IMMEDIATE RELEASE AUGUST 23, 1984 NO. 450-84

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I am today releasing the final report of the CJCS Media-Military Relations Panel (Sidle Panel).

I have directed the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) to take the necessary steps to implement those portions of the final report which meet the Panel's criteria of providing maximum news media coverage of U.S. military operations "consisten with military security and the safety of U.S. forces."

As an added step, I will form a panel of eminent journalists and former war correspondents to advise me on the best ways to meet these objectives. This group will become a permanent Secretary of Defense Media Advisory Committee. By forming such a committee, I wish to ensure that the media's viewpoint can be expressed in our highest councils on a continuing basis.

I firmly believe that relations between members of the armed forces and members of the press will be greatly enhanced by continued, strengthened, and informed dialogue. As part of instilling a better understanding on our part of the problems and responsibilities of the press in connection with our armed forces in times of crisis or conflict, as well as in peacetime, I have already directed a review of the adequacy of instruction on relations between the press and armed services at all levels of our military educational system.

I greatly appreciate the work done by General Sidle and the members of his panel, and by General Vessey. It is a necessary first step toward improved understanding by all parties. I believe our News Media Advisory Committee will help us move furth and further along that path.

#182

END

NEWS RELEASE
OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301
PLEASE NOTE DATE

General John W. Vessey, Jr.
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Pentagon, Room 2E872
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear General Vessey:

As you requested, enclosed are the final report and recommendations of the Sidle Panel, together with pertinent enclosures. The panel is unanimous in its strong belief that implementation of the recommendations, both in fact and in spirit, by the appropriate military authorities will set the stage for arriving at workable solutions for media-military relations in future military operations. We also believe that these solutions will be satisfactory to reasonable members of both the media and the military.

The report has three sections: an introduction, a recommendations section, and a comment section. We adopted this format because, while we were unanimous on the recommendations, there were some differences of opinion on some points in the comments. However, we all agreed that the comments were necessary to help explain the recommendations and that even the points on which we were not unanimous were worthy of consideration as suggestions and background for those who will implement the recommendations, should they be implemented. In any case, the entire panel has formally endorsed the recommendations, while I signed the comments. I should add that, where appropriate, I have mentioned the panel's degree of support in the comments.

The panel asked that I put three points in this letter that were not exactly germane to the report but required some comment on our part.

First, the matter of so-called First Amendment rights. This is an extremely gray area and the panel felt that it was a matter for the legal profession and the courts and that we were not qualified to provide a judgment. We felt justified in setting aside the issue, as we unanimously agreed at the outset that the U.S. media should cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and the safety of U.S. forces.

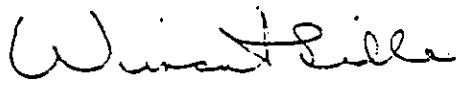
Second, Grenada. We realize that Grenada had shown the need to review media-military relations in connection with military operations, but you did not request our assessment of media handling at Grenada and we will not provide it. However, we do feel that had our recommendations been "in place" and fully considered at the time of Grenada, there might have been no need to create our panel.

Finally, the matter of responsibility of the media. Although this is touched on in the report, and there is no doubt that the news organization representatives who appeared before us fully recognized their responsibilities, we feel we should state emphatically that reporters and editors alike must exercise responsibility in covering military operations. As one of the senior editors who appeared before us said, "The media must cover military operations comprehensively, intelligently, and objectively." The American people deserve news coverage of this quality and nothing less. It goes without saying, of course, that the military also has a concurrent responsibility, that of making it possible for the media to provide such coverage.

The members of the panel have also asked me to express their appreciation for being asked to participate in this important study and their hope that our work will be of value to the military, the media, and to the American people.

Finally, the panel considers this covering letter an integral part of our report.

Sincerely,



Winant Sidle
Major General, USA, Retired
Chairman

Enclosure
Report

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Media - Military Relations Panel (known as the Sidle Panel) was created at the request of the Chairman, General John W. Vessey, Jr., who asked that I convene a panel of experts to make recommendations to him on, "How do we conduct military operations in a manner that safeguards the lives of our military and protects the security of the operation while keeping the American public informed through the media?"

