doris A. Graber. *Mass Media and American Politics*, 4th edition (Congressional quarterly Inc. Washington DC), 1993.

³¹ Ibid.

there would have been no public pressure on the American administration to intervene in Bosnia³².

Also, the work of Stephen Livingston, **Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention** (1997), strongly contributed to the accomplishment of this thesis. The way in which Livingston categorized the CNN Effect into possible media effects on foreign policy as accelerants, impediments, and an agenda-setting agency was very useful. According to Livingston, one clear effect of the media is to accelerate the process of decision making by shortening the amount of time available for policy makers³³. Under the pressure created by media to take action, policy makers find themselves forced to respond instantly, without even taking the necessary time for analysis and information gathering. Media as impediment comes in two forms, one is emotional inhibitor and operates through the public opinion, the other pertains to concern that media could be a threat to operational security through revealing secret information on military operations. During war in Vietnam, the so called Vietnam Syndrome appeared. This syndrome prevailed and occupied the American mentality, where it was believed that media coverage could undermine public support for the military operation and erode the morals of soldiers in battlefield, hence damaging the reputation and credibility of the United States of America in the world. Following the end of operations of the Gulf War, President George Bush the first stated “By God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all”. But, two years later, it became evident that these statements were not true when President Bill Clinton found himself forced to

³² Ray E. Hiebert. *Impact of Mass Media: Current Issues*, 3rd ed. (N.Y.: Longman Publishers, 1995).

³³ Livingston. *Op. Cit.* pp. 2-8.

withdraw the American forces from Somalia under the shadow of the American soldiers dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. As an agenda-setting agent, media would be capable of influencing foreign policy priorities by covering global issues and raising the profile of the event on the political ladder. The subdivision of media effects is better illustrated in chapter 4 of this thesis³⁴.

³⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

MEDIA POWER EFFECTS

Mass media has become one of the most influential elements of power in any field, whether political, military or economic. This power can be viewed either from the perspective of bias to one specific party or influence to achieve desired goal. This thesis will clarify and define the power of media in both the political and military fields, since such fields are reflected in the U.S foreign policy. It is understood that during the information revolution, media became a determinant agent of the political agenda and shaping public opinion about any issue, whether domestic or foreign. The thesis sets forth below some variants which dominate the discussion on the power of media, namely liberal pluralism, the new right, and cultivation. Each of these theories provide a different account, in terms of perspective, on the impact and importance of mass media, but they all support, to some degree, Livingston's examination of the media effect.

Theories of Media Power

Liberal Pluralism

This theory is know as the "liberal orthodoxy", and relates to the political impact of mass media. The theory came originally as a reaction to the "mass society" theory, which stipulates that individuality and differences were being eroded by a variety of processes, mainly mass production and mass consumption. Liberal pluralism is based on the fact that the mass media attracts a broad audience, all of whom hear the exact same

message. The exposure to such messages affects the audience, who lose their distinctive and identities, and makes them vulnerable to the power of the new medium. The propaganda of the Nazi regime was based on this theory. Moreover, American military interventions abroad after the end of the cold war were also based on this theory, particularly at the points of liberal pluralism referring to how media's impact can be clearly defined within the existence of the national interests³⁵.

New Right

The New Right theorists focus mainly on the broadcasting media, namely radio and television, while little attention is devoted to the printed word. In their own point of view, they see the broadcast media as practicing a malign influence by setting a political agenda which favors matters of importance to elite decision makers rather than to the general populace. In other words, the broadcasting media can easily distort the political agenda in a manner that serves the interests of the powerful minorities rather than the ordinary people. As for the newspapers, the impact is less since newspapers tend to satisfy their readers' appeal. Yet unless broadcasting media is subject to popular control, the role played by it will be limited to serving the interests of the news providers³⁶.

Cultivation

The Cultivation Theory is created and proved by George Gerbner, who completed his studies in journalism from Berkeley University, and prepared a series of studies on the impact of media while working in the Annenberg School of Communications at the

³⁵ John Street. *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 238-240.

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 240-241.

University of Pennsylvania. Gerbner's theory stemmed from the cultivation hypothesis, which focused on understanding the impacts of exposure to cultural images for long hours on shaping the viewer's concept of reality³⁷.

This theory states that exposure for long hours to media, especially television, creates and shapes the viewer's attitudes in a manner more consistent with the story version meant to be delivered by media, but not the reality itself. Television audiences are strongly influenced by what they watch on screen, which is reflected on their attitudes, actions, and positions towards these events³⁸.

Within this context, television serves as a socializing agent that educates viewers on the form of reality it wants. Hence, the solid base behind the Cultivation Theory states that viewers tend to have more faith in the media's version of reality when they are exposed to media.

It is worth mentioning that the Vietnam Syndrome was one of the main effects of the Cultivation Theory. People in the United States started to formulate opinions on the Vietnam War following the broadcast of the first pictures of war to the American public. The anti-war sentiment, which prevailed during Vietnam War, was the direct result of exposure to media. With the end of the cold war and commencement of the American military interventions abroad in early 90s, the media and communication witnessed an

³⁷ Gross G. Gerbner, et al, *Growing Up With Television: Cultivation Processes*, In: Bryant J, Zillmann, D (eds) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Reserch*. 2nd edition. (NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002).

³⁸ Ibid.

unprecedented revolution, where for the first time in history battlefield events overseas were broadcast live to the public, as the case was during the first Gulf war in 1991 and war in the Balkans.

