

# Global Scenario of Media-Military Relationship: Case Study USA



**Kriti (Attri) Singh**  
PhD Scholar and Assistant  
Professor,  
School of Communication,  
GD Goenka University,  
Sohna, Haryana  
India

## Abstract

The intricacies of media in the functioning with military become far more complex and challenging than an ordinary day today's reporting of the events. The challenge to understand media and the defence perspective and communicating it to the masses, while maintaining the balance of reporting, accuracy, facts and other nuisances of journalism is a task for a journalist. The reporting during peace timings and those in the conflict or crisis or wartime situation brings the new set of challenges for both the military as well as media. It is essential to understand the various pattern and facets of this complex relationship at the international level also. The objective of the review paper is to understand the media-military relationship from the global perspective with special reference to the evolution of media-military relationship in the United States of America (USA). The USA has been opted as a case study due to primarily due to two major reasons, one US being the superpower with one of the mightiest defence forces and secondly, the freedom enjoyed by the press under the First Amendment (Amendment I) of USA, which provides the cornerstone to the free press in the USA. The paper attempts to cover the evolution of US media-military relationship, from Mexican War, American Civil War, World War I & II, Cold war era wars, Vietnam War and later on Gulf War, War on Terrorism and Iraq War, nearing 167 years of time span. It endeavour to understand how this relationship has evolved, investigate reasons of discord, the challenges, which it faced, the opportunities, which it brought, and the future possibility of conflict or cooperation between the two institutions.

**Keywords:** Wars, Conflict, Media Military Relationship, Defence, Armed Forces, War Correspondents.

## Introduction

The intricacies of media in the functioning with military become far more complex and challenging than an ordinary day today's reporting of the events. The challenge to understand media and the defence perspective and communicating it to the masses, while maintaining the balance of reporting, accuracy, facts and other nuisances of journalism is a task for a journalist. The reporting during peace timings and those in the conflict or crisis or wartime situation brings the new set of challenges for both the military as well as media. It is essential to understand the various pattern and facets of this complex relationship at the international level also. The objective of the paper is to understand the media-military relationship from the global perspective. In order to attain the objective as mentioned, the paper contemplates on the media-military relationship in the United States of America (USA).

The USA has been opted as a case study due to primarily due to two major reasons, one US being the superpower with one of the mightiest defence forces and secondly, the freedom enjoyed by the press under the First Amendment (Amendment I) of USA, which provides the cornerstone to the free press in the USA. The paper attempts to cover the evolution of US media-military relationship, especially after Post Vietnam War, often known as Vietnam syndrome, to Gulf war, post 9/11, War of Afghanistan and so on. It endeavors to understand how this relationship has evolved, investigates reasons of discord, the challenges, which it faced, the opportunities, which it brought, and the future possibility of conflict or cooperation between the two institutions.

## Aim of the Study

The objective of the paper is to understand the media-military relationship from the global perspective with special reference to the evolution of media-military relationship in the United States of America

(USA) since the Mexican War (1846–1848) till the War on Terrorism (2001- 2013) nearing 167 years of time span

#### **Evolution of US Media Military Relationship**

After going through the available body of research works, it was observed that a substantial work has been done by the USA to understand and trace the past as well as present trends of the US Media Military relationship. After breaking itself from the shackles of British Crown, the USA became independent on July 4, 1776; however, its endeavour towards attaining the democracy began with the adoption of the constitution in 1788, which is considered the foundation of present-day democracy.

While glancing over the history of US Media-military relation, one can witness that despite crest and troughs, this relationship is inextricable and inseparable. One of the prime reasons being media as one of the essential medium of engagement for US military when it comes to communicating to outside world.<sup>1</sup> (Caldwell 2009) In an attempt to look closer at the evolution of US media-military relationship, the paper has chosen to investigate closely landmark episodes in this relationship, which are as follows:

1. Mexican War (1846–1848)
2. American Civil War (1861 to 1865)
3. Spanish–American War (1898)
4. World War I (1914-1918)
5. World War II (1939-1945)
6. Korean War (Cold War era: 1950-1953)
7. Vietnam War (Cold War era: 1955 –1975)
8. Gulf War (1990–1991)
9. War on Terrorism (2001- 2013)
10. Iraq War (2003- 2011)

