Violence and Voices:

Armed Political Opposition Groups' Interaction

With the Foreign News Media

Masters of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

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And

The more than 100 Journalists killed covering the war....

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CHAPTER 1: *"Diplomatic" Immunity Forgotten*

- Violence and the Media

On August 7, 2006, former CBS newsman and current American University of Cairo Professor Lawrence Pintak published an opinion article in Lebanon's English language daily *The Daily Star,* where he called for new international laws and regulations to protect journalists covering today's wars and conflicts.[1] Though the media had always faced violence and threats covering wars and violent conflicts, Pintak argued, today's conflicts had become a different game where journalists have "specifically and systemically become 'legitimate' targets of war."[2] The media used to be the targets of kidnappings by militants and militias because of their Western nationalities and news credentials, but now "reporters are targeted because they are reporters."[3]

Pintak's article was published during the height of the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war, where journalists covering the conflict were threatened and attacked by both Hezbollah fighters and Israeli soldiers. His article also draws attention to the American military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, where significant numbers of local, regional, and international journalists have been killed or injured over the past five years of conflict by coalition military and militant groups. The international laws and regulations he advocates could help stop or deter media targeting by "official" entities, yet these laws would have very little control over non-state actors like Hezbollah, the al Qaeda network, or the myriad individual militias operating inside Iraq.

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[1] Lawrence Pintak. "Weapons of war: open season on journalists in the Middle East," *The Daily Star*, August 7, 2006.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

Washington Post columnist David Ignatius has covered and reported from many of the Middle East's conflict zones, including Beirut since the 1980's and the current conflict in Iraq. Like Pintak, he sees the game for journalists changing as well:

> "Radical groups in the old days would often talk with the Western media. In those days, the rules were 'more civilized.' It was still possible for journalists to have an invisible 'white flag,' to have a kind of diplomatic immunity allowing them to talk and interview different militia leaders and their spokesmen. Groups would issue press credentials, and they were genuinely interested in what we were reporting. But today's groups don't seem to need or want the Western media. Now, increasingly whole areas of the Middle East are becoming no go zones, and this is increasingly true outside Iraq. I find that very disturbing."[4]

When asked why this change had occurred, what he thinks might have been the factor that ultimately changed the game, Ignatius couldn't point to any one thing. "Maybe the internet? The rise and development of independent professional Arab media like *Al Jazeera*? Whatever their reasons, militant groups just aren't going to the Western media to get their message out, and if they don't need us any more, if there's no utility in their talking to us, then our relationship has, and will forever be, changed."[5]

So why has this relationship changed? Theorists of armed political conflict emphasize that successful revolutionary movements utilize the media, propaganda, and a well planned and organized public information campaign to effectively cast doubt on the legitimacy of the opposed government or military force. At the same time these groups often rely on the media in order to bolster their own legitimacy in the eyes of the global

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[4] David Ignatius, columnist for *The Washington Post*, in an interview with the author November 24, 2006.
[5] *Ibid.*

and indigenous population.[6] This relationship is usually mutually beneficial; the armed

group seeks to persuade the media to publish their viewpoints and information, while the

media seeks to gain information about the armed group.[7]

Yet if the rules have changed, if the relationship is no longer considered symbiotic

and mutually beneficial by one party, what happens to the game? If the media is

necessary to convey the militant group's message, what happens when that messenger

disappears? If the media fear for their safety, is unable to get both sides of the story and

objectively cover the conflict, who ultimately loses out?

But why is this important? Why should we care whether certain groups or

conflicts are covered objectively and fairly, or whether we, the readers of the Western

media, get the full balanced story?

Picture the following scenarios: in a somewhat developed country, the minority

race population effectively rules over a much larger majority population of a different

race. The persecuted majority population organizes a group to advocate for more equal

human rights and privileges, adopting a purely non-violent standpoint. After decades of

following a non-violent strategy with no positive results, the group decides to take up

arms and fight against the ruling minority government. Though the group never targets

civilians, only government facilities and security forces, the government quickly labels

them terrorists, and makes it illegal for any media to interact with the opposition group.