Media Effects

The effects of media could better be defined according to Stephen Livingston, who explained the CNN Effect in his study "**Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention**". The media may have a strong effect on the foreign policy making process in the following manner: (1) acting as an agent of socialization, (2) shaping the public opinion³⁹, (3) setting a political agenda, (4) impeding the achievement of desired policy goals, and (5) accelerating policy and decision-making⁴⁰.

As media is a policy-setting agent, it could be both impediment to the achievement of policy objectives or accelerant of the process of policy making. Figure 2 illustrates the above five effects:

Figure (2): Conceptual Variations of Media Effects.

Socialization	Currently, the media is considered the most popular tool for educating people on what is going on, whether in regards to the domestic or foreign affairs. In the information age there are no
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³⁹ Janda et al, *Op. Cit.* pp 211-216.

⁴⁰ Livingston. *Op. Cit.* p 2.

	limitations on the spread of information, and people are only one click away from knowing what is going on around the world ⁴¹ .
Shaping Public Opinion	The process of socialization leads to shaping the public perception of particular events. Hence, media can play a pivotal role on shaping the public opinion towards any particular event ⁴² .
Accelerant	Media shortens decision making response time. Broadcast of news on a background of people starving or pleading assures quick response by public opinion and governments ⁴³ .
Impediment	This effect falls into two categories: 1 – Emotional, grisly coverage may undermine morale. Government attempts to sanitize war, as if it were merely fought on a video game system, as well as limit actual access to the battlefield. 2 – Global, real-time media constitutes a threat to operational security, as it may reveal a secret ⁴⁴ .
Agenda Setting Agent	Emotional, compelling coverage of atrocities or humanitarian crises reorders foreign policy priorities. Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti are said to be examples ⁴⁵ .

Media as Accelerant

⁴¹ Janda et al, *Op. Cit.* p. 211

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Livingston. *Op. Cit.* p. 2

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

One clear effect of media is to shorten the process of decision-making and the amount of time available for policy makers. Under the pressure performed by media on policy makers to take action, policy makers find themselves forced to respond instantly without taking the necessary time for analysis and information gathering. This fact even confessed by high ranked American officials, who attested to the media influence on decision making process. Former Secretary James Baker argued that instead of days and weeks in which to consider a response, decision makers now “react in minutes or hours”⁴⁶. A senior level policy adviser to the American administration also argued:

“There is really not time to digest this information, so the reaction tends to be from the gut, just like the reaction of the man on the street. It is worrisome that high level people are being forced essentially to act or to formulate responses or policy positions on the basis of information that is of very uncertain reliability”⁴⁷.

Also, former U.S Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger makes a very clear contrast between the pace of past and present decision making process:

“If you’re on the receiving end; if you’re trying to figure out what the policy ought to be, let me tell you: I would love to have had the period of time it took to decide we were going to war with Spain. When you have something like the Sarajevo event – marketplace massacre in February 1994 – and the President is in the office fifteen minutes later: come on!

⁴⁶ James Baker, “Report First, Check Later: Former Secretary of States James Baker, interview with Marvin Kalb”, Press/ Politics 1, number 2 (Spring, 1996), pp 3-9.

⁴⁷ Michael R. Beschloss, *Presidents, Television and Foreign Crises*, (Northwestern University: The Annenberg Washington Program in Communications Policy Studies, 1996), p. 21.

*The time frame and the amount of time you're permitted to think through the consequences of what you are going to do is much reduced*⁴⁸.

Thus, the news media, by virtue of its immediacy and its impact, has now become an actor in the foreign policy making process.

Media as Impediment

Media as impediment comes in two forms: one is as an emotional inhibitor and operates through the public opinion, the other pertains to the concern that media can be a threat to operational security by undermining the secrecy required with some types of military operations.

A) As Emotional Inhibitor

During the war in Vietnam, the so-called Vietnam Syndrome appeared. This syndrome prevailed and occupied the American mentality, where it was believed that media coverage could undermine public support for military operations and erode the morals of soldiers in battlefield, hence damaging the reputation and credibility of the United States. The U.S. President George Bush (senior) stated following the end of operations of the Gulf War, "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all"⁴⁹. But, two years latter, it became evident that these statements are not true, where

⁴⁸ Ibid, p 31.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

President Bill Clinton found himself forced to withdraw the American forces from Somalia on the shadow of the American soldiers dragged in the streets of Mogadishu⁵⁰.

B) As Threat to Operational Security

Some military operations are very sensitive to media exposure. Maintaining the secrecy of operational security during wars and military operations is essential. Therefore, media could be a grave obstacle to the successful performance of such operations simply by revealing them.

Media as Agenda setting Agent

The third and final effect of media is as an agenda setting agent. Within this role, the media would be capable of influencing foreign policy priorities by covering global issues and raising the profile of the event on the political ladder. Livingston explains that the media acts as an agenda setting agent, arguing that “the choices and selections of national interests are too heavily weighted in favor of what happens to get covered by CNN or other media”⁵¹. This thesis will consider the implications of the media in all three aspects; however, it will not look at the impact of the media as a threat to operational security.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Livingston. *Op. Cit.* p. 6.