#### **Mexican War (1846–1848)**

It is also known as Mexican-American War, was a clash between US and Mexico. One of the major causes of the war was the US occupation of Texas in 1845. The war ended with the US emerging victorious and annexing 500,000 square miles (1,300,000 square km) of Mexican territory.<sup>2</sup> (Britannica 2018) From the media perspective, it was the first modern media coverage of an American conflict.<sup>3</sup> (Caldwell William et al. 2010) The war happened in the backdrop of the invention of telegraphy during the 1830s and 1840s by Samuel Finley Breese Morse. This invention changed the way in which communication use to happen, especially in long distance. The usage of telegraph for critical communication was the first extensive application of technological innovations at the strategic level by the US, which proved decisively advantageous to the US to win the war.<sup>4</sup> Two major factors, one the arrival telegraph and rise of the newspaper industry in the US, the American public, for the first time was blitz with the information at a rate which was never experienced in past.<sup>5</sup> (PBS 2018) The old ways of information exchange by verbal or written medium of communication was now replaced by the tactical communication machinery of telegraphy, thus providing the advantage of rapid transfer of information and providing strategic advantage to the US. Besides, the innovation of telegraphy gave the US two more significant advantages, one; it provided a faster news from war zone to the people back home,

thus giving time and space to general masses and the people in power, time to understand and review the situation and act in accordance to the changes happening at ground zero. Secondly, it gave the US military an opportunity to wage war at distant places, away from its borders..<sup>6</sup> (PBS 2018)

#### **American Civil War (1861 to 1865)**

It is also known as the War Between the States prolonged for four years. It was the war between the US and 11 Southern states, which included South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina. These 11 Southern states withdrew from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America.<sup>7</sup> It is to be noted that at the time when the civil war was about to commence, the US press was "political, social, and economic force" of the country. In terms of sheer numbers of newspapers publication, around 3,700 newspapers were published.<sup>8</sup> (Risley) However, this phase also witnessed the negative dimension of the media. On a large-scale media was accused of infringement of operational security during the war by printing misleading reports. In response to these accusations, then War Secretary Edwin Stanton, "seized newspapers that were too liberal with military information, while manipulating others into publishing false reports."<sup>9</sup> (Porch, D. 2014)

#### **Spanish–American War (1898)**

On April 25, 1898 the US declared war on Spain. The immediate trigger was sinking of the Battleship Maine in Havana in which around 260 of her crew perished. However, in the backdrop, one of the leading causes was Cuban struggle for freedom. The conflict had huge financial implications for the US. However, the war concluded with the US emerging victorious and thereafter in December 1898, Treaty of Paris was signed between US and Spain. From US media point of view, this war saw the influx of sensationalism, melodrama, manufactured facts, scandal mongering and hyperbole, in a form on news items, known as Yellow journalism. The word 'yellow journalism' was based on a character of the comic strip, originated due to the rivalry between two leading newspaper publishers during that time, Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. As one on the paper, observed, "*These two people brought media into a war and may have even started the Spanish-American War of 1898.*"<sup>10</sup> (Hagen 2018) It is to be also noted that as per the historians, the Spanish-American War is considered to be the "first press-driven war."<sup>11</sup> It also reveals how media baron of those times tried to exploit maximum out of the war to come in limelight. Hearst's often quoted statement— "*You furnish the pictures, I'll provide the war!*" is perfect example for the case in point.<sup>12</sup> Following excerpt from paper "*The Impact Media has During War: Spanish-American War of 1898*" sums to all.<sup>13</sup> (Hagen 2018)

*"The United States sure muscled their way threw the already weak Spanish, but what made them enter this war in the first place? There were a few reasons that made the United States enter the war*

*including popular autocratic rule in Cuba, sympathy for Cuban independence, and a want for manifest destiny. But, the grandest reason why we entered the war was the media. They gave the people a new spirit of nation assertiveness. The nationalistic and sensationalist press was lead by Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. They swayed the public opinion to want war, thus war was the outcome.*<sup>14</sup> (Hagen 2018)

Also, the war triggered a significant transformation in US print media, especially in war reporting. With technological advancement provided by telegraphy in secondhand information, firsthand reporting by reporters on ground zero, access to more visuals, the newspaper got more content to serve its readers and at more speed. However, the yellow journalism also proved a new challenge for the policy makers, defence forces and the media personal who advocated objectivity, fairness and truthfulness in journalism. Taking forward the War Secretary Edwin Stanton during American Civil War, tactics, Major General Nelson A. Miles repeated Stanton's manipulation of the press and intentionally misled journalists about the location of his intended landing in Puerto Rico.<sup>15</sup> (Porch, 2002)

