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## Introduction

KISLOVODSK, USSR, April 25, 1991—*In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, Secretary of State James A. Baker III hoped to use the defeat of Iraq's Saddam Hussein to push Arabs and Israelis into peace talks.*

*Baker traveled to this resort in the southern Caucasus region of Russia to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh. Baker's goal, telegraphed to reporters beforehand, was to extract the Soviet Union's endorsement for the new Arab-Israeli negotiating effort. This would strengthen his hand as he traveled on to the Middle East to pursue his diplomacy.*

*For journalists in the State Department press corps accompanying Baker, this, then, would be their measure of his success or failure that day: could he win over the Soviets, whose goals in the Middle East since World War II had been opposite to Washington's? As journalists waited outside the guest house where the meeting was to take place, Bessmertnykh appeared and began chatting with them. The reporters asked him if Moscow would support the U.S. proposals for new Middle East peace talks. Bessmertnykh was noncommittal. Later, before the meeting, Bessmertnykh and Baker appeared before the cameras for a photo opportunity. Same question to Bessmertnykh. Same answer. After the meeting, the two ministers held a formal press conference. Surely all would be clear now, the reporters thought. For a third time, they asked the question in various ways. To their surprise, Bessmertnykh still declined to give a clear endorsement of the American proposals.*

*When the press conference ended, reporters headed for the telephones to report the story that Baker, en route to the Middle East, had failed to gain the USSR's unequivocal endorsement. Given the speed and scope of worldwide*

*communications, the story would soon be all over world capitals, where attention was on the future of the Middle East following Operation Desert Storm. Baker's diplomacy would be more difficult.*

*Baker's spokeswoman, Margaret Tutwiler, caught wind of what the press corps was about to report. Suddenly, reporters were recalled from their work. Baker and Bessmertnykh were going to hold another press conference. If the picturesque but run-down spa of Kislovodsk had been a movie set, this would have been "Take Two." But American reporters, having already given Bessmertnykh ample opportunity to answer the question of the day, conspired among themselves not to ask any further questions about the Middle East. If the Soviet was going to change his tune, he would have to do it on his own. The reporters asked about anything else they could think of—Afghanistan, arms control, and so on. Finally, one of Bessmertnykh's aides whispered in the ear of a Soviet reporter and—surprise!—the foreign minister called on him. The Soviet reporter asked this "incisive" question: "Mr. Foreign Minister, have you anything further to say about the Middle East?"*

*Hitting that "softball" out of the park, the Soviet official finally did endorse the U.S. plan, completely reversing the headline of the day . . . and in the process facilitating the remainder of Baker's diplomatic mission in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>*

I open with this anecdote because it offers a view of the relationship between the news media and foreign policy officials that differs from the popular image of distance and confrontation. It is a view that undergirds this study. The relationship, examined up close, is so intertwined that at times it is all but impossible to determine who is affecting whom—who is setting the agenda and who is following it. Was it the news media that set the course of events that day in Kislovodsk? After all, to Baker and Bessmertnykh, the perceptions of the assembled press corps, with their cameras and notepads, were vital to the success of their policies. The persistent questions and the whirring videocameras meant they had to conduct their diplomacy far more publicly than they would have liked. Bessmertnykh said words—in effect, etching policy in stone—that clearly he had been reluctant to use. Did the news media force a change in Soviet policy—or merely in rhetoric? Or were the officials using the media? In the end, the journalists reported what Baker and Bessmertnykh wanted them to. They had no choice. After the second press conference was over, members of the

press corps tore up their radio and TV scripts or put a new, more positive lead paragraph on their written accounts of the day's events. The story appeared, with some caveats, in a way that helped Baker, who was legendary among the Washington press corps for using the news media for his own purposes.

These questions, and others addressed below, are not simple ones. But attempting to answer them is vital in an age when information and images move around the world instantaneously, seemingly affecting the lives of millions, the outcomes of wars, the foundations of states.

The role of television in affecting American public opinion and the policies of U.S. administrations has been the subject of scrutiny and anxiety at least since the Vietnam War. This concern has grown over the past decade, driven by events such as the uprising of Chinese students in Tiananmen Square, the Persian Gulf War, two coup attempts in Moscow, and the horrors of Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda, not to mention assorted dramatic acts of terrorism or the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. This period roughly parallels the creation and astonishing growth of Ted Turner's Cable News Network (CNN), which has made twenty-four-hour-a-day global television news a reality and turned live broadcasting from around the world into a humdrum occurrence.