Media Effect: Three Cases

As shown in Livingston's clarification of the CNN Effect, media has several major effects. It is very pivotal to know the significance of these effects. To do so, the thesis will consider three cases in which the role of media was clear. The three cases are: Iraq, Somalia and the Balkans. These specific cases have been chosen for several reasons. The intervention in Iraq gives a good example of the combined effect of both media and strategic interests the USA. already has in the region. Somalia is a relatively discrete operation for America and offers some clear examples with which to illustrate this thesis. However, the Balkans is much more complex example of American military intervention.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEWS MEDIA & AMERICAN POLITICS

The news media is considered a very powerful source for influencing the American politics. Television, newspapers, radio, magazines and the internet are considered the main sources of information for public in America. Hence, the news media coverage of any event around the world would contribute to influencing both decision makers, as well as the public towards such an event, because the policy makers and the public obtain most of their information from the media⁵². However, this effect media may have on American politics is conditional and depends on five elements. Royce Ammon clarified these elements as:

“First, the opportunity of news media to affect American politics depends on the issue itself: global crises or complex humanitarian emergencies are the most likely candidates. In other words, new media ability to affect politics is issue specific. The second and the third are inter-related: the events must be rapidly unfolding, and/ or there must be an absence of clear policy from the decision makers towards such an issue. In other words, in addition to fast-breaking events, there must be a leadership vacuum. Fourth, news media must have access to the unfolding events and be able to operate without restrictions. And, finally, the situation must become highly visible to a wide viewing audience”⁵³.

⁵² Janda et al. *Op. Cit.* p.749

⁵³ Royce J. Ammon, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

This indicates that the news media impact on politics depends on a variety of elements, where the most ambient conditions for media to have strong impact on politics are the political crises, humanitarian emergencies and civil wars.

News Media in a Democratic Society

The mass media is constituted the cornerstone of democracy. It is considered the main source of political information voters obtain to base their decisions on during elections. Also, the news media raises debate around issues that are of concern to the public, forming a watchdog to rely on for uncovering any wrongdoings or misuses of power by those in office⁵⁴.

In the United States, media reflect the values and complexion of the society and work to preserve the basic tenets upon which that society has been constructed. The first amendment to the U.S Constitution sets forth the foundations of the press freedom. Yet, the press laws in force in the United States provide the required protection and legal rights journalists need and not contained in the Constitution⁵⁵.

In democratic societies, news media serves as a tool to monitor developments, stress on the most relevant developments that touch the interests of any nation, provide a platform for debate and raising a diverse range of views, holding officials accountable to

⁵⁴ Denis McQuail. *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest*. (Sage, London, 1993), p. 183

⁵⁵ Fredric A. Ammert, *The Media and Society* [online]. U.S Dept of State Website, 2002 (cited 8 Nov 2005). Available from the World Wide Web: (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/media/files/media3cd.htm>).

misuse of power, as well as to educate the public and encourage them to learn, choose and become involved in the political process⁵⁶.

However, the communication flow in democratic societies must move in two directions: from the citizens to the government and from the government to the citizens. In the United States, the information never passes directly from the government to the public without passing through the media. Accordingly, media serve both the majoritarian and the pluralist models of democracy by improving the quality of information transmitted to people about the government as well as the policy makers⁵⁷.

The news media usually transmit the information from the public to the government by reporting the public's reactions to the acts and policies of the government, whether domestic or foreign⁵⁸. Also, media in America creates and reflects the public opinion by defining the news and suggesting courses of action by the government to such news⁵⁹.

However, in democratic society – where freedom of the press is guaranteed by law – media may become an antidemocratic force by supporting the status quo. The news could be more entertaining than informing by supplying rumors, scandals, sex and

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Junda et al, *Op. Cit.* p 219

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

violence – such as the case for some American media outlets nowadays.⁶⁰. Also, commercial mass media privately owned may focus on the private lives of politicians and their family members rather than on the ideologies, hence leaving voters with paid political propaganda serving the interests of those who pay for the ad⁶¹.

News Media & Public Opinion

The news media and public opinion are interrelated elements, where the public opinion is based on what the media feeds them, and the public's interest in certain issue shifts the media attention to such issue. It is well evident that the news media play a pivotal role in shaping the public opinion towards certain issues, whether domestic or foreign⁶². Yet, that impact appears clearly through the activity of the opinion leaders who take the lead in establishing the public's opinion towards a certain issue. The opinion leaders *“have an influence on the attitudes of the people. Opinion leaders are not people that meet the traditional view of what social/ economic strata. When these opinion leaders were questioned, it seemed that the media was influential upon them. Therefore, the media influences “opinion leaders, and they, in turn, influence other people”*⁶³.

Within this context, media have a strong impact on the public opinion through educating the people how to think about what is taking place around them *“the press may*

⁶⁰ McChesney RW, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp 59-61.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p 176.

⁶³ Ibid.

not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about”⁶⁴. This means that media serve is a determinant element in defining the problems and evaluating the significance of such problems; hence raising the attention of the government towards such issues.

Impact of the News Media on Public Policy

In view of the impact media may have on public opinion, it is remarkable that media too have an impact on public policy through its impact on public opinion. In the information age, media became an element of decision making. Richard H. Solomon, President on the United States Institute of Peace and a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State (1997) described the role information is playing in the public policy, *“The information is taking the initiative in policy-making away from governments. How policy makers react to and cope with the fact that their hands are being forced by the mass media has created a new set of challenges for diplomacy”*⁶⁵.