#### **World War I (1914-1918)**

The US debate over neutrality ended when the US President Woodrow Wilson concluded in April 1917 that German invasion on the high seas was a threat to American's national security.<sup>16</sup> (Keene 2014) A decision came after two and a half years since the world erupted into after World War I in 1914. From media perspective, the period of war witnessed complex narratives as the along with print newspapers, pamphlets other mass communication technologies like radio, photography and cinema also shaped the narratives emerging from the war zones. The phase also witnessed extensive use of mass media as a tool for propaganda by governments, military and belligerents alike and newspapers, quite often integrating the state propaganda apparatuses in its publication, to mobilise civilians for the war efforts.<sup>17</sup> (Keil 2017) From media military point of view, during the war restrictions became more draconian during World War I.<sup>18</sup> (Caldwell 2009) During this time two acts, the Espionage Act and the Sedition Act of 1918, proved determinant in the working of the journalist while reporting about the war. Both of these acts restricted the press to publish any news/ information regarding military operations or war production. Furthermore, the Committee on Public Information set up by Woodrow Wilson that was tasked to regulate the censorship and to manufacture propaganda to support US cause.<sup>19</sup> (Porch, 2002) The trend of propaganda set by yellow journalism was continued but at a new level during this phase. The prudence of the war correspondents was based on "sworn to tell the truth", their movements restricted till military bases, prevented even accredited war correspondents "to travel to the front lines,"<sup>20</sup>

(Hammond 1994) due to the suspicion of "stab in the back" and "to keep up the spirit of the armies and people of our side."<sup>21</sup> (Llyod 1991). These Espionage Act and the Sedition Act ushered an era of prior restriction that imposed broad limits on how journalists could report during times of war.<sup>22</sup> (Caldwell 2009)

#### **World War II (1939-1945)**

The US entered into war on December 7, 1941, after the surprise strike on Pearl Harbor, the Hawaiian naval base by the Japanese warplanes. In response to the attack by Japanese, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory."<sup>23</sup> During this phase, three popular mass media, which were extensively used by the Americans, were "radio broadcasts, newspapers and newsreels." As per an estimate, "Fifty million Americans watched newsreels every week in one of 14,000 theatres."<sup>24</sup> (PBS 2018) The accessibility of war correspondents to interact with troops gave them an opportunity to see the war from the frontline. Later their narrations through various (especially radio) media gave an opportunity to an ordinary American citizen to have a glimpse of the lives of the troops from the war front, right at their homes. However, the censorship was also very stringent during that time. Immediately after the Pearl harbour attack, the then US president established the Office of Censorship. The government tightened its grip over the flow of the news. It was mandatory for any news related to war, to get filtered through the "Office of War Information (OWI)." Subsequently in January 15, 1942, a "Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press" was issued. The code laid down stringent instructions on proper treatment of news coming from the war zone.<sup>25</sup> (PBS 2018)

From US media military perspective, World War II is considered to be an example of "the golden age of media-military relations."<sup>26</sup> (Porch, 2002) Media docility probably hit its zenith during World War II.<sup>27</sup> (Caldwell 2009) The phase in which is marked by the complete participation of the citizens and US press supporting the cause of war and "reflected the patriotic mood". The journalists voluntarily accepted the "press code". The majority of journalists did not question the censorship as it gave them an opportunity to get closer to the combat zone. Two distinctive features can be seen in the evolution of US media-military relationship, firstly attachment of journalist as "press camps" with combat forces, thus setting the stage for the future embedded journalism and secondly handpicking of the selective journalists to cover crucial events, thus acting as "precursor" of the modern "press pool."<sup>28</sup> (Porch, D. 2002) Another feature, which deserves a mention, is the use of media as vehicle for "propaganda" in the war. While elaborating on the use of journalists as vehicle to push propaganda, Philip Knightly noted that, "A Reuters correspondent admitted that journalists were merely propagandists for their government, mere cheerleaders: 'It wasn't good journalism,' he [the correspondent] said. 'It wasn't journalism at all.'<sup>29</sup> (Knightley, 1995) One of the primary objectives of the OWI was to connect home front with war front,

by directing public attention on selective themes like the role of women in war, information battle casualties, visual details of the conflict.<sup>30</sup>(PBS 2018). In realizing this objective, press was extensively used to mobilise people to the cause support the cause of war and also for propaganda purpose.