Various commentators have ascribed sundry new powers to the miniaturized cameras and satellite dishes employed in modern television news gathering—and to the men and women behind them. Some of these observations are accurate; many are not. Understanding properly the role of the news media is vital to the future of American foreign policy and, without exaggeration, to the American way of governing. Getting it right opens the possibility that reporters and government officials will be able to work better together, carrying out their similar, if often opposed, tasks for the benefit of American society. It also will ensure that officials, when they formulate policies that determine the nation's future and put American lives at risk, better understand the potential impact of the news media on themselves and those who voted them into office. Getting it wrong has high costs. Whether the media are the culprit or whether the fault lies in government policies, a public that is pushed into each (televised) instance of tragedy somewhere in the world, only to be pulled out when the (televised) costs become too high, likely will soon tire of the exercise. As of this writing, the nation's mood offers evidence that precisely this is happening.

This book attempts to document and understand one small, but vital, slice of the news media's impact: its effect on U.S. military intervention in an era when full-scale war seems to be, at least temporarily, a phenomenon of the past. The 1990s have seen the proliferation of limited military operations where less than "vital" interests, as traditionally defined, are at stake. These are peace operations.

The view that the news media's influence has usurped the traditional function of government policymakers was perhaps stated most starkly by the dean of American diplomacy, George F. Kennan. Writing in his private diary as U.S. troops landed in Somalia to combat mass starvation, Kennan worried that if such momentous decisions are made by popular impulse stirred by fleeting television images of horror, "then there is no place . . . for what have traditionally been regarded as the responsible deliberative organs of our government, in both the executive and legislative branches."<sup>2</sup> Variations on this view have also been stated by personalities as disparate as billionaire presidential candidate H. Ross Perot and former UN secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali. During the 1992 presidential campaign, Perot declared on the ABC News program *20/20* that the advent of instantaneous worldwide communication has made embassies and their inhabitants "relics of the days of sailing ships."<sup>3</sup> More recently, Boutros-Ghali has said, "For the past two centuries, it was law that provided the source of authority for democracy. Today, law seems to be replaced by opinion as the source of authority, and the media serve as the arbiter of public opinion."<sup>4</sup>

This book argues that these concerns are misplaced, and the observations behind them are in error. Collectively, the comments above implicitly accept the existence of what has come to be called the "CNN effect." And to complicate matters, the term is understood differently by commentators both inside and outside the news media. Some use it to describe the "diplomatic ping-pong match" that occurs when world leaders use the network to send messages to one another during an international crisis such as the Persian Gulf War.<sup>5</sup> Others use it to describe the shrinkage of the time in which foreign policy officials must respond to world events that are nearly instantaneously displayed on their, and many others', television screens. Former assistant secretary of state Rozanne Ridgway has spoken of a "CNN curve," which she describes as CNN's ability to prompt popular demands for action by displaying images of starvation or other

tragedy, only to reverse this sentiment when Americans are killed while trying to help.<sup>6</sup>

A much narrower definition of the CNN effect, one that is implicit in Kennan's diary entry, describes it as a *loss of policy control* on the part of government officials supposedly charged with making that policy.<sup>7</sup> This definition asks whether there is an independent effect on the foreign-policy making process by media such as CNN, which virtually wrest control from policymakers, who in turn can do little or nothing about this transformation. While this definition comes closer to the policymaking process itself, its presumption that the news media either have or do not have this powerful effect is too stark a distinction.

This book shows that the CNN effect implied by Kennan does not exist. It disappears under the examination that follows of numerous incidents in which the media supposedly played a major policy role. But to say that the news media do not steal policy control from foreign-policy decision makers is not sufficient. One must look at why the media, especially television, sometimes seem to have such power. How, when, and why do media reports inject themselves into the policymaking process, and what, if anything, can officials do about it?