In addition to the political agenda setting effect, media created a substantial change on the form of public policy by replacing the traditional methods of diplomacy with non-traditional methods of diplomacy. By 1991, the mass communication created what is called the “diplomacy via television” or what is so called the “telediplomacy”⁶⁶. A form different than previous forms of diplomacy by high speed, functionality and

⁶⁴ McCombs M, Reynolds A. *News Influence on Our Pictures of the World*. In: Bryant J, Zillmann D. (ed) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 2nd edition. (NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002), p. 163.

⁶⁵ Royce J. Ammon, *Op. Cit.*, p. 49.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 70-72.

flexibility. This issue has been clearly reflected by the former American Secretary of State, James Baker, who stressed the importance of new media saying:

“The CNN Effect has revolutionized the way policy makers have to approach their jobs, particularly in the foreign policy arena, and it started frankly only about 1987, or 88, whenever CNN began their CNN international program. We learned very early, in 1989, that the best way for us to get a message to a foreign head of state was to get on the tube, to get out there on CNN. Particularly in the Gulf War, we knew that Saddam Hussien watched CNN. You didn’t send a message to the embassy or an ambassador; that delayed it a lot”⁶⁷.

Therefore, the news media intensely contributed to the formulation of the public policy in the United States, since media is the best and most efficient way for both government and public to talk to each others, as well as for a government to speak to another government during times of crises.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p 74.

CHAPTER V

THE MEDIA & U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTIONS ABROAD

National interests are considered a determinant factor in the foreign policy-making process. For democratic nations, “*national interest is simply the shared priorities regarding relations with the rest of the world*”⁶⁸. In regards to risks that threaten the United States’ national security, three hierarchal categories have been established in this regard, A, B and C. The “A” category formed by threats to American survival (like the one the Soviet Union represented); the “B” list, formed by imminent threats to U.S. interests (but not to its survival) such the one Iraq, Iran and North Korea represent, and the “C” list, formed by “contingencies that indirectly affect U.S. security but do not directly threaten U.S. interests”, like Kosovo, Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti.⁶⁹

With the end of the cold war and the collapse of the USSR in 1989, the United States of America found itself without a clear definition of its national interests, since there was no defined enemy. However, the enemy didn’t wait long to appear, or the United States of America didn’t wait long to create such enemy.

⁶⁸ J. Nye. “Redefining the National Interest”, *Foreign Affairs*. (July/ August 1999), p. 23

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 26.

War on Iraq (1991-1992)

Long time has elapsed after Vietnam War until the United States of America carried further significant military interventions abroad. The first was the “Dessert Storm Operation” in 1991 to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. This military intervention by the United States of America came in the first instance to protect America’s national interests in the Gulf region by preventing any Iraqi expansion to the south. And this military intervention was also marked by the impact of media. But, before launching the war, the American administration needed a principal justification for the war, where it found demonizing Saddam Hussien is the best one. To that effect, special focus was made on the narrative, albeit such narrative is most likely built on fabrications.

During the first Gulf War with Iran, Iraq has become indebted for US\$ 14 billions to Kuwait and other Arab countries⁷⁰. Iraq hoped to repay its debts by raising the oil price through production cuts. Instead, Kuwait increased production, lowering the oil prices, in an attempt to pressure Iraq to settle the border problems between the two states. Kuwait, also exploited the war conditions between Iraq and Iran and started to drill several oil wells inside the Iraqi territories, as well as it built so many military outpost on the Iraqi soil along the border line. Iraq, which considers its war with Iran as a collective service to the whole Arab world and Gulf region, hoped that the Gulf states should cancel their debts on it. But, Kuwait refused to cancel Iraq’s debts, and desisted from raising the oil price by reducing production. Therefore, on August 2nd, 1990, the Iraqi troops crossed the

⁷⁰ From Wikipedia, *the free encyclopedia*, *Gulf War*. (cited 18 June 2005). Available from the World Wide Web ([http:// www. En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War](http://www.En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War)).

border line with Kuwait and marched into the country occupying all strategic facilities, including the Emir's palace⁷¹.

The Emir and the Kuwait royal family members as well as many other officials and businessmen fled from the country towards Saudi Arabia first, then to Europe and U.S.A, where they started mobilizing the public opinion against the occupation of their home land. Survivors started narrating very emotional stories about what is happening in Kuwait. The stories of torturing civilians and killing children were the very influential upon the American Public opinion. On October 10, 1990, a 15 years old Kuwaiti girl, using the name "Nayirah", appeared before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, who gave the following testimony. "I just came out of Kuwait. While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers come into hospitals with guns. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators and left the children to die on the cold floor. It was horrifying. I could not help but think of my nephew, who was born premature and might have died that day as well"⁷². This testimony was one of the good reasons which mobilized the American public opinion, and made Congressman John Porter to say, "We've passed eight years in the existence of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. We've had scores of hearings about human rights abuses throughout the world we have never heard, in all this time, in all circumstances, a record of inhumanity and brutality and sadism as the ones that the witness have given us today.... All the countries

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Kathleen Jamieson & Paul Waldman. *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists and the Stories that Shape the Political World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 15.

of the world must join together and take whatever action may be necessary to free the people of Kuwait”⁷³.

Though Bush knows that the story of throwing babies of incubators is not confirmed, he used it as a tool to mobilize public support for the war in Iraq since he knows well that the Americans stand strongly against human rights violations. In a speech in Mashpee, Massachusetts on November 1st,1990, U.S. President George W. Bush said about the Iraqi President Saddam and the Iraqi forces, “They have tried to silence Kuwaiti dissent and courage with firing squads, much as Hitler did when he invaded Poland. They have committed outrageous acts of barbarism. In one hospital, they pulled twenty two premature babies from their incubators, sent the machines back to Baghdad, and all those little ones died”⁷⁴. By making this story available to the press, Bush’s administration succeeded in justifying the war – since it became all about human rights and not oil.