Major General Winant Sidle, USA, Retired, was selected as chairman of this project and asked to assemble a panel composed of media representatives, public affairs elements of the four Military Services, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (OASD(PA)), and operations spokesmen from the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS).

The initial plan, concurred in by CJCS and ASD(PA), was to invite major umbrella media organizations and the Department of Defense organizations to provide members of this panel. The umbrella organizations, such as the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), and the Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA), and their individual member news organizations decided that they would cooperate fully with the panel but would not provide members. The general reason given was that it was inappropriate for media members to serve on a government panel.

This decision, unanimous among the major news media organizations, resulted in a revised plan calling for the non-military membership of the panel to be composed of experienced retired media personnel and representatives of schools of journalism who were experts in military-media relations. The Department of Defense organizations involved agreed to provide members from the outset. Final panel membership is at Enclosure 1.

To provide initial input to the panel for use as a basis for discussion when the panel met, a questionnaire was devised with the concurrence of CJCS and ASD(PA) and mailed to all participants. It was also sent to a number of additional organizations and individuals who had expressed interest and to some who had not but were considered to be experts in the matter. As the result of these mailings, the panel had available 24 written inputs to study prior to meeting. Of these, 16 were from major news organizations or umbrella groups. All inputs are at Enclosure 2. The panel regretted that all who indicated interest could not appear before it, but time did not permit.

Although the news organizations involved did not agree to provide panel members, they all agreed to provide qualified personnel to make oral presentations to the panel. The only exception was an individual news organization which felt that its umbrella group should represent it.

The panel met from 6 February through 10 February 1984 at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. The meetings included three days for media and military presentations in open session and two days for panel study and deliberation in closed session. The presentations included those by 25 senior media representatives speaking for 19 news organizations, including umbrella organizations. The chiefs/directors of Public Affairs for the Army, Navy, and Air Force also made major presentations during the open sessions with the USMC, OJCS, and ASD(PA) panel members making informal comments during the closed sessions. The open sessions were covered by about 70 reporters representing nearly 30 news organizations. The schedule of presentations is at Enclosure 3.

The attached panel report is composed of two sections.

1. The Recommendations section, concurred and signed by all panel members.

2. The Comment section, explaining the recommendations and including comments, when appropriate, made by all concerned, to include both written and oral inputs to the committee and by the panel itself. This section is signed by the chairman but was approved unless otherwise indicated by the members of the panel. It is made available to explain the recommendations and to assist, via suggestions, in their implementation.

The panel recommends approval and implementation both in fact and in spirit of the recommendations made in Section I of this report.

Winant Sidle

Winant Sidle
Major General, USA, Retired
Chairman

Enclosure
Report

REPORT

by

CJCS MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONS PANEL (SIDLE PANEL)

SECTION I: Recommendations

Statement of Principle

The American people must be informed about United States military operations and this information can best be provided through both the news media and the Government. Therefore, the panel believes it is essential that the U.S. news media cover U.S. military operations to the maximum degree possible consistent with mission security and the safety of U.S. forces.

This principle extends the major "Principle of Information" promulgated by the Secretary of Defense on 1 December 1983, which said:

> "It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and members representing the press, radio and television may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered responsively and as rapidly as possible. . ." (Copy at Enclosure 4)

It should be noted that the above statement is in consonance with similar policies publicly stated by most former secretaries of defense.

The panel's statement of principle is also generally consistent with the first two paragraphs contained in "A Statement of Principle on Press Access to Military Operations" issued on 10 January 1984 by 10 major news organizations (copy at Enclosure 5). These were:

> "First, the highest civilian and military officers of the government should reaffirm the historic principle that American journalists, print and broadcast, with their professional equipment, should be present at U.S. military operations. And the news media should reaffirm their recognition of the importance of U.S. military mission security and troop safety. When essential, both groups can agree on coverage conditions which satisfy safety and security imperatives while, in keeping with the spirit of the First Amendment, permitting independent reporting to the citizens of our free and open society to whom our government is ultimately accountable.