#### **Korean War (Cold War era: 1950-1953)**

On July 25 June 1950, a major conflict erupted at 36th parallel between North and South Korea, as the former invaded South Korea. Where North Korea got backing from China and the former Soviet Union, South Korea, on the other hand, got support from the US. After losing more than 2.5 million people in the war, in July 1953 the war concluded and further negotiations stalled in 1954, thus making the frontline de facto border between both the warring nations.<sup>31</sup> Korean War is considered to be the first extensive armed conflict to be battled within the agitated air of the Cold War.<sup>32</sup> (Fraser 2008) From media military perspective, it was observed that at the onset of the war, the media continued self-imposed censorship. The main reason behind the volunteer censorship was due to the fear of jeopardising the operational security.<sup>33</sup>(Caldwell 2009)The initial press reportage of the conflict presented US political and military action in an uncritical way, deemphasize setbacks, highlighted only the advancement and despite a questionable report by the official channel, it wasn't challenged by the press.<sup>34</sup> (Fraser 2008) Thus losing the balance, objectivity and fairness, which are the basic tenants of news reporting. However, the "compelled harmony rooted in media docility began to break down during the Korean War."<sup>35</sup>(Caldwell 2009)However, as the war progressed and headed for the conclusion, the relationship between the US media and military worsened.<sup>36</sup>(Caldwell 2009)From the military perspective, the onset of the invasion on South Korea by North Korea took US military by surprise. The initial information of the news of invasion was covered by *The United Press* correspondent Jack James and cabled to Japan. When the Washington bureau of *The United Press* tried to clarify it from the Pentagon, it was evident that senior press officer on duty was oblivious of the attack.<sup>37</sup>(Fraser 2008)Amidst the atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty, the US military was also caught unprepared to deal with the press.Due to the paucity of time, the US military was not in the position to enforce a code of censorship. Their attempt to manage media personnel during the early stage of conflict was reviewed with criticism. According to the claim made by New York Herald Tribune correspondent Marguerite Higgins, "it was the most appalling act of disorganization she had ever seen."<sup>38</sup>(Fraser 2008)In response to the situation, local military commanders framed their own rules to deal with press.<sup>39</sup>(Porch, 2002)Later, then General MacArthur imposed formal censorship on the press, which resulted into banning reporters to criticise, along with other things military reverses, insufficiency or failures of U.S. equipment, or the government of South Korean or any other writing which were questioning or disapproving his command.<sup>40</sup>(Knightley 1975)Gradually the reportage from the conflict depicted two sides of the spectrum on the canvas of

the war reportage. On one hand where the reporting was all about US resistance to "monolithic force of communist" and "us" versus "them". The setbacks were downplayed, casualties of rivals were more emphasised and casualties of US and South Korean forces were downplayed significantly. On the other hand, the reportage critical about the US actions in the war wrote about the unpreparedness of South Korean army, the fluidity of the atmosphere, the implicit criticism of US envoys, damage and casualties of the American soldiers, suffering of the battlefield, endless retreats by the US forces, acknowledgements of defeats were seen.<sup>41</sup>(Fraser 2008) The US administration was concerned with the critical media coverage as it could affect the moral of the soldiers and citizens back home. Subsequently, the volunteer code of censorship was applied, pooling system of reporters was initiated and accreditation of the war correspondents were emphasized, detailed information were provided by the office in form of dispatches to the press and communication lines to transmit the information related to the war by the correspondents were provided by the military in a rationed timing. The challenges of battles, limited logistic support, threat to life and so on only left a single option for the war correspondents to rely only on the bare minimum provided by the US military, who in turn got an opportunity to have access to all the reportage material of the journalists.<sup>42</sup>(Fraser 2008) However as the war proceeded, the media reports continued to construct and shape the dominant media frames of the war back home and the relationship between media and military started heading towards new low, which came in form of Vietnam War.

#### **Vietnam War (Cold War era: 1955 –1975)**

Vietnam War (Cold War era: 1955 –1975) or Second Indochina War was a face-off between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The North Vietnam was backed by Soviet Union, China (pro communist) and the South Vietnam had it support from the US, South Korea, Australia, Thailand and other anti-communist allies.<sup>43</sup> It is termed as a longest war in the history of US, which continued nearing two decades. It is also considered as actualization of Cold War or proxy Cold War, whose causes were stemmed from the traits, elements and outcomes of the Cold War.<sup>44</sup> (Trueman 2015)While Americans left the Vietnam War in 1973, subsequently in 1975, South Vietnam fell and the two warring nations unified under communist regime.The war left a dent on the US confidence to hinder the expanse of communalism. On the loss of lives, US lost around 58,000 Americans, with regards to the money spend around \$173 billion (equivalent to \$770 billion in 2003 dollars) was consumed by the war.<sup>45</sup> The war affected all spheres of American lives and acutely divided, including the economy, agriculture, morale, psychological, international standing and so on. However, one aspect that frequently comes under the scanner is the media-military relationship during and post-Vietnam war.From the media-military relationship, the Vietnam War is considered to be a turning point in the relationship between both the establishments.Vietnam War has been the "first TV war," which brought the news and gory images of the conflict in the drawing rooms of ordinary American

citizens. The news reporting of the Vietnam War is often linked with the "personal, independent and uncensored reporting and image making." Where on the one hand the journalists have a free hand to report about the war in the manner, they deemed fit, which was considered to be the ideal situation for a war reporter. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the government, including the US defence forces saw the news coverage as "an obstacle to successful government conduct of the war."<sup>46</sup>(Griffin 2010)