The media power also played a role in war beginning and ending time. The War began during America’s evening network broadcast, and the air attack started just few moments before 7:00 p.m., a time which is very appropriate for live coverage⁷⁵. Attacks on Iraq halted after the broadcast of the footages of the Mutla Gap wreckage. On 28 February, extensive TV coverage was given to the death and destruction caused by the coalition warplanes to Iraqi soldiers escaping through the Mutla Gap North of Kuwait

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p 16.

⁷⁵ Royce J. Ammon, *Op. Cit.* p 66.

towards the Iraqi territories. As a result President Bush ordered for ceasing the attacks. Officials from Bush's administration admitted this fact, mainly Richard Haass, member of the National Security Council (N.S.C) who said that "television coverage of the carnage played a part in Bush's decision to halt the war"⁷⁶. Likewise, American Undersecretary of Defense, Paul D. Wolfowitz, revealed that "the decision to end the war when we did is one that may have been influenced by television"⁷⁷. Once again, the circumstances of the decision to the halt military operations against Iraqi troops show how important the human element is – as Bush's administration firmly believes that the Americans would not accept this way of genocide against Iraqi fled troops.

Media & the Case of Kurds & Shi'it

With the defeat of Saddam troops in Kuwait, the Kurds and Shi'it revolted against the Baath's rule in the north and south. Hence, the media power influence didn't cease with the end of the attacks on Iraqi troops and installations and throwing Saddam's troops out of Kuwait. The Kurds, as well as the Shi'it, failed in their insurrection against Saddam's regime. They were pursued and tortured by the Iraqi army, whereby thousands escaped in the north to the mountain borders with Turkey and in the south to Iran. Meanwhile, the coalition troops didn't provide the necessary protection to them, nor they had the intention to do so. President Bush himself said at that time that the US-led coalition is not ready "to settle all the internal affairs of Iraq". In another word, they can't

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

do any think for the Kurds, or for the Shi'it⁷⁸. Several days later Bush again stated, “American lives are too precious for us to get sucked into a civil war between Saddam hussein’s forces and Kurdish refugees fleeing for their lives”⁷⁹.

With the escalated attack against Kurds in the north, Kurds refugees became a good subject for TV and more focus was placed by media on their misery. This issue directly affected the public opinion in the United States of America, where the polls showed support for helping them. NPR commentator said that “within two weeks period, the President had been forced, under the impact of what Americans and Europeans were seeing on television, to reconsider his hasty withdrawal of troops from Iraq”⁸⁰. In a corrective statement to his previous position, Bush said at a press conference, “No one can see the pictures or hear the accounts of this human suffering and not be deeply moved”⁸¹. Accordingly, the U.S. launched the largest humanitarian relief operation with dispatching 5,000 soldiers and sufficient air cover to prevent Iraqi aircrafts from operating in major parts of Northern Iraq. In less than two weeks, the Bush Administration had moved from a policy of non-intervention to a policy of providing the Kurds with a de facto state in the northern parts of Iraq⁸². This change in Bush’s position is mainly attributed to the impact of media, where global television had affected the outcome of foreign – policy decision making process.

⁷⁸ Philip Sieb. “The Interplay of Media and Politics in Foreign Policy”. (Harvard International Review, Vol 22, No. 3, Fall 2000), p 60.

⁷⁹ Royce J. Ammon. *Op. Cit.* p 97.

⁸⁰ Sieb, *Op. Cit.* p. 60.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ammon, *Op. Cit.* p 97.

In comparison, the Shi'it plight never received the same amount of coverage by international media outlets, so it never existed in the foreign policy agenda of the United States of America, or the western countries. Within this framework, a senior British official made it clear at that time by saying "We are under no pressure to do something about crises that are not on TV"⁸³. The case of Kurds and Shiit depicts the real role of media as an agenda setting agent. In the Kurds case, media effectively functioned as an agenda setter by virtue of its existence, while it played the same role in the Shiit case, but by virtue of its absence this time.

INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA (1993-1994)

Next to Vietnam, Somalia may be the clearest case of media influence on the United States foreign policy. It is argued that television played the crucial role in the U.S. intervention in Somalia as supported by the chronology of events prior to that intervention. There is no doubt that the appearance of Somalia in the American media just immediately before the changes in the U.S. policy in August 1992 influenced the decision of Bush's administration⁸⁴. Yet, the reason beyond the sudden appearance of Somalia in the American news is not well defined, the Ethiopian model could be the most likely, which is the famine spreading there. It is believed that some American senators and influential figures within Bush's administration made considerable efforts to publicize

⁸³ Ibid. p. 133.

⁸⁴ Jonathan Mermin. "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: Thy Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy". (Political Science Quarterly; Fall 97, Vol 112, Issue 3), p. 383.

events in Somalia, interpreting them as a crisis, and encouraging the U.S. to respond to achieve internal and electoral goals⁸⁵.

Accordingly, the pictures captured for starving Somali people mobilized the public opinion in America towards launching a relief campaign to help Somalis, then sending American troops to put an end for the starvation and the fighting. Bernard C. Cohen argued that “in the 1990s, television has demonstrated its power to move governments. By focusing daily on the starving children in Somalia, a pictorial story tailor-made for television, TV mobilized the conscience of the nation’s public institutes, compelling the governments into a policy of intervention for humanitarian reasons”⁸⁶.

