Triumph
of the Image

The Media's War
in the Persian Gulf—
A Global Perspective

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CHAPTER TWENTY

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Persian Gulf War, the Movie

George Gerbner

THERE COMES A TIME in the accumulation of quantitative changes when a qualitative transformation takes place. Add heat to a pot of water, and at one point it begins to boil. A confluence of controls, technologies, and power reached that point in the war in the Persian Gulf. The change occurred not just in geopolitics. It also happened in the way we write—and make—history.

A scholar of media technology, Frederick Williams, compared the Gulf War to the first moon landing in 1969: "It was one feat to put two astronauts on the surface of the moon, but another, perhaps just as amazing, to broadcast live that first human step on the moon's surface." Technology-based immediacy, Williams concluded, was a preview of the shape of things to come.[1] In 1991, the preview led to the main event.

When Mao Zedong was asked what he thought about the meaning of the French Revolution, he is reported to have said that it was too soon to tell.[2] Official history, written from the point of view of rulers, is typically the story of the inevitable unfolding of the glorious present. As written by losers, history is tragedy crying for redemption. When roles change, or when long-hidden facts come to light, it takes time to sort things out.

When that other astute observer of the world scene, Saudi financier of Irangate fame Adnan Khassoghi, was asked what he thought about the war in the Persian Gulf, he said that it was "like going to a movie: we

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paid our money, we went to the theater, we laughed, we cried, the movie ended and an hour later we had forgotten about it."[3]

Mao's and Khassoghi's observations marked a change that had come about after a long buildup. Cheap parchment had replaced rare papyrus. The printing press had replaced the quill. The telegraph and telephone had replaced the pony express. We had gone from oral to scribal, to literate, to audio-visual-digital-cybernetic mass-produced culture. The quantum leap had occurred when satellites connected them all around the world. The stage had then been set for centrally scripted real-time live global imagery, evoking instant reaction, feeding media events back into an ongoing crisis, and giving the deliberate sorting out of historical meanings a swift kick in the pants.

Historiography is a communicative activity that relates the past to the present and future.[4] But, as with any communicative activity, it depends not only on the events to be communicated about and the communicating parties but also on the means and modes of communication. When the means change, as Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Elizabeth Eisenstein, and others have observed, access to and control over communications change, and the telling of stories, including history, also changes.

The boiling point is reached when the power to create a crisis merges with the power to direct the movie about it. Participation, witness, and confirmation hitherto limited to those on the scene can now be a vicarious global experience, and response, or cooptation, occurs while the event is still in progress. Having achieved the desired outcome, the movie ends, but the images remain in archives and memories.

The convergence of new communicative technologies confers controls, concentrates power, shrinks time, and speeds action to the point where reporting, making, and writing history merge. The "simultaneous happening," in which, as Ien Ang described it, "the whole world presumably participated through the electronic collapsing of time and space,"[5] usually occurs in crises, or tends to precipitate a crisis, as in climactic trials and hearings, disasters, uprisings, and wars.[6] These are situations when, one would think, deliberate speed and careful consideration are needed the most. Instead, however, past, present, and future can now be packaged, witnessed, and frozen into memorable moving imagery of instant history—scripted, cast, directed, and produced by the winners.

Instant History—Image History

Instant history is made when access to video-satellite-computer systems blankets the world in real time with selected images that provoke immediate reactions, influence the outcome, and then quick-freeze into received history. Instant history is a magic lantern projecting images on

a blank screen in a temporal void. The show has a clear beginning, middle, and end. It telescopes roles, parts, and outcome into the same act. It appeals to prior beliefs and predilections. It triggers familiar responses. It blends into our repertory of imagery. It is not easily dislodged, reinterpreted, or even attributed to one particular show. We have forgotten the title.

Films of Vietnam took hours or days to reach us after the fact. It may have been the first "living-room war," but not for the first few years and not in real time. Starting with the make-believe incident in the Gulf of Tonkin, it was a long, slow, duplicitous buildup. It lasted eleven years, destroyed three countries, and left behind some 2 million dead and continuing economic sanctions for the living.

"Body counts" were in headlines but did not have public witness. The tide of public reaction turned after victory eluded policymakers and cameras began to record unsettling images: the Tet Offensive, a summary execution of an "enemy" suspect, naked "enemy" children fleeing napalm, thatched "enemy" huts being put to the torch. (When cameras turn to focus on the fallen, the war is lost, or soon will be. The press was barred from Dover Air Force Base, where Gulf War body bags landed.)

Instant history is image history. The crisis unfolds before our eyes, too fast for thoughtful consideration of antecedents, alternatives, or long-range consequences but just in time for conditioned reflex. The show is on, we are in it, and the deed must be done before second thoughts, counteracts, and regrets can derail the action.

The Iraq-Iran War, totally out of sight, dragged on for more than eight years, claimed more than 1 million casualties, and ended in exhaustion. Chaotic *perestroika*, made visible by *glasnost*, rolled into Eastern Europe, where each successive counterrevolution took half the time of the previous one. The long-pent-up Soviet backlash led to the attempted coup of August 1991 or, as the plotters saw it, countercoup, which was intended to prevent disaster. But the plotters lost control. The magic lantern was snatched from their hands. Defiant imagery swamped their timorous stance. A tidal wave of domestic and world reaction swept them from power in seventy-two hours. Instead of victory, they fell victim to instant history.

Speed and controlled imagery give instant history its thrust—and its burden. When emphasis shifts to image, complex verbal explanations and interpretations, if any, switch into supporting and explanatory, rather than alternative, modes. Experiments have shown that dramatic imagery tends to inhibit both complexity and alternatives. Instant history preempts alternatives.

Neil Postman argued that pictures "have no difficulty overwhelming words and short-circuiting introspection."[7] He cited studies that found

the complexity of diplomatic exchanges in international crises that ended in peace to be significantly higher than in crises that ended in armed conflict. Research by Tom Grimes concluded that words can influence the memory of imagery.[8] Thus, congruent narration will often be recalled as a part of actuality witnessed on the screen, even if it never occurred there.[9]

If, however, the voice-over conflicts with the image, the former may be ignored. Todd Gitlin recounted his four-hour interview for "The NBC Nightly News" in which he expressed the view that his opposition to the Gulf War did not conflict with donating blood for the troops. The few seconds selected for the news only showed him donating blood, with his opposition to the war briefly noted in the voiceover. Viewers who confronted him afterward recalled only the image of his apparent support for the war. "People who wouldn't be caught dead saying out loud that the news (to use the media's own favorite metaphor) mirrors reality, saw a media image and *assumed it not to be a construction, not a version, but the truth.*" And "when an image comes advertised as actuality, it raises the expectation of accuracy."[10]

Images of actuality appear to be spontaneous and to reveal what really happens. They do not need logic to build their case. Following William's observation, spontaneity and immediacy preclude time for reflection and evaluation. And if the audience response quickly becomes news, the effects of superficial responses to important world events can be exaggerated."