*"The Vietnam War was complicated by factors that had never before offered in America's conduct of war.... The American news media had come to dominate the visiting opinion about its purpose and conduct.... Eventually, this contributed to the impression that we were fighting a moral quicksand rather than two words and important and work by objective.... Whatever the intention behind such a relentless and literal reporting of the war, the result was serious demoralization of the home front, raising the question whether America would ever again be able to fight an enemy abroad with unity and strength of purpose at home."*Richard Nixon<sup>47</sup> (Duiker et al. 1987)

Media influence in moulding the public opinion received severe criticism to such an extent that till date continuous parallel is drawn whenever America is undergoing any war. Research reveals that continuous assertion that there exists a correlation between media bias and its influence on decision makers with regards to policies had profoundly influenced Vietnam War.<sup>48</sup>(Darley 2005) Vietnam War is considered being one of the major reasons behind the permanent undercurrent experienced by the US media-military. This "subversion" became a new departure point in the US media-military relations.<sup>49</sup> (Porch, 2002) The war brought unto surface the deep impact that a camera, reporters and television can bring on a nation's perception and their role in the course of the war and its bearing on the public, policy makers and on war itself.<sup>50</sup>(Duiker et al. 1987) Although it is broadly accepted all across the political spectrum that during the Vietnam war the relationship between the media and the government, including defence forces reached a new low, and it became the only conflict where the US press directly contradicted the official war projections.<sup>51</sup>(Duiker et al. 1987) However, if we scan through the history of US media military relationship, one can see the fissure developing in the relationship and the "animosity between the two is as old as the foundations of the Republic itself."<sup>52</sup> (Porch, 2002) As the war concluded, the US military-media relationship embittered, constructing the stage for unmitigated mutual hostility and distrust augmenting from Vietnam, to be witnessed a decade later.<sup>53</sup> (McLaughlin, 2002)

#### **Gulf War (1990–1991)**

Gulf War (1990–1991) also known as Persian Gulf War was a global conflict sparked off due to then Iraq's President Saddam Hussein invasion of Kuwait. The attack intended to seize the oil reserves

of Kuwait to bail of Iraq's debts and also to augment Tehran's influence in the region. The attack also posed grave threat to Saudi Arabia. In response to the Iraq's invasion, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces along with the US forces hastened troops for the rescue of Saudi Arabia.<sup>54</sup> The code name of the operation was Operation Desert Shield, which was initiated on January 1991. From media perspective, the war is remembered as the portrayal of war from the perspective of superior military technology, the precision of weapons, SCUD missiles and less on the projection of human fatalities, corpses of civilian and soldiers, which was a stark contrast of depiction on war as it was during Vietnam War. The presentation of technology involved in the war provided a smoke screen to the destruction of human life in the conflict zone. From military perspective, especially after the experience of the Vietnam War, the US military tried to limit the access of the journalists into the war zone. The technique of press pool system and to a very limited extent embedded journalism was undertaken to regulate the press and the narratives constructed by the media. The rigid press pool system adopted during the gulf war allowed only 100 war correspondents/reporters to have access to the information.<sup>55</sup> It gave firmer grip to the US military to control the flow of information. However, this was also met with stiff resistance from the journalists, criticism from US media critiques like Noam Chomsky and also resulted in the detention of journalists reporting about the event. As per an estimate although around 1000 reporters were given accreditation and only 126 journalists were part of the Pentagon press pool. However, these numbers are also not genuine.<sup>56</sup> As per the paper titled, "Press Pools and Newspaper Coverage of the Gulf War: Attitudes of Newspaper Editors," the review of the literature with regards to the Gulf war, brought three main problems on the surface regarding pool system, which were, attitudinal, logistical and operational. Firstly, the attitudinal difficulty stems from the lack of trust between the military and media. Secondly, the logistical difficulty was faced mainly concerning copy transmission and access difficulties. Thirdly, the operational dilemma was mainly experienced in terms of problems with press escorts and copy review procrastination.<sup>57</sup> (Steuck 1992) Embedded journalism, on the other hand, is a practice in which selected reporters are attached with a military unit. The practice is commonly used in war zones or conflict area, where access to information is very tough, and the dependency on the military is quite high, for the journalist. However during the first Persian war it was used in very limited extend by US Marine corps. As a result, some of the most critical battles of the entire war were almost lost to history because there was no press coverage.<sup>58</sup> (Shepard 2004) On the whole, to some the idea of pool system was a workable solution in the conflict, however, to a few it was contradictory to both the establishments, as "the Pentagon has one agenda and the news media have another agenda and quite often, they are in conflict".<sup>59</sup> (Garneau. 1987) With the war coming to an end, the contention surrounding the pool system refused to die down. In response to it, the media issued a 10-point statement of principles to

then US Defense Secretary Richard Dick Cheney.<sup>60</sup> (Steuck 1992)