Early 1992, starvation and civil war spread all over Somalia in the wake of toppling Mohammed Siad Barre, who had ruled the country for more than two decades. In January 1992, the U.N. Security Council called for a ceasefire and peaceful settlement for the conflict. In March, the ceasefire went into effect, but fighting over food continued between Somali factions. The vast majority of Somalis became threatened with the starvation, while more than 300,000 Somalis already have died.⁸⁷ In April 1992, the Security Council authorized a military operation, and on 12 August the UN announced plans to send 500 soldiers to protect the international relief efforts in Somalia. On 14 August, the White House announced taking charge of the airlift, and the 500 soldiers

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Bernard C. Cohen, “A view from the Academy” in *W. Lance Bennet and David L. Paletz, Eds., Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 9-10.

⁸⁷ Mermin, *Op. Cit.* p 383.

arrived with the support of U.S. warships. Thereafter, Bush administration announced that the United States of America would send troops to Somalia if the Security Council passed a resolution authorizing it to do so, which it did on 3 December. Accordingly, the first phase of Operation Restore Hope hit the shores of Somalia on 9 December⁸⁸.

Within this period, the presence of media influence was so remarkable and significant. A series of stories and news reports have been broadcasted by the four main American media outlets, ABC, NBC, CBS and CNN. Such reporting included footages of Somali children starving to death and showed that the whole nation is in risk, the issue which mobilized the conscience of the Americans. On August 13, an ABC story described Somalia as "on the verge of committing suicide, a country in a state of utter and complete and hopeless misery, where one finds graves in athletic fields, graves in farm fields, and graves along city streets"⁸⁹. During the first half of May 1992, CNN covered all aspects of the crisis in Somalia by airing eight stories, the issue which left a remarkable impact on the public as well as on the decision makers in the United States⁹⁰. Figure no (3) below shows the monthly coverage of Somalia on main American media outlets (ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC) in 1992.

Figure (3): Monthly Media Coverage of Somalia⁹¹

	Times in Minutes	Stories over 30 seconds
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⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ _____. "Somalians Fight Over Meager Rations". *CNN Website*, 11 May 1992. (cited 20 Sept 2005). Available from the World Wide Web (<http://www.cnn.com>).

⁹⁰ Mermin, *Op. Cit.* p 385.

⁹¹ Ibid.

April	0.0	0
May	0.3	0
June	0.2	0
July	5.7	2
August	48.3	18
September	13.0	6
October	3.8	1
November	16.3	4

Yet, figure no (4) below depicts the phases of Somali coverage on major American media outlets (ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC) in 1992:

Figure (4): Phases of Somali Media Coverage⁹²

Phase	Dates	Total Time (minutes)	Time/ week (minutes)
I	1 January – 21 July	6.5	0.2
II	22 July – August 13	15.4	4.7
III	14 August – 18 Sep	55.3	10.8
IV	19 Sep – 8 Nov	4.2	0.6
V	9 Nov – 25 Nov	16.3	6.7

⁹² *ibid.*

As it is evident that media played a role in dragging the United States of America into Somalia, it is also evident that media played the same role in regards to the American decision to leave Somalia. This is evident by the events that took place twelve months later, when Somali militants dragged the American Marines at the streets of Mogadishu. These scenes were aired by the major news outlets in America, mainly CNN, whereby it created a public opinion supportive to immediate withdrawal from Somalia. Hiebert Ray attributed this issue to the fact that media was involved in all stages of the American intervention in Somalia, beginning from the mobilization into the arrival of Marines at Somalia shores ending with the withdrawal, "... when American military forces moved into Somalia as part of a humanitarian campaign to get food to starving people, the invasion by the news media was almost as big as the invasion by the marines"⁹³.

INTERVENTION IN BALKANS (1994 – 1999)

The impact of media on the U.S intervention in the Balkans is quietly different than that in African Horn region. In the Balkans, the U.S troops are still deployed conducting control and humanitarian operations. Also, the geographic location of the Balkans is unlike that of Somalia, the former is in Europe, in an area very close to the NATO's domain. Further, the military intervention has not been conducted by the United States of America alone, but also by troops from NATO member states.

⁹³ Hiebert, *Op. Cit.* p. 339.

The intervention of the United States of America in the Balkan's conflict emerged immediately following the broadcast of the atrocities committed by Serbs. The turning point, which set Sarajevo on foreign policy agenda of the United States, was the massacre of Sarajevo market⁹⁴. On February 5, 1994, a mortar shell has exploded in the main market square in Sarajevo killing 68 and wounding 200 people. The BBC correspondent described the incident as "the worst single atrocity in the 22-month old conflict between Bosnia's Serbs, Muslims and Croats... Some people were literally torn apart. Heads and limbs were ripped off bodies"⁹⁵. Following the massacre, the USA abandoned the hands-off policy towards The Balkans, and persuaded the NATO to declare a zone around Sarajevo free from Bosnian Serb heavy weapons. In this way, the media, in general, and the CNN, in particular, played a pivotal role in mobilizing the American public opinion for the military intervention in The Balkans. Yet, for CNN, the war in The Balkans is unlike previous wars, where a new rival smoothly presented the atrocities of the war to the public around the globe, it is the World Wide Web. Highlighting the role of CNN in alerting the nations towards several domestic and foreign issues, James A. Traficant, Jr, Democrat Senator for Ohio - during a Senate hearing - stated that CNN is playing the same role the CIA plays. "... You know we learned about the collapse of the Soviet Union on CNN ... the fall of Berlin Wall on CNN. We learned about the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam on CNN. And I made a statement once, why did we fund the CIA,

⁹⁴ Strobel, *Op. Cit.* p 33.