A detailed look at the modern news media and foreign-policy makers, seen through the prism of peace operations, reveals a relationship like the one that played out in Kislovodsk. The relationship is far more complex, situational, and interwoven than the above definitions imply. As stated above, the news media are rarely, if ever, independent movers of policy. In hundreds of hours of interviews with people on both sides of the camera, and in a close examination of four peace operations, I found no evidence that the news media, *by themselves*, force U.S. government officials to change their policies. But, under the right conditions, the news media nonetheless can have a powerful effect on process. *And those conditions are almost always set by foreign-policy makers themselves or by the growing number of policy actors on the international stage.* If officials let others dominate the policy debate, if they do not closely monitor the progress and results of their own policies, if they fail to build and maintain popular and congressional support for a course of action, if they step beyond the bounds of their public mandate or fail to anticipate problems, they may suddenly seem driven by the news media and its agenda. They may discover what has been called the "dark side" of the CNN effect, a force—as

sudden, immediate, and powerful as an avenging angel—that can sweep them along in its path.<sup>8</sup> This seemingly random, but in fact predictable, exercise of media influence was described graphically by a senior diplomat at the U.S. mission to the United Nations:

It is very difficult to work out and anticipate how the CNN factor will come into play. It is like waking up with a big bruise, and you don't know where it came from and what hit you.<sup>9</sup>

The central point of this book is that the very nature of peace operations, as described in chapter 3, opens policymakers up to these sorts of potential influences. Peace operations thus require a more sophisticated understanding on the part of military and civilian officials of news media behaviors, and a more intricate melding of military, political, and public affairs objectives.

This more nuanced view of the CNN effect helps reconcile starkly competing visions of the news media's influence. On one hand is the view that CNN in particular can be an awesomely powerful, even frightening, tool in the hands of government officials, even in a democratic society. This view was frequently articulated in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990–91, which saw an extraordinary effort by the U.S. military to formally control the news media, and the determined use of the media by civilians in the Bush administration. On the other hand are the almost plaintive cries of Kennan and Boutros-Ghali just a few years later.

In truth, the news media's impact is almost invariably due to the conditions that officials themselves (or other policy actors) create. The impact depends on the type of crisis involved—whether it is warfare or a peace operation, and, in the latter case, whether the operation is primarily humanitarian in nature or primarily peacekeeping or peacemaking. And, as described below, in peace operations, at least, a great deal depends on which phase the operation is in. Yet these findings preserve a greater potential role for officials than that seen by many commentators.

The chapters that follow have an additional purpose. They attempt to disentangle the effects of modern communications technology from the effects of geopolitical changes on the news media–policy relationship.

First, technology. Much of the impact of the increased speed of communication—I focus on global real-time television, but facsimile machines, the Internet, and other technological advances can illustrate the point just

as well—falls on the conduct and processes of making foreign policy, rather than on the policy itself. According to the dozens of officials with whom I spoke, real-time television can accelerate the governmental decision-making process, sometimes for good, sometimes for ill. It can force government officials to spend far more time than they used to explaining and selling their policies to the public(s) and worrying about how those policies will be received. Dramatic real-time reports can prompt rhetorical adjustments by the president and his lieutenants. If allowed, these reports can exercise a powerful agenda-setting function, forcing a sharp and sudden change of focus at the upper levels of government. In short, they make the conduct of foreign policy and the use of military force more transparent, subjecting diplomats and military officers to a level of democratic review that has little, if any, historical precedent. For this reason, many officials do not like these changes.

Many years after that day in Kislovodsk, Baker would say the effects of technology are two: temporal and spatial. By the term “spatial,” Baker meant that the camera now can bring crises from virtually anywhere around the world onto the television screen and thus directly into officials’ in-boxes.<sup>10</sup> Before, the true extent of civil war, famine, or anarchy might go unknown—or, more likely, be hotly debated—for decades. I heard much the same from many other top officials of the Bush and Clinton administrations.

Temporal effects have already been discussed briefly. The important point here is that what has really changed is officials’ margin of error. It has narrowed considerably. To sympathize with the U.S. official quoted above, what seems to be a placid policy course on one day can seem to drown in a media frenzy the next. As discussed in chapter 1, even during the Persian Gulf crisis, generally seen as a model of official handling of the news media, there were several points at which the Bush administration very nearly let control over the characterization of events slip from its grasp and into the news media’s.<sup>11</sup> Again, the very existence of these risks further indicates that official prerogatives do remain.

For all its wonders, modern communications technology has left many important variables unchanged. Even those media effects that do exist become absorbed or diluted over time. There is evidence that government officials are becoming more adept at dealing with the temporal pressures associated with the CNN effect and, sadly, in spatial terms, that both they

and the viewing public are becoming increasingly inoculated to the humanitarian horrors from afar that they see on television.