*"This statement demanded changes in the way U.S. military operations were to be covered in future conflicts; specifically, the statement demanded open, independent reporting, not press pools, as the standard means of coverage. Additionally, the statement listed requirements abolishing security review, mandating access to all major military units, requiring timely and secure transmission of independently-gathered copy, and limiting the authority of public affairs offices. Limited use of pools would be allowed in the opening hours -- 24 to 36 -- of a conflict or in areas where open coverage would be "physically impossible."*<sup>61</sup>(Steuck 1992)

Subsequently meeting between the US military and media were held to iron out the difference cropped due to pool system. Revised guidelines were issued in 1992 but without any final official approval. Majorly all the nine points were accepted barring the "review issue" regarding security review and news material review at the military end.<sup>62</sup> (Steuck 1992)The war saw US media providing continuous coverage from war zone and their endeavour to sell the war on TV channels and simultaneously the US military constant efforts to control news flowing out from the war zone. Moreover, the phase of news media reporting during 1990's of critical events like Kurdish crisis (1991), Somalia (1992-93) with emerging concept of "humanitarian intervention" crafted by news media, gave birth to a thought that news media was driving foreign policy decision-making in the US became popularly known as the CNN effect.<sup>63</sup>

#### **War on Terrorism (2001-2013)**

The fall of twin towers on September 11, 2001, ignited a crucial conflict with the commencement of "War on Terrorism" also known as "Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)" declared by then US President George W. Bush. The multidimensional war began in 2001 was over by 2013. This was followed by withdrawal of the US forces for Afghanistan in 2014. Its impact was majorly endured at the greater Middle East. Terror group like Al-Qaeda, Taliban were targeted. Various operations were undertaken during this war, which includes, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Operation Iraqi Freedom (discussed subsequently), Operation Inherent Resolve in Syria and Iraq, Operation Enduring Freedom in the Horn of Africa and so on. In 2011 USA received a major success with the Killing of group Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden on May 2nd 2011 codename operation Neptune spear. However, at the end of the war, one witnessed the unforeseen rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant terror group also known as Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). In terms of media coverage, the war on terrorism and its various dimensions were extensively covered by the western media in general and the US in particular. The war on terrorism

"temporarily drove the feud underground" occurring between the US media and military.<sup>64</sup> (Porch, 2002) This phase of war also witnessed various kind of advancement in media technology, like the spread of satellite TV, cable TV, and the World Wide Web, which drastically changed the way the news reports from the ground zero was communicated to the larger masses. The latest advancements in media technology provided both challenges, as well as the opportunity for the US military. Challenges in terms of more or less impossible to control the flow of the news emerging from war zones, as the access to Internet and smart phones, gave anyone a chance to disseminate the information and becoming citizen journalist. However, due to persistent news coverage, round a clock, the impact of the news stories also diminishes in a short period of time, and it has been observed that beyond a point, the America public also developed "compassion fatigue" and also extension of "indifference" experiences due to previous ongoing wars. The news media sphere, especially in the computer-mediated world, has also inevitably "given rise to fragmentation, whether in coverage, durability, audience or attention span."<sup>65</sup>(Caldwell 2009)

#### **Iraq War (2003–2011)**

Iraq War (2003–2011) is also known as the Second Persian Gulf War. The prelude to the war had its roots in 1991 gulf war, however, the war commenced in 2003, in the first phase, and the subsequent phase was carried out till 2011 with the fall and later one execution of Iraqi Presidents Saddam Hussian. The US along with coalition forces initiates war on Iraq to "disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger", and accusing Iraq of manufacturing "weapons of mass destruction."<sup>66</sup> (History Staff, 2009) The US and the coalition forces ended the military operations on May 1, 2003, and toppled Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime. Later in December 2003, the defeated dictator was captured near Tikrit, under operation code name 'Red Dawn'. He was later executed on December 30, 2006. The aftermath of fall of Saddam Hussian triggered severe outbursts of disturbance accompanied by 'sectarian' violence in the region. With the passage of time, the violence surged, and the US along with the coalition forces started taking toll of the sectarian violence. The fatal casualties began to increase with every passing day. As per an estimate by US Department of Defense, around 4,487 US soldiers died in operation. From Iraqi side, as per Iraq Body Count, between 97,461 and 106,348 civilian deaths up to July 2010.<sup>67</sup> (BBC 2011) Thereafter, the US withdrew from Iraq in 2011. During the second Persian Gulf War, The US Department of Defense saw an immense opportunity in the embedded journalism. It gave US defence forces a chance to frame rules on the ground for journalists, reasonable restrictions, control flow of information, and for the journalist, it gave them an exclusive chance to capture the war from the ground zero, instant minute to minute coverage from war theater, access to military news, logistics, information and security. As per an estimate, around 600 reporters were embedded to various military units.<sup>68</sup> However, it also brings with itself set unique challenges. Firstly, it