⁹⁵ BBC News, "Market massacre in Sarajevo". BBC Website on 6 Feb 1994. (cited 8 May 2005). Available from the World Wide Web: ([http:// www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com))

why don't we hire the CNN?"⁹⁶. By this statement, Traficant highlighted the important role media, in general, and CNN, in particular, plays.

Media reports, especially TV, on refugees, school children, women and old men being slaughtered in Sarajevo and later in Kosova constituted a driving factor for the U.S. and European military intervention⁹⁷. To this effect, Madleine Albright, Former Secretary of State – then USA ambassador to the United Nations, stated before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "Television's ability to bring graphic images of pain and outrage has heightened the pressure both for immediate engagement in areas of international crisis and immediate disengagement when events do not go according to plan"⁹⁸. The same issue has been made very clear by Sylvana Foa, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who strongly stressed on the role of TV and media coverage on changing the political attitudes and affecting decision makers. To Foa, "Television is our lifeline to the politicians who want nothing to do with us or hope that the problem will go away from public consciousness Without you (television coverage), we have no weapon at all"⁹⁹. Hiebert Ray, also, tackled the issue of television pictures impact on the American public, the issue which consequently affects and pushes the foreign policy makers towards action. "The genocidal war in Bosnia will be the latest example of an overseas crisis in which haunting television pictures arouse the American People to demand that their government do something. If television does not exist, such public

⁹⁶ Anelia Dimitrova. "Nightmares in the Nightly News: CNN Covers Atrocities in Kosovo". (East European Quarterly, No., Vol 35, March 22, 2001), p 4.

⁹⁷ Hiebert, *Op. Cit.* pp. 344-46

⁹⁸ Dimitrova, *Op. Cit.* p 6.

⁹⁹ Ammon, *Op. Cit.* p 88.

pressure on President Clinton might not be growing; Secretary of State Warren Christopher might not be leaving (...) to consult with allies on military and other options”¹⁰⁰. Accordingly, it is clear that the media influenced the U.S. military intervention in Bosnia, by creating a supportive public opinion for the war, the issue that forced the American Administration to fight it. This supportive opinion was made through TV pictures and news reports broadcasted from the field¹⁰¹.

Three Cases: Comparative Review

Having reviewed the three American interventions abroad for the period (1990 – 2000), it became evident that they were all interventions to handle B and C category risks that threaten the American national interests – as shown by Nye, J. in his definition of the American national interests. Such risks do not originally affect the American existence. The war on Iraq came as a response to “B” category risk, which threatened the American interests abroad, namely the economic interests of the United States in the Gulf region, as well as a risk that threatened the allies of America in the region. Whereas it is not justified for the American administration to send its sons to war overseas for economic reasons, the U.S. Administration found appropriate to focus on Saddam’s violations of human rights, which were countless, either against his people or against his neighbors in Iran and Kuwait.

As for the American intervention in Somalia and The Balkans, it was an intervention to handle “C” category risks. Such risks threaten the values of human rights, values that

¹⁰⁰ Hiebert, *Op. Cit.* p 345.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

America strongly believes in. Somalia was suffering from a starvation and civil war, where death existed everywhere. Media in America reported footages of starving children and refugees escaping the civil war, the issue which contributed to mobilizing the American public opinion in favor of intervening for helping civilians. Thus, the American intervention in Somalia came in a form of a media-military campaign that aimed at saving thousands from death and providing food and protection to others.

The circumstances in The Balkans were somehow different. Though the American intervention aimed also for protecting civilians from death and destruction, the geographic location of The Balkans and its direct impact on the NATO domain played a role in mobilizing the American administration and other western governments to intervene.

The role of Media was so prominent in the above three cases, by mobilizing and shaping the public opinion through a series of reports, accounts and footages. Such a role was supplementary to other factors, including economic or strategic. The developments of every case show how important each factors is. As for the intervention in Iraq, media served as an accelerant agent, by shortening the process of decision making as Iraq was then already at the top of the American agenda due to the type of threat Iraq was forming.

In the cases of Somalia and the Balkans, media served as both accelerant and agenda setting agent. Somalia never had been an American foreign policy priority. After an intensive coverage by the American main media outlets for the atrocities committed

there, Somalia jumped to the top of the America foreign policy agenda. The continuous media coverage of events in Somalia also shortened the process of decision making – the American administration decided to dispatch marines there. But with the lack of national and strategic interests there and with the first loss the American marines sustained, the Administration decided to withdraw forces from Somalia. And as mentioned by Ambassador Albright the TV pictures contribute to the process of decision making in so far as issues run smoothly – as was the case in Iraq and Balkans – but if issues didn't run as planned – as was the case in Somalia – decisions reconsidered¹⁰². Accordingly, the American Administration withdrew its forces from Somalia, announcing that the United States of America has no national interests in the African horn that are stake.

¹⁰² Dimitrova. *Op. Cit.* p. 6.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Notwithstanding the backward in the size of coverage allocated to foreign affairs in the American major televisions and newspapers, its large number as well as the revolution in the information technology and communication sector increased the amount of exposure of U.S. audience to news from around the world. Nowadays, the audience in America can set and watch the latest news around the world from early morning until late hours night for seven days a week¹⁰³.