"Image Industry Erodes Political Space" is the title of John M. Phelan's analysis of the uses of new technology. "The image's new role in organizing complex information is increasingly played out in dynamic interactive contexts," he wrote. In the cockpit of the latest automatically controlled aircraft, the pilot punches in his flight plan on a keyboard, and the flight management system on board calculates the route and flies the plane from takeoff to landing while he monitors the scenery. Phelan commented, "There is a running joke among pilots, who do not find it entirely comical, that the modern flight crew consists of a pilot and a dog. The dog's job is to bite the pilot if he touches any of the controls and the pilot's job is to feed the dog." "By a strange process," Phelan observed, "the further one gets from the reality the more processed the information gets, the more authority it assumes."[12]

The Scenario

The war in the Persian Gulf was an unprecedented motion picture spectacular. It crammed into its first month alone the entire imagery—and firepower—of four years of bombing in World War II. But unlike a

carpet of explosives leveling cities and setting off firestorms, or of GI's "flushing out" Vietcong from their hiding places, we were shown "seeing-eye" bombs zooming in on their targets, followed by computer graphics tracing the ground offensive against an invisible enemy.

General Norman Schwarzkopf forbade casualty estimates, so sortie counts replaced body counts. Photographs of battle or of Iraqi (or U.S.) dead were censored. Sleek aircraft "sortied" over unmentionable people in unfought battles in an unseen country. The few unauthorized shots of bombs falling on civilian targets were attacked as treasonous or rationalized as "collateral damage." Never before were selected glimpses of actuality strung together with sound bites of photogenic crews, omniscient voice-overs of safari-clad reporters, and parades of military experts with maps and charts at the ready, so mesmerizing, so coherent, and so contrived.

Desert Storm was the first major global media crisis orchestration that made instant history. The Soviet coup six months later was the first attempt that miscarried. A year before the coup, Mikhail Gorbachev had signed a new press law that gave editorial staffs autonomy not known in the democratic West. This move made for a relatively fragmented and leaky communication system that may have saved his life, if not his job. When the coup came, the plotters could not shut down or conduct the increasingly cacophonous media orchestra. What happened then also made instant history, but that is another story.

Opportunities for making instant history may be few and far between, but when they come, they unloose a landslide that shifts the political landscape. ("I came back to another country," said Gorbachev returning from Crimean captivity.) George Bush grasped the opportunity and proclaimed his "new world order."

It takes a crisis and five strategic moves to seize (or possibly provoke) such an opportunity. They are control, orchestration, witness, feedback, and quick freeze. Here are instructions for successful crisis management by instant history as learned in the Persion Gulf War:

1. Gain access to and keep control of real-time global imagery. Speed the action, and develop a sanitized scenario to show how moral, decisive, necessary, and invincible the action is. One brief burst of saturation coverage is all that is possible before unauthorized voices, costly network preemptions, and audiences missing their daily mayhem with happy endings blunt the momentum.
2. Orchestrate the main event with mainstream media events and other signs and symbols. Invent code names and terminology that fit the scenario, demonize the enemy, and wrap jarring realities in playful euphemisms. Encourage integration of supportive signs into

everyday life, sports, and commerce (yellow ribbons on cars and Kent cigarettes, Super Bowl halftime prowar pageant with President and Mrs. Bush on tape and Peter Jennings live giving upbeat reports on the destruction in progress). Promote miracles. (The icon of St. Irene gained worldwide attention when congregants in a Chicago church reported that it wept "tears of grief" on the eve of the Persian Gulf War.)[13] Instant history requires a total environment of actuality, images, talk shows, slogans, and other evocative manifestations.

3. Offer the witness-audience a sense of "being there," including what appear to be spontaneous (but still stage-managed) occasions such as press conferences, panel discussions, "briefings," and interpretations. This will suggest that alternative perspectives have been explored and exhausted. It will simplify and isolate the crisis from distracting complexities and unwanted alternatives.

4. Translate witness and participation into supportive feedback from polls, letters to the editor, driving with lights on, and horn honking. To evoke conventionally cultivated responses, make participation "like going to a movie." Let this feedback reverberate across all media, crystallize in public opinion (i.e., published opinion), and hasten the desired resolution.

5. Celebrate the outcome as the happy ending. Quickly produce and distribute videos, CD-ROM disks, paperback books, and lavishly illustrated texts to saturate the market for instant nostalgia and school use. Use the triumphant imagery to fight political opposition and resist revisionists.

Prologue

The curtain rises on an operation long in preparation. Several U.S. administrations wanted to project U.S. power into the Middle East. Dwight Eisenhower landed troops there. Ronald Reagan landed troops there (only to have 241 Marines killed in one bombing attack), condoned Israel's invasion of Lebanon, and bombed Druse villages from the sea. After building up Iraq's war machine and also secretly arming Iran in its war with Iraq, U.S. diplomacy encouraged the Saudi and Kuwaiti economic offensive against Iraq. Iraq's historic claims, grievances, and offers to negotiate a settlement were ignored, as was Saddam Hussein's advance notice of his intentions. He finally took the bait and struck.

After the invasion, Hussein released parts of a transcript of his meeting with the U.S. ambassador in which she gave him no clear warning against the impending move. Ambassador April Glaspie related before an "informal" Senate committee meeting (not officially a "hearing" so she did

not have to testify under oath) that she indeed warned Hussein in no uncertain terms. The State Department backed her up. When, under more congressional pressure, the diplomatic cables were declassified, the facts became clear: she and the State Department had lied.