More important, when deciding whether to send U.S. military forces into harm's way or whether to withdraw them, officials look far beyond the realm of portable satellite dishes, laptop computers, handheld video-cameras, and the like. The evidence strongly suggests that they examine the same constellation of factors they always have: the risks of intervention, the likely benefits of the mission, the stakes for the country, the depth of congressional support, the state of public opinion. The public, for its part, continues to weigh the real costs of a military mission against the perceived U.S. interests.<sup>12</sup> If those costs—chiefly American combat casualties—are shown on television, it may have a temporal effect, speeding the end of a mission that already lacks public support. But television has little effect on the public's basic calculation of costs and interests.

A final question concerns how technology has altered, if at all, the day-to-day relationship between reporters and the officials they cover. CNN and its brethren have had one impact in this regard, one that has been little noted outside some journalistic circles. The task of reporting basic facts—the traditional who, what, when, and where of journalism—has increasingly fallen to CNN and other instant news outlets, which range from new cable television-and-Internet hybrids to personalized electronic wire services. They deliver the news hours before the morning newspaper. For this very reason, an increasing portion of the newspaper has become devoted to journalism's why. Many officials felt newspaper coverage of them and their policies has become more analytical and interpretive—less objective, less a mere recording of the day's facts. Beyond the scope of this study, but worthy of further investigation, is the impact of the Internet and related electronic communications on objectivity. Much of the information that floods the Internet is unmediated, in the sense that it may come from non-traditional sources, is not subject to traditional journalistic filtering, and has a high emotional or subjective content.

Notwithstanding these developments—and the ravages of Vietnam, Watergate, and even more recent history on reporter-official relations—here, too, less has changed than would seem at first glance. Reporters' reliance on "official news," the statements and actions of high government officials, remains strong. Their relationship with government officials

remains largely as it was described more than thirty years ago by Bernard Cohen in his seminal study of State Department correspondents and officials, *The Press and Foreign Policy*.<sup>13</sup>

Officials, however much they might bemoan the fact, cannot conduct modern foreign policy without explaining it to, and building support among, the American public. This they do through the news media. At times, policymakers, and especially the president, through their powers of governance, can string along the news media and the American public, or deceive them about their course. But if government officials stray too far from their public mandate, the news media will sooner or later make this fact transparent, and those officials will find public opinion in open revolt, demanding, usually without great specificity, a change of policy. Thus, more than passing similarities can be found between what eventually happened in Vietnam and what happened in Somalia in the summer and fall of 1993. Somalia lacked a geostrategic rationale such as the containment of communism, which persuaded Americans to sustain costs in Vietnam long after they otherwise would have, but it had real-time television to bring the costs to the American people for evaluation much more rapidly.

By the same token, it is virtually impossible for the news media and public opinion to take policymakers in a direction that is 180 degrees from their intended course. Surveying U.S. foreign policy as it pertained to peace operations from 1991 to 1995, I found not a single instance where the news media, with their dramatic images and words, their pervasive reporting, their persistent questions, were the sole cause of a reversal of policy. Rather, the news media had an impact on policy when that policy was weakly held, when it was in flux, or when it did not have congressional and public support. If policymakers are inattentive or unsure, then someone else will determine the direction. When policy is clear and strongly held by the executive branch, is communicated well, and has congressional and public backing, the news media tend to follow. Indeed, the media's very nature and the still-powerful tyranny of "objectivity" ensure that it can do nothing else. These observations are not mine alone, of course. They were stated perhaps most eloquently by Daniel C. Hallin in his study of print and television coverage of Vietnam, *The "Uncensored War"*.<sup>14</sup> Historian Michael Beschloss, award-winning television journalist Ted Koppel, and others have made similar observations.<sup>15</sup>

Chapters 4 and 5 will show repeatedly how the news media are not the independent actors in the foreign-policy decision-making process they often are described to be, but rather a part of the process itself.

If modern communications technology provides only part—indeed, a small part—of the explanation for the *apparent* growth in the news media's power, then we must look elsewhere for the rest of the explanation. This search is complicated by the fact that the technological developments already noted occurred at roughly the same time the international system was undergoing fundamental changes.

The initial change that concerns us is the demise of the Cold War. If, as Hallin states, the news media's impact is inversely proportional to the level of consensus in society, then the existence (or belief in the existence) of a Soviet threat can be seen as the geostrategic glue that bound officials, reporters, and public together for more than forty years. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, journalists often challenged the specific tactics and policies that presidents used to fight the Cold War. But they were more supportive of the strategy of containment and the notion that the Soviet Union was a mortal threat to the nation than is usually remembered. Today's headlines reveal the lack of a similar *raison d'être* for American foreign policy around which society—and journalism—might form a consensus.