"Second, the highest civilian and military officers of the U.S. government should reaffirm that military plans should include planning for press access, in keeping with past traditions. The expertise of government public affairs officers during the planning of recent Grenada military operations could have met the interests of both the military and the press, to everyone's benefit."

Application of the panel's principle should be adopted both in substance and in spirit. This will make it possible better to meet the needs of both the military and the media during future military operations. The following recommendations by the panel are designed to help make this happen. They are primarily general in nature in view of the almost endless number of variations in military operations that could occur. However, the panel believes that they provide the necessary flexibility and broad guidance to cover almost all situations.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning. This can be assured in the great majority of cases by implementing the following:

a. Review all joint planning documents to assure that JCS guidance in public affairs matters is adequate.

b. When sending implementing orders to Commanders in Chief in the field, direct CINC planners to include consideration of public information aspects.

c. Inform the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) of an impending military operation at the earliest possible time. This information should appropriately come from the Secretary of Defense.

d. Complete the plan, currently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.

e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should provide for the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary before "full coverage" is feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

That, in connection with the use of pools, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary of Defense that he study the matter of whether to use a pre-established and constantly updated accreditation or notification list of correspondents in case of a military operation for which a pool is required or the establishment of a news agency list for use in the same circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That a basic tenet governing media access to military operations should be voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military. These rules should be as few as possible and should be worked out during the planning process for each operation. Violations would mean exclusion of the correspondent(s) concerned from further coverage of the operation.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Public Affairs planning for military operations should include sufficient equipment and qualified military personnel whose function is to assist correspondents in covering the operation adequately.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Planners should carefully consider media communications requirements to assure the earliest feasible availability. However, these communications must not interfere with combat and combat support operations. If necessary and feasible, plans should include communications facilities dedicated to the news media.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Planning factors should include provision for intra- and inter-theatre transportation support of the media.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

a. CJCS should recommend to the Secretary of Defense that a program be undertaken by ASD(PA) for top military public affairs representatives to meet with news organization leadership, to include meetings with individual news organizations, on a reasonably regular basis to discuss mutual problems, including relationships with the media during military operations and exercises. This program should begin as soon as possible.

b. Enlarge programs already underway to improve military understanding of the media via public affairs instruction in service schools, to include media participation when possible.

c. Seek improved media understanding of the military through more visits by commanders and line officers to news organizations.

d. CJCS should recommend that the Secretary of Defense host at an early date a working meeting with representatives of the broadcast news media to explore the special problems of ensuring military security when and if there is real-time or near real-time news media audiovisual coverage of a battlefield and, if special problems exist, how they can best be dealt with consistent with the basic principle set forth at the beginning of this section of the report.

The Panel members fully support the statement of principle and the supporting recommendations listed above and so indicate by their signatures below:

Winant Sidle, Major General, USA, Retired
Chairman

Brent Baker, Captain, USN

Fred C. Lash, Major, USMC

Keyes Beech

James Major, Captain, USN

Scott M. Cutlip

Wendell S. Merick

John T. Halbert

Robert O'Brien, Colonel, USAF
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)

Billy Hunt

Richard S. Salant

George Kirschenbauer, Colonel, USA

Barry Zorthian

A. J. Langguth

SECTION II:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning. This can be assured in the great majority of cases by implementing the following:

a. Review all joint planning documents to assure that JCS guidance in public affairs matters is adequate.

b. When sending implementing orders to Commanders in Chief in the field, direct that the CINC planners include consideration of public information aspects.

c. Inform the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) of an impending military operation at the earliest possible time. This information should appropriately come from the Secretary of Defense.

d. Complete the plan, currently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.

e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

Comments

1. Under the current system of planning for military operations, provisions exist to include public affairs planning but it is neither mandatory nor certain that current joint planning documents are adequate from a public affairs standpoint. The basic purpose of this recommendation is to help assure that public affairs aspects are considered as soon as possible in the planning cycle for any appropriate military operation and that the public affairs planning guidance is adequate.