raises the risk of inherent bias in the journalist who can become influenced by the military views, as he/she is surviving in the same-shared space and start interpreting the event from military point of view. This may risk the loss of objectivity in journalist reporting. Secondly, the movement of the journalists was restricted and scrutinize by the military. Thirdly, there is a continuous fear of manipulating media by the military for the propaganda purposes as the view of embedded journalists are already limited and to some extent tweaked by the military. Fourthly, another detrimental effect of "embedding" is that it lessens the "brutality of any military occupation and underplay hostile local response to it."<sup>69</sup> From the media perspective, one can observe various interpretation of the Iraq war in 2003. In view of Douglas Kellner, the war was "a major global media event constructed very differently by varying broadcasting networks in different parts of the world....providing a conduit for Bush administration and Pentagon propaganda."<sup>70</sup> (Kellner 2004). In view Deepa Kumar, "It is now widely acknowledged that the Bush administration used faulty and false information to justify the 2003 war on Iraq." From military perspective, the operation was known as Operation Iraqi Freedom in US; Operation

Telic in the UK; and Operation Falconer-in Australia, remained inconclusive till the end, except the "symbolic victory" which it achieved when the "statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled by US forces in the centre of Baghdad."<sup>71</sup> (Garden 2003) From

media military perspective, the embedded system led to unprecedented media-military relations.<sup>72</sup> (Tuosto 2008)It has been observed that the media-military relationship during this time was "distraction, desensitisation and arrogance" where both the establishments "manufacture entertainment rather than offering information". The distraction was in the form of glorifying the US military efforts in war instead of bringing to light the poor decisions made by them. Also, the reporting from war zone "transformed into a "cinematic narrative," where "showcasing a heroic embedded icon" in the form of wounded soldiers, continued to distract the American population back home.<sup>73</sup> (Tuosto 2008) The distraction furthermore led to the "desensitisation towards the horrors of warfare," which gradually cultivated the sense of indifference and apathy towards the ongoing conflict by the American public. One of the primary reasons being that the American public became apathetic towards war due to prolonged exposure of the images of War and the news coming from the war front. Beyond a time they could not relate to what was happening on the ground zero as their own lives were going uninterrupted. .<sup>74</sup> (Tuosto 2008)

**Four Distinct Phases of US Media-Military Relationship:**<sup>76</sup>

While tracing the history of US media-military relationship, Caldwell William et al. marks four distinct periods of this relationship, which are as follows: <sup>77</sup> (Caldwell 2009)

Phase	Wars	Observations
Censorship	American Civil War (1861 to 1865)	It witnessed numerous reports of military censorship.
	Spanish-American War(1898)	Censorship increased to maintain operational secrecy.
	World War I (1914-1918)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It saw the ushering of new era of prior restriction on the press and setting the limits of press on what to report and what not to report during the conflict.</li> <li>The Espionage Act (1917) &amp; Sedition Act (1918)</li> </ul>
	World War II(1939-1945)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self imposed censorship by the journalist.</li> <li>Accreditation rules were followed to get access of the war zone.</li> <li>High sanitized reporting with "No bad news".</li> </ul>
Openness	Korean War(1950-1953)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At beginning no censorship, however journalists self-imposed censorship in order to maintain operational security.</li> <li>Media military relationship entered unpleasant phase.</li> </ul>
	Vietnam War(1955 –1975)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media coverage was quite open during this phase as journalist got unrestricted access to the war zone.</li> <li>Media military relationship unpleasant phase reached new low accompanied by mutual distrust.</li> </ul>
Controlled Access	Gulf War (1990–1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More reliance of press pools and a handful of embedded reporters.</li> <li>Very less coverage of important battles.</li> </ul>
Cooperation	War on Terrorism(2001-2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive usage of embedded journalists.</li> <li>Arrival of new media disrupted the information control from the battlefield, thus posing a new challenge for the military.</li> </ul>

**Causes behind Strain Relationship between US Media Military Relationship**

While investigating the causes of faulty relationship between the US media and military relationship in the paper, "*Media/military relations in the United States*"<sup>78</sup>, the Douglas Porch observed that one of the origins of the strained relationship between US military and media, especially after the Vietnam

War is due to inherited nature, goals, institutional cultures, of both the establishments. Where on the one hand the institution of journalism, which practices the "freedom of expression", works with a flexible code of conduct, fragmented, can be practised by an amateur, at times can be extremely individualistic, tendency to exaggerate and can take any course of action to derive a newsworthy story. The professional military is often viewed as a breed apart, a closed hierarchal organization resembling a monastic order.<sup>79</sup> (Etzioni 1975)