The waning of the Cold War led directly to the second major change discussed in this study, the addition of new missions that the U.S. military is called upon to prepare and conduct. These peace operations differ radically in many aspects from traditional warfare. But for our purposes, the most important difference is in the relationship between the mission on the one hand and the news media and public opinion on the other. In war, the nation is mobilized, major news media often follow leaders and public to the point of jingoism, the enemy is known, and the desired goal (if not the means to it) is clear: victory. None of this is true during peace operations. While peace operations are arguably a legitimate part of U.S. security policy, they do not invest the nation's attention and resources as does war. The nation's physical or economic survival is not at stake. Mass public opinion is not mobilized in the same way. For this reason and because of the distinct nature of the new "battlefields," *the news media cannot be restricted in the same way*. Indeed, as discussed in chapter 3, the traditional wartime relationship between reporters and officials is turned virtually on its head. Rather than controlling reporters, in peace operations

military commanders and their civilian bosses desperately need them to help build support, to explain what may be a complex and indistinct picture, and even to gather useful information for them in the field. In return, they must offer access and independence that allow reporters to distance themselves from their would-be chaperones in the U.S. military. The different nature of the “combat,” terrain, and policy actors in places from Mogadishu to Port-au-Prince further tips the scales in favor of reporters. Finally, as a peace operation comes to an end, its outcome is likely to be much less clear-cut, less easily explained to the media and public, or even less satisfying than that found in warfare.

This changed nature of U.S. military operations accounts for much of the news media’s apparent growing influence in helping determine American foreign policy. While reporters’ tools have changed, the world as we knew it has changed even more. Yet these nonmedia factors have generally been given little attention in discussions of the CNN effect and the like.

For reasons of simplicity and analysis, I have roughly divided the life cycle of a peace operation into two phases. The first encompasses the administration’s diplomatic and political response to a crisis, culminating in decisions on whether and how to deploy U.S. armed forces. If independent news media pressure drove the decision to intervene, the news media can be said to have exerted a *push* effect. The second phase includes the entire time during which U.S. forces are deployed, as well as the decision for and manner of their withdrawal. If news media coverage of a peace operation (especially any setbacks it encounters) independently contributes to the decision to withdraw, the media will have exhibited a *pull* effect.

These effects describe what is widely thought to have happened during the Somalia operation: Televised images of starving children forced President Bush to dispatch American troops to the Horn of Africa in December 1992. He was “pushed” into action he would not have taken otherwise. In this view, that same medium, television, by reporting the tragic costs of the Somalia mission in October 1993, forced President Clinton to withdraw. He was “pulled” out. Although there are grains of truth in both these accounts, this book demonstrates that what really happened in Somalia and the other operations examined here is far more complex, and the role of television and other media was much less influential than is often cited.

Nevertheless, this push/pull division remains a useful tool for analyzing the news media’s role in peace operations. The media’s behavior and

the relationships among the nation's leadership, the public, and news media are quite different when decisions are being made about whether to intervene from when decisions are made after U.S. troops and prestige have been put at risk. I argue throughout this study that the media have greater potential effect once an intervention is under way, even if it is the policy equivalent of sticking a toe in the water to test the temperature. Many who make foreign and national security policy in the U.S. government understand this, with the result that the news media (or more precisely, fear of its effects) can be a negative influence on intervention decisions.

At times, this book uses the term "peace operations" in a generic sense. When so used, it refers to these operations in the broadest context. I take my definition from the Clinton administration's 1994 policy on multilateral peace operations: the entire spectrum of activities from traditional peacekeeping to peace enforcement aimed at defusing and resolving international conflicts.<sup>16</sup> Excluded from this definition at one end of the spectrum is warfare as traditionally understood by the U.S. military and, at the other, quasi-military operations such as drug interdiction that are included under the Defense Department's broader terminology, "operations other than war."