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[6] Steven R. Corman and Jill S. Schiefelbein. "Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas," *Consortium for Strategic Communication*, Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University, Report #0601, April 20, 2006, pg 2.
[7] see Gadi Wolfsfeld's discussion on the "competitive symbiosis" relationship between the media and political antagonists, in Gadi Wolfsfeld. "Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pg. 13.

In another part of the world, an internal civil war wages between many different groups, threatening to spill over into a regional war. Each group claims legitimate rule, yet no group is strong enough. After a time, the countries neighbors decide to step into the conflict, each claiming national security reasons. Soon groups align with the various powers, yet still civil war and insecurity prevails. Though groups and neighboring powers maintain press offices and official spokesmen in country, foreign media are constantly under threat from one group or another, and random attacks on the press corps are a regular occurrence. Following years of power fluctuations and stalemates, the international community decides to intervene, though many nations now side with various parties. Due to an unclear picture of what's actually going on, the international bodies are paralyzed and remain inactive.

In a third part of the world, a country receives independence from its former occupiers. Though independence has been granted, the former occupiers retain a significant military force, ostensibly for regional and global strategic reasons. After minor clashes between new government security forces and various militant groups claiming higher legitimacy, the former occupiers increase their military presence and begin security operations against the militant forces. Foreign media rush in to cover the conflict, yet are soon targeted by the opposition groups, who claim the foreign media are propaganda arms of the illegitimate government and former occupation forces. Facing significant threats, the media soon hunker down in specified journalists "safe havens," reporting mostly "official" released information and rare snippets of opposition information. In the end, following a number of government "stabilization" operations,

the opposition is utterly crushed, though a few reports filter out accusing government forces of mass atrocities in the crackdown.

Now ask yourself again those questions identified above. In the first scenario, the minority ruling government labels the armed opposition group claiming to represent the persecuted majority as terrorists. Yet without coverage by an independent, objective and balanced press corps, the international community might never know the real nature of the opposition group, especially if countries have fairly positive and long standing relationships with the minority government. Lacking the knowledge of the situation, foreign populations might never have the opportunity to care about the plight of the persecuted minority, therefore never even thinking to take independent action to support the resistance group or put pressure on their own governments to take action.

In the second scenario, though government and group press information institutions exist, the foreign media is unable to report the actual situation and status of the conflict. The international community wishes to intervene, yet due to an incomplete information picture, internal squabbles and varying viewpoints create deadlocks that could have been avoided had journalists been free to report a full and accurate picture of the conflict. Without more stringent international norms concerning the protection of journalists by warring parties, media attempting to cover the conflict are unable to safely report.

The last scenario presents a frightening picture for a number of reasons. The first reasons are much like the first two scenarios: when the situation becomes too dangerous for foreign media to safely cover the conflict, a true picture of the conflict is unable to be reported, resulting in longer conflicts, missed negotiation opportunities, and other

possible problems. Yet an additional issue arises in this scenario much like the first scenario: perhaps the opposition group has a fully legitimate reason for opposing the government, yet by targeting journalists and other innocents, their legitimacy will be irrevocably eroded. Outside actors who might have cause to intervene and support the group will ultimately be turned away. Lastly, as the scenario suggests, the government and former occupation forces might have committed war crimes or other atrocities, yet because of the negative relationship between opposition forces and the global media, these actions may receive little action and ultimately occur with impunity.

In this paper I will seek to predict where the global relationship is moving, and hopefully answer some of the previous identified questions. By examining the actions and strategies of past armed political opposition groups, I will attempt to show how and why armed movements interact with the news media the way they do, specifically the global, Western news media. In addition to an analysis of the success of specific groups' media strategies, I will also attempt to create a new model of media interaction, the *spectrum of violence media interaction model*; a tool that will hopefully help predict the future actions and strategies of today's militant movements.

Finally I hope to answer the underlying topical question: is the current situation in Iraq indicative of a new global relationship between armed groups and the media, or is it simply an anomaly? Will future armed groups follow the al Qaeda Network's lead, shunning live media interaction and relying almost exclusively on internet web-boards and taped messages released to wire services and regional media, or will they follow the more successful armed political movements of the past, such as the African National Congress, the Irish Republic Army, or even Hamas and Hezbollah?