No attention was paid to Hussein's brutalities until he marched on cue. Media "watchdogs" were still asleep when the U.S. head of Amnesty International complained that "there was no presidential indignation . . . in 1989, when Amnesty released its findings about the torture of Iraq children. And just a few weeks before the invasion of Kuwait, the Bush administration refused to conclude that Iraq had engaged in a consistent pattern of gross human-right violation."[14]

When Hussein invaded Kuwait, however, gruesome atrocity stories filled the media. They were used in six speeches by Bush and were cited by seven senators as a reason for voting for the war resolution (which passed by six votes). A year later it was revealed that the story was hearsay told by the daughter of Kuwait's ambassador, whose appearance was arranged by Hill and Knowlton, the Washington public relations firm representing Kuwait. The *New York Times* also reported on December 20, 1991, "the discovery that the country suffered less damage than originally estimated" and was "recapturing its former affluence.")

The first stage, Operation Desert Shield, was to stop Hussein from marching into Saudi Arabia, although there was no evidence he intended to do so and the United States had no treaty or prior policy to defend the Saudis. The mission of the troops, according to Bush was defensive; they would not initiate hostilities.

Soon, however, the operation became a simple and unconditional offensive to rebuff "naked aggression." The U.S.-led military buildup proceeded swiftly with no consideration of the colonial and recent history of the shifting boundaries of Middle Eastern nonnations or of other invasions, occupations, and repeated violations of U.N. resolutions and international law by the United States and its allies.

The United Nations itself was brought out of media mothballs. The *New York Times,* after spearheading the successful campaign for U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO, and mostly ignoring U.N. actions, now editorially complimented the United Nations on September 11, 1990, for having "provided legal and political armor" for the operation.[15] Vague resolutions authorizing force were rammed through without significant opposition (absent on the world scene since the collapse of Soviet power). The resolutions concealed, but were later used to justify, the allies' ultimate objectives. Having achieved them, the allies exploded the equivalent in bombs of the next twelve to fifteen years of the entire U.N. global budget. Other resolutions condemning the invasion of Lebanon and continuing military occupation by Israel were ignored.

The United States was still withholding $720 million in overdue membership payments. This long-standing pressure tactic drove the United Nations to the brink of bankruptcy. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar had to report in the fall of 1991 that "it is a source of profound concern to me that the same membership which sees it appropriate to entrust the United Nations Secretariat with unprecedented new responsibilities has not taken the necessary action to insure that the minimum financial resources required to carry out those responsibilities are provided on a reliable and predictable basis."[16]

A loose coalition was patched together, with the United States contributing most of the military might; the Arabs, the location; and the oil sheikhs, Germans, and Japanese, most of the cash. While preparation for war proceeded, diplomacy was faked for the media. Bob Woodward's book *The Commanders* described the panic in the White House when it seemed that the Saudis might "bug out" (in Bush's words) and accept some settlement.[17] King Fahd did not buy the excuse of a Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia. (Neither did the satellite photos published in the *St. Petersburg Times* on January 6, 1991, which were refused by the U.S. wire services.) But then the White House sent Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney with an offer the king could not refuse, apparently a promise to push for favorable regional settlement after Hussein was safely out of the way. While Secretary of State James Baker went to Baghdad to "negotiate," national security adviser Brent Scowcroft told Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar that the president had made up his mind and that diplomatic efforts were all exercises.

Exaggerated estimates of nuclear capability, "the world's fourth largest standing army," and Iraq's "crack Republican Guards" were fed to eager media. A vast and sophisticated U.S. intelligence community that five months later was able to warn Gorbachev of the impending coup in his own backyard (in vain, as it turned out) now seemed to be muted. Disinformation, rationalized as "confusing the enemy," confused everybody. Decisionmaking was restricted to a small group headed by former CIA director (now President) George Bush. "It was apparent even before the Gulf War, wrote Maureen Dowd in the *New York Times* (November 22, 1991, p. 1), that "this White House does not have a traditional policy-making process." Dowd cited a "top Administration official" as saying, "It's hard to debate decisions because there is a lot of secrecy."

In the preparation for Desert Storm, even the National Security Council was held at arm's length.[18] Woodward reported that the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, and other commanders advised "containment or strangulation" and found themselves excluded from decisionmaking.[19] Later they complained of "faulty intelligence." The order to

attack came from a White House apparently acting on superior intelligence.

Final planning for the attack was known to have begun in September but was not reported until much later. The *New York Times* published the "news" on March 3, after the war had ended. *Newsweek's* account of the preparations, published on January 28, quoted "one of his closest advisers" as saying, "This is a fight George Bush has been preparing for all his life." Elizabeth Drew wrote in the *New Yorker* on January 25, "John Sununu . . . was telling people that a short successful war would be pure political gold for the President." Reporters who usually rushed on the air and into print with every scoop now held back. "The road from Watergate to the Gulf War is marked by ever greater cautiousness and opportunism on the part of the press," wrote Michael Massing. "Bob Woodward [who saved revealing details for his book] provides a particularly disquieting example of the change."[20]

The full history of the swift and massive military buildup still remains to be told. A nearly Vietnam-size military force was built up over a period of months in the desert. Information, communication, and coordination were key elements. Williams reported that more communications networks were put into full use during the buildup and war than in all of World War II.[21] As late as December 1990, the Pentagon sent out a call for $30 million worth of computers to be shipped to Saudi Arabia in six weeks. A small and little-known Texas company called Compuadd got the contract and did the job. Its full reward came when, ten months later, it shared in the biggest Defense Department computer order ever awarded.

Forming the backbone of the new instant-history-making machine were the portable uplinks, the global satellite network (including the collaborating Soviet satellite), the dedicated direct telephone lines, and the computer links. This tightly guarded system made it possible to provide controlled real-time simultaneous live global coverage in several selected sites, even when nothing much was going on. Suspenseful "live" boredom filled with breathless analysis and photo opportunities gave audiences around the world a realistic sensation of "being there." Donning gas masks enhanced the feeling of spontaneity even, or perhaps especially, when the alarm turned out to be false. At the height of the crisis, CNN's audience share rose more than five times its normal 3 percent.

The prologue ended with the U.S. ultimatum of January 15, 1991. The deception, suppression, misinformation, and disinformation that characterized the buildup overwhelmed and disoriented the public. Many watched in disbelief as the juggernaut assembled in the Gulf was set to strike. When the nonnegotiable ultimatum was about to expire, the public was still deeply divided: four out of ten responding to a *Times Mirror*

poll thought sanctions should be given more time. The same number also wanted to hear more about the views of the 41 percent of the U.S. public that did *not* think Bush "did the right thing" sending troops to the Gulf.[22] Even though the congressional authorization had passed by only seven votes, once the war started, dissenting voices fell silent or were silenced, and the media-driven instant history blitz kicked in.