However, the study itself and the interviews I conducted were built around four major cases of peace operations, with a fifth minor case sometimes used for reference. The first case is the international response to the civil wars that broke out in the former Yugoslavia in 1991. The second is Operation Restore Hope, the Bush administration's dispatch of nearly thirty thousand U.S. troops to establish security for humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia, and the subsequent activities by the United States and the United Nations in the second UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), which was under nominal UN control. The third is the international response to the mass slaughter and refugee crisis in Rwanda in spring and summer 1994, particularly Operation Support Hope, the huge U.S. logistics effort in support of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other relief agencies. The fourth is the U.S. intervention in Haiti in September 1994 to restore the elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the follow-on UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). Finally, from time to time I refer to and analyze Operation Provide Comfort, the mission to sustain and protect Iraqi Kurds following their failed revolt at the end of the Persian Gulf War.

These cases obviously do not constitute a complete, nor perhaps even balanced, selection of modern peace operations. Left out are arguably some of the greatest successes of the United Nations and its member states: Namibia's peaceful transition to independence, the holding of elections throughout most of Cambodia and the establishment of a recognized government in Phnom Penh, and the ending of fratricidal bloodshed in El Salvador and Mozambique. These latter operations, while garnering some press and television attention, have not been the subject of media frenzies. Like the news media I write about, I am guilty of focusing on the dramatic, the bloody, and the controversial. I picked the four cases of the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti because each dealt with an actual or prospective U.S. intervention with military force and because each raised at least the appearance of media impact on U.S. government policy or public opinion.

This study focuses almost solely on policy processes (both executive and legislative) and public opinion in the United States. Again, while I hope this approach gives a clear picture of this one subject, it leaves out many others. This approach also risks leaving the reader with the impression that U.S. troops did more, and U.S. policy played a greater role, in these missions than was actually the case. It is not my intention to diminish others' contributions. In Bosnia and throughout the Balkans, troops from Europe, Asia, and elsewhere at first bore the brunt of the frustrating and dangerous work to contain the conflict; in Rwanda, as in many places, volunteer relief workers were the first to address the horrible wounds and were still there long after the television cameras moved on. In terms of news media, I also have focused primarily (although not exclusively) on the U.S.-based media. Of course, this line is harder and harder to draw as mergers, news-sharing, and other cooperative arrangements blur the distinctly national character of many news organizations.

The reason for this focus is twofold. First, my own experiences, occasionally found in the book, are with the U.S. foreign policy machinery and journalism as it is practiced in the United States. Second, the project had to be circumscribed somehow. All the same, this focus points the way toward further areas of useful study. It is a reasonable hypothesis that press coverage of, and public and governmental attitudes toward, peace operations differ around the world. Delineating these differences and the reasons for them would aid in a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. It

might enable government leaders to better understand the sources and limits of public support for peace operations and the impact of national and global news media on both.

My conclusions are my own, but they are based in the first instance on hundreds of hours of interviews with over seventy individuals. I interviewed people from five basic groups: policymakers from the Bush and Clinton administrations; U.S. military officers (particularly from the Army and Marine Corps), including many military spokespersons; UN officials; representatives of relief organizations, both intergovernmental and nongovernmental; and journalists, primarily from television and newspapers. The interviewees were not chosen in a strictly regimented fashion; however, I sought out those individuals I believed were in the best position to determine how the news media had affected them and those around them and to give a perception of public opinion at the time. I purposely tried to interview officials at different levels of policymaking—the military spokesperson in the field and the desk officer at the State Department, as well as the secretary of state and the cabinet department spokesperson. The interviews with fellow journalists were particularly useful in further understanding their interactions with these various groups, as well as their assessment of the impact of their own work. The interviews themselves did not include a standardized set of questions. Rather, I sought to probe each individual's personal experiences, the view from their particular place in the policy "food chain," and their insights into the news media's influence on peace operations. Some government officials, both current and former, and other sources agreed to share their candid views on the condition that their names not be used. While unsatisfying for both the reader and the journalist, I agreed to respect their wishes in the interests of describing the various decision-making processes that surround peace operations as fully as possible.

Other sources of data include a review of the copious literature on the news media, the military, and foreign policy; a survey of newspaper coverage, primarily in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, of the events in question; videotapes of some of the most dramatic events recounted; opinion polls; and data on television coverage of the cases. Some data analyses were performed to determine patterns of television coverage. However, in most cases when I use numerical data, either regarding media performance or public opinion, I draw on others' work. I made no attempt

to characterize media coverage in a mathematical fashion, such as through coding for story content or counting the use of particular words or phrases (bibliometrics). These skills do not come easily to a journalist. This study, then, is not scientific in the purest sense of the word. Rather, I have tried to lay out an understanding of the news media's impact on peace operations that is both analytical and practical. The words of those on the receiving end of that impact speak for themselves.