2. The panel was unanimous in feeling that every step should be taken to ensure public affairs participation in planning and/or review at every appropriate level. Recommendations 1a, b, and d are designed to assist in implementing this consideration.

3. Panel discussions indicated that it is difficult to determine in advance in all cases when public affairs planning should be included. The panel felt that the best procedure would be to include such planning if there were even a remote chance it would be needed. For example, a strictly covert operation, such as the Son Tay raid in North Vietnam, still requires addressing public affairs considerations if only to be sure that after action coverage adequately fulfills the obligation to inform the American people. Very small, routine operations might be exceptions.

4. Recommendation 1c is self-explanatory. The ASD(PA), as the principal public affairs advisor to both the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, JCS, must be brought into the planning process as soon as possible. In view of the DOD organization, the panel felt that this should be the responsibility of the Secretary of Defense.

5. We received indications that some commanders take the position that telling something to his public affairs officer is tantamount to telling it to the media. All members of the panel, including its public affairs officers decried this tendency and pointed out that a public affairs specialist is the least likely to release material prematurely to the media. Although the panel did not consider the matter officially, there is no doubt that public affairs officers are just as dedicated to maintaining military security as are operations officers and must know what is going on in a command if they are to do their job!

RECOMMENDATION 2:

When it becomes apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should support the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary.

Comments

1. Media representatives appearing before the panel were unanimous in being opposed to pools in general. However, they all also agreed that they would cooperate in pooling agreements if that were necessary for them to obtain early access to an operation.

2. The media representatives generally felt that DOD should select the organizations to participate in pools, and the organizations should select the individual reporters. (See Recommendation 3.)

3. The media were unanimous in requesting that pools be terminated as soon as possible and "full coverage" allowed. "Full coverage" appeared to be a relative term, and some agreed that even this might be limited in cases where security, logistics, and the size of the operation created limitations that would not permit any and all bona fide reporters to cover an event. The panel felt that any limitations would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis but agreed that maximum possible coverage should be permitted.

4. The media agreed that prior notification of a pooling organization should be as close to H-Hour as possible to minimize the possibility of a story breaking too soon, especially if speculative stories about the operation should appear in media not in the pool or be initiated by one of their reporters not privy to the pool. This would require a pool media decision as to whether to break the story early, despite the embargo on such a break that is inherent in early notification for pooling purposes. The media representatives were not in agreement on this matter but did agree generally that they should not release aspects of the story that they had been made aware of during DOD early notification and which did not appear in the stories already out or in preparation; nor should this privy information be used to confirm speculation concerning an operation.

5. In this connection, the media generally did not agree with a view voiced by some members of the panel that, absolutely to guarantee security, pool notification would not be made until the first military personnel had hit the beach or airhead even though advance military preparation could speed the poolers to the site in the least time possible. The panel did not take a position on this, but some felt that carefully planned pool transportation could meet the media's objections in many, possibly most, cases. For example, in remote areas the pool could be assembled in a location close to the operation using overseas correspondent who would not have to travel from the United States. This is a subject worthy of detailed discussion in the military-media meetings proposed in Recommendation 8a.

6. In this connection, the panel recognized that in many areas of the world an established press presence would be encountered by U.S. forces irrespective of a decision as to whether or not a pool would be used. This consideration would have to be included in initial public affairs planning.

7. There was no unanimity among the media representatives as to whether correspondents, pooled or otherwise, should be in the "first wave" or any other precise point in the operation. All did agree that media presence should be as soon as possible and feasible. The panel believes that such timing has to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

8. Neither the media nor the panel agreed on use in a pool of full-time media employees who are not U.S. citizens. The media tended to agree that, if the parent organization considered such employees reliable, they should be allowed to be pool members. Based on public affairs experience in Vietnam, there were many cases where such employees proved entirely reliable; however, some did not. The panel suggests that this has to be another case-by-case situation.