The Main Event

"As the skies cleared . . . an American officer proclaimed it 'a beautiful day for bombing,'" wrote R. W. Apple, Jr., in the *New York Times* on February 12, 1991. Before the day was over, 750 bombing missions had been completed. "'There is more stuff up there than I'd see in 20 lifetimes,' said an Air Force pilot."

What may have been happening on the Iraqi ground could only be surmised from a safe distance. A British defense expert calculated that in the first month "the tonnage of high explosive bombs already released has exceeded the combined allied air offensive of World War II."[23] But the military terminology that permeated the reporting was more sports than slaughter. "Our team has carried out its game beautifully," exulted a military expert on NBC. "We ran our first play, it worked great," said a pilot interviewed on CBS. "We scored a touchdown."[24] Secretary of Defense Cheney told U.S. Air Force personnel that they had conducted "the most successful air campaign in the history of the world."[25]

The precision-bombing spectacular was, in fact, the dumping of the equivalent of five Hiroshimas on a small country of 18 million people. The targets were the life-sustaining infrastructure of water, power, and transportation facilities. When the bombing was over, the carnage of hunger and disease began. Western health authorities estimated 1 million children malnourished, and child mortality quadrupled within a year. Middle East Watch, an affiliate of the international Human Rights Watch organization, reported that allied decisions to drop unguided bombs in daytime over populated areas without warning civilians of imminent attacks violated generally accepted practice and international law "both in the selection of targets and the choice of means and methods of attack."[26]

The memorable Patriot missiles, costing $700,000 each, missed eight out of ten times. When they found their targets, the resulting debris caused more destruction than the Scuds might have done. MIT weapons expert Theodore Postol told the House Armed Services Committee that thirteen Scuds that fell unchallenged near Tel Aviv caused no deaths, fewer injuries, and less than half the property damage than the eleven Scuds in the same area that were intercepted by Patriots. Marc S. Miller,

senior editor of *Technology Review* magazine, called Patriot "the anti-truth missile."[27] Roger N. Johnson concluded in his study of war damage that the Patriots were "successful mainly as psychological weapons used to fool the public."[28] Their public relations success was shown in the survey by Michael Morgan, Justin Lewis, and Sut Jhally (see Chapter 18): 81 percent of the respondents knew about the Patriots, while only 42 percent could identify Colin Powell.

The mighty armies that brutalized Kuwait and were supposed to march on to Saudi Arabia, if not beyond, could not be found. Poorly equipped and demoralized troops sitting in trenches, caves, bunkers without air cover were napalmed and "fuel-air bombed" to deprive those inside of oxygen, and then they were bulldozed; dead and alive alike were buried in some seventy miles of trenches. (Bodies of soldiers who "suffocated in their bunkers after U.S. tanks plowed them under" were still being discovered nine months after the war.)[29] Defenseless convoys fleeing in panic were bombed and strafed into oblivion in what pilots called a "turkey shoot."

There was much media concern expressed about Iraqi chemical and missile threats. The erratic Scuds and the even more erratic Patriots got extensive coverage. Missing were signs that the roughly four-week, $61 billion massacre inflicted on Iraq was more lethal than any nuclear, chemical, or biological warfare had ever been.[30]

One may question, as Noam Chomsky does in this book (Chapter 4), whether there really was a war, if by war we mean a conflict in which an enemy shoots back. The slaughter, as it is more properly called, claimed more than 100,000 lives in direct casualties alone. That is the official figure. In a secret report, former navy secretary John Lehman revealed a Pentagon estimate of 200,000.[31] The kill ratio of even about 100,000 to 150 U.S. soldiers, at least 35 of them, as it later turned out, killed by "friendly fire," was unprecedented in military history.[32]

The main facts of cost, casualties, and damage were carefully kept out of the briefings and were censored from the reports. U.S. and allied reporters were rigidly controlled, and few other journalists were even admitted into Saudi Arabia. The few independent reporters who managed to obtain information on their own, and the analysts who might have contributed more diverse perspectives, were excluded from the media mainstream.

NBC first commissioned, then refused to broadcast uncensored footage of heavy civilian casualties. (The broadcast was vetoed by NBC president Michael Gartner, who had led a media crusade for freedom of the press in the 1980s.) The video was then offered to CBS. The night before it was to air on the "CBS Evening News," the show's executive producer was fired and the report was canceled.[33]

Roger N. Johnson monitored CNN for the climactic twenty-seven-hour final prewar period when Iraq proposed conditional withdrawal and Soviet and Iranian peace initiatives were advanced.[34] His study revealed that thirty military experts but no peace experts were interviewed. George Bush, the most frequently shown, brushed aside peace talks. Others interviewed included mostly right-wing hawks, such as Oliver North, Robert McFarlane, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Pat Buchanan, Richard Allen, Richard Perle, Dan Quayle, and Ronald Reagan. And CNN may have been the most open to a diversity of views. (NBC is owned by General Electric, a supplier for every weapons system used in the Gulf. Major military contractors sponsor news programs and sit on the boards of directors of other networks and leading media, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post.*)[35]

Instead of full and accurate reports and documentaries, network "docudramas" shot in sync sound on location and in Hollywood studios took audiences to the Persian Gulf War movie. Realistic shots of training, tanks maneuvering in the sand, simulated trench warfare, attacks on the enemy lurking in the darkness, scripted scenes of camp life and the "home front," patrols on a mission firing into the darkness, a full sequence of mission control launching a Patriot and scoring a "hit," and even "hostages" being beaten alternated with promos of *Die Hard 2* and *Terminator 2*. Spectacular explosions lit distant horizons, hurled vehicles, and blasted bodies in all three movies.

Deborah Amos, who covered the Gulf War for National Public Radio, scoffed at the adage that truth is the first casuality of war. "In this war," she wrote, "truth was more than a casualty. Truth was hit over the head, dragged into a closet, and held hostage to the public relations needs of the United States military." The docudrama's happy ending showed jubilant faces, while the voice-over spoke of "an outpouring of joy not seen since World War II." The real documentary footage of the conflict was locked in Pentagon vaults.[36]

The Cult of Violence

"It was a colossal failure of politics that plunged us into the war," said the *New Yorker* (January 28, 1991, 21). Then how did this failure become a triumph? How was the engineering of a vast and unnecessary human catastrophe made to seem not only acceptable but also politically advantageous, even triumphant? How did the war become a virtual breeding ground for presidential prospects?