The military institution, on the contrary, is firmly grounded on the principles of hierarchy, teamwork, discipline, well-defined sets of procedures, profoundly controlled and astringent profession. Where the attitude of a journalist is open to new views and heterogeneous, on the other hand, the position of military personnel due to the institution can be conservative and insular at times. Another reason attributed to the deteriorating relationship between US media and military, as perceived by the defence forces, was the growing influence of media on the foreign policy.<sup>80</sup> (Porch, D. 2001)

Also, the institutional objectives of both the institutions are poles apart. The journalist will relentlessly endeavor to find a piece of information, which can be converted into an interesting story for the masses. The military's objective is to 'pursue national objectives' as ordered by the political leaders of the country. These two divergent purposes can sometimes provide an opportunity for mutual cooperation between the two institutions.<sup>81</sup> (Porch, D. 2001)

**Conclusion: US Media Military Cooperation: The Way Ahead**

It was observed that despite having the difference and the tension between them, which can be 'endemic'<sup>82</sup> (Porch, D. 2001), studies advocated for both the institution to work in synergy with each other to protect and preserve the democratic interest of the nation. The press plays a crucial role of a watchdog to question the people who are in power and their decisions. This role is considered as a 'symbiotic relationship' between the two institutions to support or question the policy and also to narrate the story from the military side.<sup>83</sup> (Porch, D. 2001)

As per the observation of scholars, there is an increasing gap not only between US media and military but also an expanding abyss between the military and American society altogether. (Ricks 2009) For example wherein Vietnam War or during Iraq war in 2004 through 2007 -- a period of broad public doubt about U.S. success in Iraq<sup>84</sup> (Gallup, I. 2009) - the public confidence in the military dwindled. Nevertheless, with continuous shifting in domestic politics and global challenges, this internal dynamics between military, media and society becomes more

complicated and volatile. For instance, back in 2009, once again witnessed the rise in the public confidence in US military, going as high as 82%, of Americans' expressing high confidence in the U.S. military.<sup>84</sup> (Gallup, I. 2009).<sup>85</sup> Therefore, keeping in mind the volatile dynamics and interdependence between media, society and military, it becomes very crucial for the military to use a vehicle of press for promoting their side of the story. Citing it as the top priority in building communication for the US army, it had been advocated to "*keep Americans informed and connected with their Armed Forces*" as "*job one*" for the US armed force and to espouse a "*culture of engagement*" which vigorously endeavours to build bridges and construct viable relationship between the masses.<sup>86</sup> (Caldwell William et al. 2010)

The changing media landscape calls for the Army must get beyond "business as usual" to embrace a culture of engagement.<sup>87</sup> (Caldwell 2009) As suggested by Caldwell, firstly, the present day army need to be more "proactive" in terms of predicting a news worthy event and prepare the person to address the anticipated questions before hand. Also, the pro-activeness should be displayed in establishing a working relationship between the media, both at the national and international level, which aims at bringing "trust, confidence, and mutual understanding" between both the establishments. Secondly, the army has to innovate new ideas and creative as well as an efficacious way to communicate with the larger heterogeneous audiences worldwide, in the backdrop on new media technologies. The new media technologies like Web 2.0 and Internet have given the army the asset of "user generated content" which can be used to their advantage as they can create and disseminate their own content.<sup>88</sup> (Caldwell 2009) Thirdly, given the fast, flexible and instantaneous nature of the new media and Web technology, they have posed as a colossal challenge for the military organisations that have rigid and inflexible structure. To optimise the benefit of the modern media technologies, the military organisation have to embrace the environment of adaptability and flexibility.<sup>89</sup> (Caldwell 2009) Fourthly, given the immense challenges thrown by the new media on the military, the former have to understand the realities of new media and rework on the strategies of communication apparatus to reach to masses. The answer lies in establishing an active leadership from the military, which cultivates the "culture of engagement" at the grassroots level. In addition to this, "dedicated resources, manpower, and time" is crucial to building constructive media engagement.<sup>90</sup> (Caldwell 2009) Lastly, the military forces have to strengthen the sustainable element of cultural engagement, which includes material, workforce, and transparency, culture that promotes positive and openness in media relations and develop leadership.<sup>91</sup> (Caldwell 2009)

From the US military perspective, one has to bear in mind that, battling with the revolution and advancement of media and its impact has become an indispensable component of the broader doctrinal understanding regarding information.<sup>92</sup> (Caldwell 2009) The relevance of the issue cannot be ignored or



undermined as it can be detrimental to the security of the country, given the usage of the new media technology employed by non-state actors and adversaries to promote false propaganda, misinformation and in information warfare. Thus making the need of hour is to build cooperation between media and military.

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