9. There was also a divergence of opinion among the media as to what news organizations should make up a pool, although all agreed that the most important criterion was probably which organizations cover the widest American audience. Several media representatives suggested specific media pools, but, unfortunately, they varied widely. The panel was not in full agreement on this subject either, but did agree that the following types of news organizations should have top priority. The panel further agreed that DoD should take the factors discussed in this paragraph into account when designating news organizations to participate in a pool.

a. Wire services. AP and UPI to have priority. A reporter from each and a photographer from either one should be adequate. In a crash situation where inadequate planning time has been available, a reporter from one wire service and a photographer from the other could provide a two-person pool.

b. Television. A two-person TV pool (one correspondent, one film/sound man) can do the job for a brief time although perhaps minimally. All TV representatives agreed that a three-person team is better and can do more. A panel suggestion that a six-person team (one cameraman, one sound man, and one reporter each from ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN) seemed agreeable to the four networks although the load on the two technicians would be difficult to handle. The panel has no suggestion on this except that TV pool representatives must have high priority with two representatives as the minimum and augmentation to depend on space available. This should be a matter of discussion at the meetings suggested in recommendation 8a. The question of radio participation in pools must also be resolved.

c. News Magazines. One reporter and one color photographer.

d. Daily newspapers. At least one reporter. The panel agreed with newspaper representatives that, although newspapers do use wire service copy and photos, at least one newspaper pooler is needed for the special aspects of newspaper coverage not provided by the wire services. Criteria suggested for use when deciding which newspaper(s) to include in a pool included: Circulation, whether the newspaper has a news service, does the newspaper specialize in military and foreign affairs, and does it cover the Pentagon regularly. There was some agreement among the media representatives that there are probably not more than 8-10 newspapers which should be considered for pooling under these criteria.

10. In addition to the type of embargo necessary when a pooling news agency is notified in advance about a military operation (i.e., nothing to be said about it until it begins) there is another type applicable to some military operations. This second type was used with great success in Vietnam and restricts media accompanying the forces from filing or releasing any information about the progress of the operation until the on-scene commander determines that such release will not impair his security by informing the opposing commander about his objectives. Normally, this is not a problem as general objectives quickly become apparent. In the case of a special objective, there might be some delay in authorizing stories until either the objective is attained or it is obvious the enemy commander knows what it is. In any case, this type of embargo is an option to planners that the media would almost certainly accept as opposed to not having correspondents with the forces from the outset or close to it. The panel did not have a consensus on this matter.

11. Media representatives emphasized the readiness of correspondents to accept, as in the past, the physical dangers inherent in military operations and agreed that the personal security of correspondents should not be a factor in planning media participation in military operations.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

In connection with the use of pools, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary of Defense that he study the matter of whether to use a pre-established and constantly updated accreditation or notification list of correspondents in case of a military operation for which a pool is required or just the establishment of a news agency list for use in the same circumstances.

Comments

1. The panel envisions that in either case the agency would select the individual(s) to be its representatives in the pool. In the case of the accreditation/notification list, there would presumably be several names from each news agency/organization to provide the necessary flexibility. The agency would have provided the names in advance to DoD. In the case of the news agency/organization list, DoD would decide which agencies would be in the pool and the agencies would pick the person(s) desired without reference to a list. There was no agreement as to whether DoD should have approval authority of the individuals named to be pool members. The media representatives were unanimously against such approval as were some members of the panel. However, other panel members believed that in the case of an extremely sensitive operation, DoD should have such authority.

2. There was no agreement among either those who appeared before the panel or among the panel itself on this matter. More in both groups seemed to favor simply establishing a news agency list including wire services, television, news magazines and newspapers from which to pick when DOD establishes a pool.

3. This particular problem is one that should be resolved in advance of a military operation and should be a subject of discussion in connection with the military-media meetings suggested in Recommendation 8a.