The buildup, orchestration, saturation, and fabrications of the war provide only part of the answers to these questions. Another part comes from those characteristics of instant history that isolate critical events

from their broader historical context and throw the spectator-witness back on conventional conceptions of how things work in the world. In our culture many of those conceptions stem from what we should recognize as the cult of violence.

Violence has many faces. Wholesale mass executions of people, otherwise known as war or genocide, have become increasingly technical, scientific, and deadly but no more precise.[37] They have killed an ever-increasing percentage of civilians, eventually far outnumbering military casualties. For instance, the German terror-bombing of the small Spanish city of Guernica provoked worldwide outrage and Pablo Picasso's antiwar mural. But by the end of World War II—thousands of large-scale air raids and a genocide later—the calculated destruction of Dresden's historic center, the firebombing of Tokyo, and the pulverizing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for little, if any, military advantage (but more likely to impress Joseph Stalin before the agreed-upon entry of the Soviets into the war in the Pacific), numbed our senses.

The Vietnam War witnessed further escalation of firepower and the chemical poisoning of Vietnam's countryside, both which were met with rationalization. The trend toward increasingly skewed kill ratios has culminated, so far, in the Persian Gulf War. Recounting such facts of "cultural evolution and war," Roger N. Johnson observed that political bombing of civilians is no longer considered an act of barbarism.[38] Wholesale violence against basically innocent people is seen, if at all, as potentially embarrassing information to be sanitized and wrapped in euphemisms.

Retail violence is not far behind. The United States is the undisputed homicide capital of the world. We also lead industrialized countries in jailing and executing people.[39] Our streets, our schools, and our homes have become places of fear and brutality, widely publicized and profitably dramatized. Killings in the workplace doubled in the 1980s over the previous decade.[40] And yet the cult of violence is neither simply a reflection of these trends nor just a stimulus for them. It is more like a charged environment affecting many aspects of social relations, control, and power.

The facts of violence are both celebrated and concealed in the cult of violence that surrounds us. There has never been a culture as filled with images of violence as ours is now. We are awash in a tide of violent representations. There is no escape from the massive invasion of colorful mayhem into the homes and cultural lives of ever-larger areas of the world.

Of course, there was blood in fairy tales, gore in mythology, murder in Shakespeare, lurid crimes in tabloids, battles and wars in textbooks. The representation of violence is a legitimate cultural expression, even

necessary to balance tragic consequences against deadly compulsions. But the historically defined, individually crafted, and selectively used symbolic violence of heroism, cruelty, or misanthropy has been swamped by violence with happy endings produced on the dramatic assembly line.

The violence we see on the screen and read about in our press bears little relationship in volume or in type, and especially in consequence, to violence in real life.[41] Yet much of it looks realistic, and we tend to project it onto the real world. This sleight of hand robs us of the tragic sense of life necessary for compassion. "To be hip," wrote Gitlin, "is to be inured, and more—to require a steadily increasing boost in the size of the dose required."[42]

Our children are born into a symbolic environment of six to eight violent episodes per prime-time hour alone (four times as many in presumably humorous children's programs) and an average of at least two entertaining murders a night. Children are "the first to react to the environment around them," wrote playwright Steve Tesich.[43] "Unless we are willing to change that environment, we must accept the verdict that our children have become the victims of choice for most Americans."

The dominant portrayals of mayhem and crime misrepresent in important respects the actual nature, demography, and patterns of victimization of real-life violence. Contrary to promotional hype, most uses of cable, video, and other new technologies make the dominant patterns penetrate even more deeply (but not more cheaply) into everyday life. No historical, esthetic, or even commercial rationalization can justify drenching every home with images of expertly choreographed brutality.

Movies exploit the cult and increase the dosage. Escalation of the cinematic body count seems to be one way to get attention from a public punch-drunk on video mayhem. *Robocop's* first rampage for law and order in 1987 killed 32 people. The 1990 *Robocop 2,* targeting a twelve-year-old "drug lord," among others, slaughtered 81. The sick movie *Death Wish* claimed 9 victims in 1974. In the 1988 version, the bleeding-heart-liberal-turned-vigilante disposed of 52. *Rambo: First Blood,* released in 1985, rambled through Southeast Asia leaving 62 corpses. In 1988, *Rambo III* visited Afghanistan, killing 106. *Godfather I* produced 12 corpses, *Godfather II* put away 18, and *Godfather III* killed no less than 53. The daredevil cop in the original *Die Hard* in 1988 saved the day with a modest 18 dead. Two years later *Die Hard 2* thwarted a plot to rescue "the biggest drug dealer in the world," coincidentally a Central American dictator to be tried in a U.S. court, achieving a phenomenal body count of 264.

The decade's record goes to the 1990 children's movie and tie-in marketing sensation and glorification of martial arts, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.* Released as the Gulf War buildup began, with 133 acts of

mayhem per hour, *Ninja Turtles* was the most violent film ever marketed to children. Undaunted by the outrage of trapped parents and overworked psychiatrists, *Turtles II,* appropriately subtitled *Secrets of the Ooze,* followed the success of the Ninjas (and of the Gulf War) as another nonstop punchup and kick-in-the-teeth opera in which the martial artists continued their rampage.

The infamous "Faces of Death" videos, withdrawn from circulation in 1987, were quietly rereleased in the fall of 1991.[44] The October 14, 1991, international edition of *Variety* featured 123 pages of ads for new movies, with pictures of shooting, killing, or corpses on every other page and a verbal appeal to violence, on the average, on every page. Leading the verbal procession were "kill," "murder," "death," "deadly," and "dead" (thirty-three times) and "terror," "fatal," "lethal," and "dangerous" (twelve times). Bringing up the rear were "rage," "frenzy," "revenge," "gun-crazy," "kickboxer," "maniac," "warrior," "invader," "hawk," "battle," "war," "shoot," "fight," "slaughter," and "blood."

Terminator 2 dominated the list of box-office blockbusters from fourteen major movie markets around the world. Its leading actor, promoter, and role model, Arnold Schwarzenegger, chaired the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. The National Coalition on Television Violence named Schwarzenegger "the most violent actor" of 1987 and found that ten of Schwarzenegger's twelve movies averaged 109 often graphic and gruesome violent acts per hour.

