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The Media and the Persian Gulf War

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Israeli agents to assure them that his big gun had no offensive potential. Initially the British and Israelis were uninterested in the large-gun project, believing it was a dead end. They became more concerned when Bull involved himself in more dangerous projects, including the Iraqi three-stage rocket launched in December 1989. By early 1990 Bull was receiving definite warnings to stop working for the Hussein regime, but "Iraqi contracts were keeping his company alive, and without them he would go bankrupt." In March 1990 Gerald Bull was gunned down in Brussels by unknown killers, his big gun still unfired. Ironically, in mid-1992 a gun-launched satellite of the type Bull had been trying also to build in Iraq was nearly ready to test in Livermore, California.

The author is a journalist who was the Washington bureau chief for *MacLean's* (the Canadian equivalent of *Time* magazine) during the investigation into Bull's South African arms dealings. Drawing on numerous interviews with Bull's family and former colleagues, Lowther has written a sympathetic account of a technically gifted man who, by virtue of his knowledge and abilities but also his personal flaws, became a dangerous man as well. *Arms and the Man* is a readable account of the danger a frustrated weapons scientist can pose in today's world, one that is full of technically illiterate but wealthy and hostile regimes.

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Denton, Robert E., Jr., ed. *The Media and the Persian Gulf War*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993. 344pp. $55

This essay collection examines the news media's role and impact during the Persian Gulf War. Robert Denton deals with issues that have been largely ignored until now, ranging from a content analysis by Jannett Kenner Muir of C-Span coverage, and an assessment by Dan Nimmo and Mark Hovind of radio and television talk shows, to a perceptive examination by Matthew P. McAllister of how advertising has used Gulf War images. In some cases, the conclusions might be surprising. For example, and in contrast to the much-touted "Global Village" argument that the world's electronic media are increasingly homogenized, David Swanson shows that television coverage of the war varied by country even though all the newsmen used the same sources of information and the same video footage.

On the other hand, readers might find some chapters more challenging than rewarding. The authors of "News Viewing, Authoritarianism, and Attitudes" try to find positive links between authoritarianism and support for the war and between news viewing and a supportive attitude. The detailed discussion of the regression analysis involved, however, will leave many readers unconvinced about the conclusions; not only do I have some unease with regression analysis itself, but some of the conclusions are not clearly tied to that analysis (or by footnotes to others' work). For instance, the authors conclude that news viewing creates positive attitudes; they then add

that "those who initially saw coverage of the war and developed pro-war attitudes may have then become selective in their exposure to, and interpretation of subsequent coverage." In my understanding, it is generally assumed that news viewing affects attitudes rather than the reverse. The unusual nature of the conclusion is intriguing, but I am frustrated by the absence of supporting information. Similarly, Denton asserts in his own essay, "TV as an Instrument of War," that "CBS, in an effort to increase advertising sales, reassured sponsors that war specials would be tailored to provide good lead-ins to commercials." Sadly, he does not let us know where he got the explosive information that, for CBS, Desert Storm was little more than a docudrama to be tailored for its commercial interests.

Only two chapters truly disappointed me: "The Natural, and Inevitable, Phases of War Reporting," by Donald Shaw and Shannon Martin, and "The Rules of the Game: The Military and the Press in the Persian Gulf War," by Gary Woodward.

"The Natural, and Inevitable, Phases of War Reporting" attempts to demonstrate that Vietnam and the Persian Gulf went through three similar phases of reporting: reliance on and trust in military information, questioning of military information, and finally pluralistic views and eventual dissent. After multiple reads, I am not yet convinced. Shaw and Martin leave it to the reader to determine the chronology of the three phases—I still have doubts about when I would date each phase in the conflicts. Also, I do not believe that the authors' path toward comparative analysis is the appropriate route for an analysis of news media-military relations across the two conflicts—the authors hide the dissimilarities in their search for an overarching schema for categorizing the two wars.

In "The Rules of the Game," Woodward argues that the military's rules for media coverage were part of a news management policy designed to avoid negative publicity. However, he has based his essay almost exclusively on information from reporters and ignores military sources (which are easily accessible—a congressional committee has published the war plan's press-guidance rules). Thus, his case is one-sided. In addition, Woodward disregards the particular conditions that led to the media's absence from Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989). Without such analysis one can question his conclusion that there is a definite pattern of news management by the U.S. military. Moreover, many protagonists would not agree with his assertions. For instance, he states that the pool arrangements to cover Operation Earnest Will in 1987 were "not a resounding success," but both the Pentagon and most journalists deployed there said just the opposite.

The occasional references to the "censorship" of the Pentagon and the "news management" designed to manipulate the will of the people might aggravate some readers of the *Naval War College Review*, but it should not obscure this work's good point—its diversity of subjects and perspectives.

If you're interested in how the news media reported the Gulf War, this book is a good starting point.

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Hinds, Lynn Boyd and Windt, Theodore Otto, Jr. *The Cold War as Rhetoric: The Beginnings, 1945–1950.* New York: Praeger, 1991. 272pp. $52

While this period of history, one of central interest to students of national security, has been often explored, Lynn Hinds and Theodore Windt offer a fresh perspective. They apply techniques of rhetorical analysis to the juncture when Churchill, Truman, Marshall, and others established the terms that defined national security debate for more than forty years. This challenging evaluation is especially timely as we move beyond the rhetoric of the Cold War and our leaders engage in a still-incomplete effort to establish new metaphors, images, narratives, and arguments to shape national security policies during coming decades.

We are accustomed to thinking of rhetoric as the froth on the waves, something carried forward by deeper, more substantial economic, military, or social currents. However, the authors ask us to reverse that view of the world and look at rhetoric as the force that shapes and constrains economic and military actions. They argue convincingly that metaphor and image shape both our understanding and the reality in which we live.

Building on Kenneth Burke's published writings (spanning the period 1931–1966), which are the foundation for much of contemporary thinking about rhetoric, Hinds and Windt argue that to name a thing is "magical," because it gives meaningful existence. By naming events we give them meaning, and the new events achieve clearer meaning when we associate them by analogy with something already known; thus Saddam Hussein is compared to Hitler, and the Somali situation is compared to U.S.–style gangsterism. The authors distinguish between actuality (the world of actual events and objects) and reality (the world of meaning). Reality is the world in which men and women live most of the time, and it is a world created by and sustained by rhetoric.

Once a meaning gains popular acceptance, it shapes our perception. For example, after Walter Lippmann popularized the phrase "Cold War," Churchill had created the image of the iron curtain, and Truman and others had associated Munich and appeasement with efforts to accommodate Soviet demands, Americans came to see all Soviet actions and statements within those contexts. Certain policies could be deduced from this rhetorical reality, and other security policies were literally inconceivable.

Rhetorical analyses of a range of subjects have appeared in recent years, reflecting the growing maturity of communication studies. Contemporary scholars such as Dan Nimmo, Kathleen Jamieson, and Lynda Kaid have produced an impressive literature with important lessons for students of national