4. This recommendation does not concern the accreditation that would have to be given each correspondent covering an operation, either at first or later, by the senior on-site commander. Traditionally, this accreditation is limited to establishing that the individual is a bona fide reporter (represents an actual media organization).

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That a basic tenet governing media access to military operations should be voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military. These rules should be as few as possible and should be worked out during the planning process for each operation. Violations would mean exclusion of the correspondent(s) concerned from further coverage of the operation.

Comments

1. The media were in support of this concept as opposed to formal censorship of any type, and all media representatives agreed that their organizations would abide by these ground rules. This arrangement would place a heavy responsibility on the news media to exercise care so as not to inadvertently jeopardize mission security or troop safety.

2. The guidelines/ground rules are envisioned to be similar to those used in Vietnam (a copy at Enclosure 6). Recognizing that each situation will be different, public affairs planners could use the Vietnam rules as a starting point, as they were worked out empirically during Vietnam by public affairs and security personnel and, for the most part, in cooperation with news media on the scene. All media representatives who addressed the issue agreed that the ground rules worked out satisfactorily in Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Public affairs planning for military operations should include sufficient equipment and qualified military personnel whose function is to assist correspondents in covering the operation adequately.

Comments

1. The military personnel referred to in this recommendation are normally called escorts; however, this term has developed some unfortunate connotations as far as the media are concerned. In any case, the panel's recommendation is designed to provide personnel who, acting as agents of the on-scene commander, will perform such functions as keep the correspondents abreast of the situation; arrange for interviews and briefings; arrange for their transportation to appropriate locations; ensure they are fed and housed, if necessary; and be as helpful as possible consistent with security and troop safety.

2. Almost all of the media representatives agreed that such escorts are desirable, especially at the beginning of an operation, to assist in media coverage. As the operation progresses and the reporters become familiar with what is going on, the media representatives were generally less enthusiastic about this type of assistance.

3. All the media were against escorts if their goal was to try to direct, censor, or slant coverage. However, most agreed that pointing out possible ground rule violations and security problems would be part of the escort's responsibility.

4. The point was made to the panel and the media representatives that escorts were often required in Vietnam, especially after about mid-1968, without many problems arising. One of the major advantages of escorts was making sure the reporters had a full and accurate understanding of the operation being covered.

5. The senior on-scene commander will decide how long escorting should continue after an operation begins.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Planners should carefully consider media communications requirements to assure the earliest feasible availability. However, these communications must not interfere with combat and combat support operations. If necessary and feasible, plans should include communicative facilities dedicated to the news media.

Comments

1. Media representatives were unanimous in preferring provision for use of their own communications or using local civilian communications when possible. They were also unanimous, however, in the need for access to military communications if nothing else were available, especially in the opening stages of an operation.

2. Permitting media coverage without providing some sort of filing capability does not make sense unless an embargo is in force.

3. Although not discussed in depth during the panel meetings, communications availability is an obvious factor in determining press pool size. Planners should consider the varying deadlines of the different types of media. For example, newsmagazine reporters usually have more time to file thus permitting courier service as a possible satisfactory solution from their standpoint.

4. There was considerable discussion of the possibility of media-provided satellite uplinks being a future threat to security if technology permits real-time or near real-time copy and film/tape processing. The media representatives felt that such a possibility was not imminent; however, the discussions resulted in Recommendation 3d being included in the report. One panel member made the point that such real-time or near real-time capability has long existed for radio news including the Murrow reporting during World War II.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Planning factors should include provision for intra- and inter-theater transportation support of the media. There was no Panel comment on this matter.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

a. CJCS should recommend to the Secretary of Defense that a program be undertaken by ASD(PA) for top military public affairs representatives to meet with news organization leadership, to include meetings with individual news organizations, on a reasonably regular basis to discuss mutual problems, including relationships with the media during military operations and exercises. This program should begin as soon as possible.

b. Enlarge programs already underway to improve military understanding of the media via public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges, to include media participation when possible.

c. Seek improved media understanding of the military through more visits by commanders and line officers to news organizations.

d. CJCS should recommend that the Secretary of Defense host at an early date a working meeting with representatives of the broadcast news media to explore the special problems of ensuring military security when and if there is real-time news media audiovisual coverage of a battlefield and, if special problems exist, how they can best be dealt with consistent with the basic principle set forth at the beginning of this section of the report.