Growing up in a violence-laden cultural environment cultivates aggressiveness in some people and desensitization, insecurity, mistrust, and anxiety in most people.[45] These are highly exploitable sentiments. They set up a scenario of violence and victimization in which some take on the role of violents but in which most adopt the role, and psychology, of victims. They demand protection and condone, if not welcome, violent solutions to domestic and world problems purported to save them from aggressors. This scenario contributes to the appeal of punitive and vindictive action against dark forces in a mean world, especially when the action is quickly and decisively presented as enhancing a sense of control and security.

The cold war is over, and the cultural props for imperial policy are shifting from anticommunist rationalizations to sharp and selective offensives against real and concocted terrorists, narco-terrorists, petro-terrorists, unauthorized aggressors, and other unfriendly (as opposed to friendly) demons of the Third World. The cult of violence is the ritual demonstration of brute power and its projection into sex, family, job, politics, and war.

An overkill of violent imagery helps train the military mind and mobilize support for taking charge of the unruly at home and abroad.

Bombarding viewers with violent images of a mean and dangerous world without illuminating the real costs of violence and war is, in the last analysis, an instrument of intimidation and terror. It was indispensable to the triumph of instant history in the Persian Gulf. It is a preview of the shape of things to come in a unipolar world with no effective democratic opposition or geopolitical counterforce.

Epilogue

What was represented as a clean, swift, surgical strike to punish aggression, get rid of Hussein, and secure cheap oil, petrodollars, peace, jobs, and democracy became, in fact, a human and ecological disaster of "cataclysmic proportions" (in the words of the U.N. inspection team) that achieved few of its purported aims. The war "changed almost nothing," concluded *Newsweek* on June 28, 1991. "Most of the same faces and the same tired policies remain. . . . Internally, the regime's capacity for repression seems undiminished." Hussein was riding high. U.S.-inspired revolts of Kurds in the north and of Shiites in the south were crushed. A Palestinian settlement was as far from manifestation as ever.

At year's end, Human Rights Watch issued a comprehensive report saying that Washington had sacrificed principle to political interest, promoting rights "only when it is cost-free." "When competing interests arose," the report observed, ". . . maintaining warm relations with Saudi oil sheiks, . . . or avoiding politically embarrassing questions about why the United States went to war to restore the Kuwati Emir—human rights took a back seat at the White House."[46]

The war and its global imagery traumatized many Third World countries. It paralyzed the already weakened Nonaligned Movement, which "had done absolutely nothing to stop the war," observed the *Christian Conference of Asia News* in its November-December 1991 issue. "It is a cruel irony," the *News* noted, "that it took the blood bath of the Gulf War . . . to bring these cold realities home to the Non-Aligned Movement members." The disruption of trade and travel and the shutting of Iraq's pipelines deepened the Third World's economic distress and political paralysis.

The Middle East was left in turmoil, with Iran and widespread fundamentalist backlash gaining power. Arabs versus Arabs were arming faster than ever. (Saudi Arabia alone was getting twenty new Patriot batteries at the cost of $3.3 billion.)[47] Syria, invader of Lebanon and newfound U.S. ally, spent the $2 billion earned for good behavior in the Gulf on North Korean Scuds, Czech tanks, and Soviet MIGs.)[48]

The full scope of nuclear disinformation was still unclear. Although Third World nuclear proliferation (generally unreported) was by no

means limited to Iraq, and twenty Iraqi nuclear facilities were destroyed by U.S bombers, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* estimated in its March 1991 issue that Iraq was five to ten years away from producing a usable nuclear device. Since then, commission after commission has released widely publicized—and divergent—reports on hidden nuclear plants. The "nuclear story," not the story of misery the continuing blockade was inflicting on the people, became the largest single topic of postwar coverage. And yet the salient facts of even that story were missing from the sweep of instant history.

Not reported was the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had inspected the Iraqi facilities in November 1990 and had found them to be in compliance with IAEA safeguards, meaning that nuclear fuel was not being diverted to weapons use. Not reported were the further facts that Article 56 of the Geneva Protocols explicitly forbade the targeting of live reactors; that both IAEA and U.N. General Assembly resolutions had called for a ban on attacks on nuclear facilities; and that the IAEA had declared any such attack "a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Statutes of [this] Agency." Many proliferation experts considered the targeted reactors to be of dubious military value and the bombing of operating reactors with probably "hot" cores to be potentially more harmful than either necessary or effective.[49]

The Western alliance had been strained. U.S. arm-twisting of Japan to contribute troops, in contradiction to the latter's U.S.-dictated constitution, divided Japan (which resisted, though agreed to contribute minesweepers and $13 billion) and started a political backlash. The backlash in the Muslim world led to the defeat of the Turkish government. The loss of trade and increased energy costs added to the trauma of the Third World. Kuwait's oligarchy was restored and proved more repressive than before. The Kurds had been abandoned again, as had the democratic forces in Iraq, which apparently posed a threat to the new world order.

The day the war ended, the Bechtel Corporation, from which U.S. secretaries of state and defense had been recruited, announced a multibillion dollar contract for the reconstruction of Kuwait. Stock prices rose, but the economy slumped, and consumer confidence declined. The high costs and mounting deficits incurred to pay for the war and its aftermath contributed to recession in the United States. After an initial rise in the price of oil, friendly Gulf states boosted oil production. By year's end, falling prices (and revenues) plunged OPEC into a crisis and further postponed serious discussion of an effective U.S. energy policy.

The only clear successes have been the extension of U.S. power into an increasingly troubled region, the renewed flow of petrodollars propping up increasingly shaky economies, and the domestic "political gold." The quality of political (or any) thinking behind the celebration was

suggested by George Bush's response to a question a year later: "If I had had to listen to advice from the United States Senate leadership, the Democrats—or from the House, the leadership over there—to do something about the Persian Gulf, we'd have still been sitting there in the United States, fat, dumb, and happy, with Saddam Hussein maybe in Saudi Arabia."[50]

Within weeks of the victory, Time Warner completed in record time the collection and compression of imagery that would fill five hundred floppy disks into a single CD-ROM history of Desert Storm and its speedy distribution to stores and school libraries. (The job ordinarily takes several months.) *CNN: War in the Gulf,* advertised as an "authoritative chronicle of the world's first 'real-time television war,'" was published soon thereafter. Pentagon-aided victory parades, the ABC-TV docudrama "Heroes of Desert Storm" (with a thirty-second introduction by President Bush), and the first deployment of Gulf War imagery in an election campaign rounded out the triumphant quick-freeze stage of instant history.[51]