The prolonged hours of exposure to news reports published via various mass media outlets may have a significant impact on public. This impact constitutes a momentum, which derives the emotions of the public in order to interact with what is going around them. Thus, the public influences their governments and forces them to do something – which could be a form of military intervention, particularly when the national interests are at stake.

Yet, this thesis evidences that the level of media effect depends on many factors, the issue which shows that media is not the only force pushing for policy making changes. The media force may act in conjunction with other factors – most importantly, national and strategic interests – to influence the process of foreign policy decision-

¹⁰³ David Boren et al (eds.) *Preparing American's Foreign Policy for the 21st Century*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), pp 279-285.

making. This thesis shows through the case of Somalia operation that media alone doesn't have the power to shape the foreign policy in the United States of America. But – in conjunction with other factors – media has the power to reach and affect some issues and aspects of foreign policy. In essence, the media influence depends greatly on the effect it is trying to achieve and on what it is attempting to act.

By analyzing several media effect scenarios in this thesis, I can conclude that the primary thesis' question has been clearly answered. Through addressing the secondary questions of this thesis, it became evident that media can have an effect on audience, an effect that shapes the public opinion, which accordingly affects the policy makers.

The effect of media was to some extent clear in the policy of the United States of America (1990 – 2000), where the American administration was actually in need for what may justify some of its foreign positions. In Iraq, for instance, the exploitation of media was apparent when the government of Kuwait recruited American largest public relation firms in order to circulate the Kuwaiti narrative to the decision making centers in the United States of America, United Nations and around the world. As well as the American administration utilized the media to justify its war on Iraq through shedding light on the human nature of this involvement. Through reporting on Saddam's atrocities, the United States of America succeeded in presenting its war on Iraq as a campaign to maintain the human rights, democracy and peace values, values strongly respected by the American public and to fight tyranny and terror, issues strongly denounced by Americans.

As shown above, Somalia has never been a priority for the United States of America. But for several political and human considerations, Somalia became through a series of press reports at the top of the American foreign policy agenda. It is known that Africa is the country of starvations, civil war, riots and illness, where life there equals death. But, through strong media focus on starvation and civil war in Somalia, the American administration – supported by U.N resolutions – succeeded in deploying its forces to protect the relief workers, in a mission with a declared goal: restore hope to the victims of war and epidemics.

However, the deployment of the American marines was accompanied by a deployment of an army of journalists from around the world, in view of promoting the efforts made by the United State of America to maintain the human values. But with the first losses sustained by the American marines, which were actually covered by media, the administration took a decision for withdrawing its forces from Somalia. The case of The Balkans also represented the effect media may have on foreign policy making process.

Whereas it became evident that media has impact on the foreign policy making process, the question remains on the degree and amount of impact a TV, newspaper or Internet report may have on audience. This thesis concludes that the media power acts strongly and influentially when coupled with other factors.¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

Recommendations

This thesis depends on other studies available on the impact of media on foreign policy-making process. Also, the thesis focuses on the coverage of three U.S. military interventions abroad; particularly the direct media impact on the three U.S. military interventions as forms of foreign policy.

As it is well evident that military intervention usually takes place where there has been media coverage of an event, and that media coverage only occurs because there is some interest for the country in that event. It is recommended in the future to consider the accuracy of news media presented in television, newspaper, radio or even the internet. The source and accuracy of the information posted on the internet must be double checked, since there is no party monitoring or censoring the information contained there.

In any future studies, it is also recommended to review the mechanisms and circles of foreign policy-making process in the United States. In a democratic society like the United States, the President is considered the highest echelon of foreign policy making, whether in regards to the American diplomatic relations or dispatching troops abroad. Yet, the American foreign policy making circles vary. The Congress is a major player in this regard, as well as the Department of State (DoS), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC). Within this framework, one can study the impact of media on certain circle, and the consequent impact on other circles. Since the American public opinion is very important, it is also recommended to study the

mechanisms used by the American foreign policy making circles to mobilize the public opinion towards certain issue, in view – off course – to pass certain determined policies.

Another interesting approach concerning the impact of media on the U.S. foreign policy is examining the issue of “news credibility”. It is worthy mentioned that news credibility is a very pivotal issue. Some times, news is labeled as propaganda. A narrative such as the one given by the Kuwaiti girl "Nayerah" before the Human Rights Caucus in the American Congress, and repetition of such narrative by President George W. Bush, the father, as well as the American major media outlets strongly contributed towards mobilizing the American and international public opinion against Iraq; hence, building a strong coalition of states which took part in the war. Should the credibility of such story, as well as the credibility and innocence of the American media have been verified, results would be definitely different. Within this context, one can prepare a comprehensive study on the coverage trends, bias and impartiality in coverage of world events, and to what extent media may have interests in certain issue.

In sum, this thesis concludes that news media has an impact on the U.S foreign policy, albeit the fact that the level of impact varies depending on several factors. This indicates that media itself is not the only force pushing for change in the U.S. foreign policy-making process, but there are other forces, and the most important of which are the national interests.

Consequently, media has influence on the U.S. foreign policy, it affects the people, the voters, and it therefore affects the politicians and decision makers. Yet, it remains difficult to quantify the amount of effect media has. This thesis sums up by one conclusion that news media serves as political agenda setter, accelerant or impediment to decision makers.

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