Comments

1. The panel became convinced during its meetings with both media and military representatives that any current actual or perceived lack of mutual understanding and cooperation could be largely eliminated through the time-tested vehicle of having reasonable people sit down with reasonable people and discuss their problems. Although some of this has occurred from time to time through the years, there has not been enough, especially in recent years. The panel envisages that these meetings would be between ASD(PA) and/or his representatives and the senior leadership of both media umbrella organizations and individual major news organizations. A number of media representatives appearing before the panel said that they thought the media would be happy to participate in such a program. The program should include use of the Chiefs/Directors of Public Affairs of the Services, some of whom are already doing this.

2. Such meetings would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss problems or potential problems involving future military operations/exercises such as pooling, security and troop safety, accreditation, logistic support, and, most importantly, improving mutual respect, trust, understanding, and cooperation in general.

3. The panel does not exclude any news organizations in this recommendation, but practicality will lead to emphasis on meetings with major organizations. It would be equally useful for commanders in the field and their public affairs officers to conduct similar meetings with local and regional media in their areas, some of which are also underway at this time.

4. Both the panel and the media representatives lauded the efforts underway today to reinsert meaningful public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges. Many officers are sheltered from becoming involved with the news media until they are promoted to certain assignments where they suddenly come face-to-face with the media. If they have not been adequately informed in advance of the mutual

with each other, they sometimes tend to make inadequate decisions concerning media matters. In this connection, several media representatives told the panel they would be, and in some cases have already been, delighted to cooperate in this process by talking to classes and seminars.

5. Several media representatives also were enthusiastic about undertaking an effort to inform their employees about the military, primarily through visits of commanders and other appropriate personnel to their headquarters or elsewhere in their organizations. It was also apparent that some media are concerned with this problem to the point that they are taking an introspective look at their relations not only with the military but other institutions.

General Comments:

1. The panel agreed that public affairs planning for military operations involving allied forces should also consider making plans flexible enough to cover allied media participation, even in pools in some cases.

2. It was pointed out to the panel and should be noted that planners may also have to consider the desires of U.S. Ambassadors and their country teams when operations take place in friendly foreign countries. Some of these problems can, of course, be handled by the commanders and senior public affairs personnel on the scene, but they should be alerted to them in advance.

3. The media representatives all agreed that U.S. media should have first priority in covering U.S. military operations. The panel generally agreed that this must be handled on a case-by-case basis, especially when allied forces are involved.

Final Comment:

An adversarial -- perhaps politely critical would be a better term -- relationship between the media and the government, including the military, is healthy and helps guarantee that both institutions do a good job. However, this relationship must not become antagonistic -- an "us versus them" relationship. The appropriate media role in relation to the government has been summarized aptly as being neither that of a lap dog nor an attack dog but, rather, a watch dog. Mutual antagonism and distrust are not in the best interests of the media, the military, or the American people.

In the final analysis, no statement of principles, policies, or procedures, no matter how carefully crafted, can guarantee the desired results because they have to be carried out by people -- the people in the military and the people

in the media. So, it is the good will of the people involved, their spirit, their genuine efforts to do the job for the benefit of the United States, on which a civil and fruitful relationship hinges.

The panel believes that, if its recommendations are adopted, and the people involved are infused with the proper spirit, the twin imperatives of genuine mission security/troop safety on the one hand and a free flow of information to the American public on the other will be achieved.

In other words, the optimum solution to ensure proper media coverage of military operations will be to have the military -- represented by competent, professional public affairs personnel and commanders who understand media problems -- working with the media -- represented by competent, professional reporters and editors who understand military problems -- in a nonantagonistic atmosphere. The panel urges both institutions to adopt this philosophy and make it work.

Winant Sidle
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Chairman