A few other definitional matters need to be cleared away. As noted in chapter 2, when I use the term "real-time television," I employ the definition provided by fellow journalist Nik Gowing. Real-time television refers not only to images that are broadcast as they occur (that is, live), but images that reach policymakers and other audiences within a few hours of the event.<sup>17</sup> There does not seem to be a substantive difference in impact associated with this brief of a delay in broadcast.

How to disaggregate the effects of the different media that make up the "news media" is always an analytical challenge. When I use the term "news media," I refer collectively to all the major branches of modern journalism—broadcast and cable television, newspapers and magazines, wire services, and radio. At times, particularly if a single story dominates the news, the combined pressures that these media bring into play are a phenomenon in their own right. Most of the discrete examples of supposed media impact examined in this book involve television, and I have tried to make it clear in the text when I am discussing that medium's particular qualities and impact.

My vantage point, of course, is that of a lifelong print journalist with intimate knowledge of the story-selection and news-gathering processes; a decade of experience reporting on U.S. foreign policy and national security; and, even before my research began, a more than passing acquaintance with the work of my colleagues in television news. At the risk of sounding defensive, it is my view and the view of those I interviewed that the printed word and photograph continue to have a distinct impact of their own, notwithstanding the growing dominance of television and the emergence of CNN and its brethren. That newspapers continue to have a substantial impact on the policymaking elite—although perhaps less so on mass public opinion—is clear from several of the stories told here. Dramatic newspaper accounts of the famine in Somalia and the horrific human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia influenced the U.S. govern-

ment decision-making process on whether to intervene. Another medium, radio, helped spur the bloodshed and exodus in Rwanda and played a role in Somalia as well. A study of the news media and peace operations that limited itself to television would be incomplete.

Chapter 1 presents a brief history of the U.S. media's coverage of warfare from the Spanish-American War through the Persian Gulf War, pointing out certain phenomena and relationships between media, military, and public opinion that will be examined in more detail later in the book. Chapter 2 analyzes the changes wrought in the relationship between news media, policymakers, and public, first by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, and second by the emergence of new communications technology. The last section of this chapter begins my detailed examination of the CNN effect. Chapter 3 examines the mechanics of how reporters cover peace operations and interact with different groups on the ground. It shows how the relationship between the media and the military during peace operations differs in several fundamental ways from their relationship in wartime. Chapters 4 and 5 are the core analytical chapters of the book and contain my specific conclusions about the news media's impact on peace operations. Chapter 4 examines the *push* effect: the media's influence on U.S. government decisions about whether to intervene in a crisis by initiating or joining a peace operation. Chapter 5 examines the *pull* effect: the media's influence, once a peace operation is under way, on the conduct of the mission itself, on overall policy, and on public support. Chapter 6 summarizes my conclusions and offers some recommendations for policymakers.

The book's structure is intended to reflect the dual nature of the subject matter as explained above. The chapters are interconnected and can be grouped in two sets. Chapter 1 and, even more so, chapters 3 and 5 focus on military operations that are in progress and on the media-military relationship. Chapters 2 and 4 focus more on diplomacy and the relationship between the news media and foreign policy officials. Like the subjects themselves, these are proximate, not exact, delineations.

A final, somewhat personal, note. This book may be seen by some as an apology for the news media and its many faults written by a member of that profession. It is not intended as such. I have tried not to gloss over the many failures of the news media (especially those of television, in my view). These include failures to aid officials and the public in spotting

emerging problems before they become crises; to convey the complexity of international events that go beyond the black hat–white hat stories to which television seems inexorably drawn; to sustain coverage of peace operations after the initial drama is past, returning only when new bloodshed or suffering occurs; and to focus enough attention on international problems that lack the drama and “good video” of Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti, and the like. Rather, I tried over and over to pin down the news media’s precise impact on *policy*. Although I did not begin my research with a detailed thesis in mind, I assumed the media’s impact was substantial and direct. I have found otherwise.

I also have written under the assumption that the nature and mores of the U.S. news media are unlikely to change significantly, given the political and economic nature of this society. Government officials, I believe, will have to learn to deal with the news media as they find it, and can do so. Effective policymakers and military commanders understand this. Others, who see only the news media’s potential negative effects, try to block out or hide from it, losing important opportunities to build support for their policies and thus govern.