In a fitting and perceptive tribute, *Time* magazine named CNN owner Ted Turner its Man of the Year for his influencing the dynamic of events and for his making viewers around the world into instant witnesses of history. (Time Warner is also one-fifth owner of Turner Broadcasting System.) A review of the year in *Modern Maturity,* the largest-circulation magazine in the United States, was titled (appropriately to the promised "gentler, kinder nation") "The Gentle Giant." Sent to 32 million "mature" readers, the review summarized the war as "a stunning success in the Gulf" and concluded, "The Bush Administration's conduct of the crisis had been in the purest American spirit of respect for international law, winning the widest international support for joint action and the use of minimum force. It was a model of successful modern diplomacy."[52]

Anatomy of Triumph

Let us now consider how this model of success played out on the home front. Once the saturation bombing had started, dissent had been marginalized, challenge had been suppressed, and the tide of saturation coverage had risen, most respondents to the *Times Mirror* poll were swept up in the flow. Their responses became news and sped the rush of events. Half the respondents, most of whom wanted more diverse views before, now said they heard too much opposition.[53]

As the operation entered its second full week, instant history found its true believers. Nearly eight out of ten believed that the censors were not hiding bad news; 57 percent wanted increased military control over reporting. Martin Shaw and Roy Carr-Hill report in Chapter 13 that in a

British poll 82 percent agreed the sorties were "precise strikes against strategic targets with minimum civilian casualties."

The effect of television coverage can be gauged from the differences between responses of light and heavy viewers of otherwise comparable groups. The Morgan, Lewis, and Jholly survey showed that less than half (47 percent) of light viewers, compared to three-quarters (76 percent) of heavy viewers, "strongly supported" President Bush's decision to use military force against Iraq.

A panel study conducted as part of the 1991 American National Election Study also revealed some gender differences. During the buildup, 61 percent of male light viewers but 71 percent of male heavy viewers approved "the way George Bush is handling the crisis in the Persian Gulf," a highly significant ten-point difference. For women, who were less supportive to begin with, viewing made no difference: About 50 percent of both light and heavy viewers "approved." After the war, however, with even the "light viewers" saturated with the images of the war, the approval rate for light and heavy male viewers rose to 83 and 86 percent and for light and heavy female viewers to 78 and 85 percent. Instant history almost closed the gender gap.

Heavy viewing also boosted the percentage of those who would vote for George Bush, especially among those who were otherwise the least likely to vote for him: Only 31 percent of low-income light viewers but 51 percent of low-income heavy viewers expressed an inclination to vote for Bush in 1992. And as Morgan, Lewis, and Jhally demonstrated, the more viewers saw, the more they remembered the misleading imagery, but the less they knew about the background and facts of the war.

Two months after the war, the public rated the coverage, military censorship, and general information about the war even higher. The *Times Mirror* percentage of "very favorable" rating of the military rose forty-two points from 18 to an unprecedented 60 percent. Secretary of Defense Dick Chaney's rating jumped from 3 to 33 percent (extraordinary for a secretary of defense). Desert Storm commander Norman Schwarzkopf's 51 percent was the highest "very favorable" score in more than 150 *Times Mirror* public favorability surveys conducted since 1985, stimulating instant speculation about his political future.

The war in the Persian Gulf is fading to a few flickering images: Scuds streaking through the sky and Patriots rising to intercept them, or so we thought; bombs falling down factory smokestacks with deadly accuracy, or so, too, we thought. But that was no movie. Its consequences will linger in the real world for a long time to come. When the balance sheet of critical events of the 1990s is finally tallied, the world will marvel at the mischief wrought by the new scenario of instant history.

Global immediacy gives us instant history, which is simultaneous, global, mass, living, telling, showing, and reacting in brief and intensive bursts. Image driven and violence laden, as compelling as it is contrived, instant history robs us of reflection time, political space, and access to alternatives. The horror of a holocaust can now be managed with glorious efficiency.

This is not an isolated problem that can be addressed by focusing on media violence or crisis coverage alone. It is an integral part of a global cultural condition that increasingly permeates, and poisons, the mainstream of the common symbolic environment. Only a new international cultural environment movement, dedicated to democratic participation in cultural policymaking and an alternative media system, can do justice to the challenge, and terror, of instant history. But that, too, is another story.

Notes

1. Frederick Williams, "The Shape of News to Come: The Gulf War as an Opportunity for TV News to Show Off, and to Raise Questions," *Quill* (September 1991): 15–17.

2. Cited in Timothy Garton Ash, "Poland After Solidarity," *New York Review of Books,* June 13, 1991, p. 57.

3. Cited in a book review by Tom Masland, *Philadelphia Inquirer,* September 1, 1991, p. 2F.

4. Ernst Briesach, "Historiography," *International Encyclopedia of Communications,* vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 280.

5. Ien Ang, "Global Media/Local Meaning," *Media Information Australia* (November 1991): 4.

6. Disaster relief has been particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of instant history. A 1991 report to the United Nations concluded that "far too often, thousands who are starving and uprooted in one part of the world receive the minimum of relief and succor, while aid pours forth for those who are suffering at the focus of international power politics and media attention." The highly politicized aid to the Kurds in Iraq was one case in point (*New York Times,* November 13, 1991, p. A9).

7. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business by Neil Postman.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 103.

8. Tom Grimes, "Encoding TV News Messages into Memory." *Journalism Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 757–766.

9. The Tianenman Square massacre, which many claim to have witnessed on television, did not take place on Tianenman square; only the cameras were there, recording the clearing of the square by troops and tanks. The massacre took place off camera in another part of town.

10. Todd Gitlin, "On Being Sound-Bitten," *Boston Review* (December 1991): 16–17.

11. Williams, "The Shape of News to Come."

12. John M. Phelan, "Image Industry Erodes Political Space," *Media Development* 38, no. 4 (1991): 6–8.

13. The story of the weeping icon took on a life of its own when it was extensively described, then reported stolen, then recovered, and finally called a hoax and a publicity stunt. (See, e.g., *New York Times*, December 29 and 30, 1991, January 1, 1992; and Associated Press stories during that time.)

14. Cited by Deborah Amos, "When Seeing Is Not Believing: Desert Mirage—the True Story of the Gulf War," *Nieman Reports* (Winter 1991): 61.

15. George Gerbner, "UNESCO in the U.S. Press," in George Gerbner, Hamid Mowlana, and Kaarle Nordenstreng (eds.), *The Global Media Debate: Its Rise, Fall, and Renewal* (New York: Ablex, 1992).

16. "U.N. Asks Billion for Peacekeeper Fund," *New York Times*, November 25, 1991, p. A3.

17. Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

18. John B. Judis, "Twilight of the Gods," *Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 1991): 55.

19. Woodward, *The Commanders*.

20. Michael Massing, "Sitting on Top of the News," *New York Times Review of Books*, June 27, 1991, p. 11.

21. Williams, "The Shape of News to Come."

22. "The 1990–91 Panel Study of the Political Consequences of War," *in American National Election Study* (Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1991).

23. Reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 5, 1991, p. 6A)

24. For these and more examples, see Michael Parenti, "Media Watch: Now for Sports and Weather," *Z Magazine* (July-August 1991): 104.

25. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 9, 1991, p. A1.

26. Melissa Healy, "Group Faults U.S. on War Deaths," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 17, 1991, p. 9A. The law is a 1977 international treaty that has not been ratified by the United States.

27. Marc S. Miller, "Patriotic Blindness and Anti-Truth Weapons," *Index on Censorship* (November-December 1991): 32.

28. Roger N. Johnson, "Cultural Evolution and War: From Science to Social Science," *Bulletin of the International Society for Research on Aggression* 13, no. 2 (1991): 7–10.

29. Associated Press dispatch from Nicosia, Cyprus, November 5, 1991.

30. Pentagon estimate reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 6, 1991, p. 3A.

31. *People* magazine reporter Dirk Mathison crashed the highly confidential Bohemian Grove encampment in northern California, where each year top male U.S. policymakers, including media chiefs, assembled. Mathison's story of what he heard (before he was discovered and ejected by an executive of Time Warner), including the Lehman speech entitled "Smart Weapons," was killed by *People* magazine, owned by Time Warner. It was published under the title "Inside the Bohemian Grove: The Story People Magazine Won't Let You Read," *Extra!* (November-December 1991): 1, 12–14.

32. David H. Hackworth, "Killed by Their Comrades," *Newsweek,* November 18, 1991, pp. 45–46.

33. Dennis Bernstein and Sasha Futran, "Sights Unseen," *San Francisco Bay Guardian,* March 20, 1991, p. 23.

34. Johnson, "Cultural Evolution and the War."

35. See, for example, Martin E. Lee, "Arms and the Media: Business as Usual," *Index on Censorship* (November-December 1991): 29–31. Lee recalled that on the day U.S. bombs killed four hundred men, women, and children in a Baghdad shelter, *Newsweek* (owned by the Washingon Post Company) featured a stealth bomber on its cover with the caption "How Many Lives Can It Save?" (30).

36. Deborah Amos, "Seeing Is Not Believing," *Nieman Reports* (Winter 1991): 61.

37. Wars in the twentieth century have killed 99 million people (before the Gulf War), twelve times as many as in the nineteenth century and twenty-two times as many as in the eighteenth century. Other hostilities, not counting internal state terrorism, are resulting in an estimated one thousand or more deaths per year (*World Military and Social Expenditures* [Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1986]).

38. Johnson, "Cultural Evolution and the War."

39. One of every 133 Americans will become a murder victim. (*U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Technical Report,* NCJ-104274 [March 1987]). The U.S. rate of killings is 21.9 per 100,000 men fifteen through twenty-four. The rate, for example, for Austria is 0.3; for England, 1.2; and for Scotland (highest after the United States), 5.0 (National Center for Health Statistics study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and reported in the *New York Times,* June 27, 1990, p. A10). Between 1985 and 1989 the number of homicides nationwide increased 22 percent (congressional hearings reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer,* August 1, 1990). The U.S. rate of incarceration is 407 per 100,000 citizens. This compares to 36 in the Netherlands, 86 in West Germany, and 100 in England. While the prison population in the United States doubled in the 1980s, the crime rate rose 1.8 percent, suggesting that the "need to incarcerate" is out of proportion with the actual crime rate but is a political response to culturally generated insecurity and demand for repression. There is no evidence that capital punishment is a greater deterrent than a life sentence or that it relates to lower crime rates.

40. Associated Press dispatch by Fred Bayles reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer,* November 15, 1991, p. 3A.

41. See, for example, Ray Surette, *Media Crime and Criminal Justice: Images and Realities* (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1992).

42. Todd Gitlin, "On Thrills and Kills: Sadomasochism in the Movies," *Dissent* (Spring 1991): 247.

43. Steve Tesich, "The Watergate Syndrome: A Government of Lies," *Nation,* January 13, 1992, p. 13.

44. *Variety,* October 14, 1991, p. 61.

45. See, for example, George Gerbner, "Violence and Terror in the Mass Media," *Reports and Papers in Mass Communication,* no. 102 (Paris: UNESCO, 1988).

46. Paul Lewis, "New U.N. Leader Is Taking Over at a Time of Great Expectations," *New York Times,* December 30, 1991, pp. A1, 6.

47. Eric Schmitt, "Saudis to Buy 14 More Batteries of Patriot Missiles from the U.S.," *New York Times,* November 9, 1991, p. 3.

48. Matthew d'Ancona, "All Eyes on the Armourer," *Index on Censorship* (November-December 1991): 2.

49. For more details, see Mel Friedman, "Too Little, Too Late: How the Press Misses the Proliferation Story," *Nuclear Times* (Winter 1991–1992): 27–32.

50. Andrew Rosenthal, "Bush Returns the Democrats' Fire, Pointing to Success Against Iraqis," *New York Times,* November 9, 1991, pp. A1, 9.

51. A "test run" by the National Republican Congressional Committee in a November 1991 race in central Virginia yielded positive results. A thirty-second spot superimposed a photo of the Democratic candidate over an antiwar demonstration showing a "Victory to Iraq" banner. Although it was acknowledged (after the election) that the candidate did not attend that rally, she lost the election 37 to 63 percent.

Although by year's end the alternative press and more searching examinations had begun to challenge the instant history of the war, they were not likely to thaw the massive quick freeze of the mainstream media. The first "revisionist" book to appear was Martin Yant, *Desert Mirage: The True Story of the Gulf War* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1991).

52. John Keegan, "The Gentle Giant," *Modern Maturity* (December 1991–January 1992): 52.

53. "The People, The Press and the War in the Gulf" (Washington, D.C.: Times Mirror Center for People and the Press, releases of January 10, January 31, and March 25, 1991).