In the second chapter, I will first define and explain a number of important subjects vital to understanding the interaction between armed groups and the media. First I will discuss the communications concept of framing, including setting a working definition of framing, and why this concept is important to the broader topic being discussed. Second I will set down definitions of armed political opposition groups, briefly discussing the differences between militant, criminal, and terrorist groups. For the purposes of this paper, I will be concentrating on militant and terrorist groups, and therefore a careful definition of such groups is important, especially as it relates to media coverage and other semantic issues.

In the third chapter there will be an examination of Gadi Wolfsfeld's *political contest model*, a model well suited to our discussion of media interaction. Though dealing primarily with the contest between political antagonists over the media, and focusing heavily on government actors and organizations, the model is still very relevant for our discussion. Additionally this chapter will discuss some of the general dangers the news media faces when covering conflict zones, including current and historical conflicts, new security precautions, and psychological concerns.

The fourth chapter will outline my new model, the *spectrum of violence media interaction model*, including an explanation of the four major arguments used as the basis of my model, descriptions of major types of interactions, indicators for these types, as well as historical and current data to support these designations. I will also discuss why I felt it necessary to create a new model, rather than rely on Wolfsfeld's *political contest model.*

The fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters will focus on specific case analysis of a number of historic armed political opposition groups, including the Apartheid-era African National Congress (ANC)[8], Hezbollah, and the al-Qaeda Network. The case analysis will focus on the groups' media strategies and policies, historical interaction with foreign media, a determination of where and how they fit into the *spectrum of violence media interaction model*, and a discussion of their failure or success as a movement due to their media policies.

The final chapter will examine the current situation in Iraq, the evolving relationships between the media and various Iraqi militias, and the security implications for journalists. Utilizing the *spectrum of violence media interaction model* and comparing Iraqi militia groups with previous historical opposition groups, I will attempt to answer the key question concerning the global relationship between the media and militant groups.

Lastly a note about the data and methodology used. The primary data comes from individual interviews conducted by the author with journalists, security experts, and political activists. A full list of interviews and sample questions can be found at the back in Appendix A. Additional secondary information was gathered from expert books and reports on the subjects of terrorism, security, and political communications. Lastly a significant number of news articles were analyzed covering conflicts throughout the past three decades. A full bibliography and list of works, reports, and articles can also be found at the back in Appendix B.

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[8] Please Note – for the purposes of my paper, the ANC I refer to is the historical Apartheid-era group which consisted of both military and political wings, existing roughly between 1961 and 1992. The ANC of today is no longer an armed political opposition group.

CHAPTER 2: *Pictures of militants or terrorists?*

- The Importance of Semantics and Definitions

As the old cliché goes, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."

While many use that phrase as an excuse to legitimize certain actions, is that really

always the case? What's in a name, any way - does it really matter what we call these

groups? Are certain areas "occupied" or "in dispute?" Should specific actions be

described as "acts of terrorism" or "acts of resistance?" What qualifies as a "protest" or

"retaliation," an "incursion" or "invasion?" What constitutes a "massacre?" Who should

be labeled a "terrorist" and who a "freedom fighter?" Who are "gunmen," and how are

they similar to or different from terrorists or freedom fighters? Who are "separatists" or

"rebels?" Are certain people best described as "suicide bombers" or "homicide

bombers?"[9] In the case of the media, it is very important, as semantics mean everything

to media framing. In this chapter I will first briefly outline media framing, including a

working paper definition. I will then go on to define and differentiate armed groups,

terrorists, and criminal cartels.

Names, categorizations, generalities, and phraseology are all important factors of

media framing. Robert Entman has developed a good basic definition for framing.

According to Entman, a *frame* operates to select and highlight some features of reality

and obscure others in a way that tells a consistent story about problems, their causes,

moral implications, and remedies.[10] Another useful definition of frames is W.A.

Gamson's definition, where frames are "a central organizing idea for making sense of

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[9] Beverly Wall. "The minefield of language in Middle East coverage: journalists rarely have the time or space to navigate through the war of words." *Nieman Reports* 56.3, Fall 2002, p81.
[10] Robert M. Entman. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43 (4), pg 51-58, 1993.

relevant events and suggesting what is at issue."[11] A further way of describing framing is to think of a picture frame – what you see inside the frame is what you get; no more, no less. Yet framing armed opposition, rebellions, insurgencies and terrorist activities is not quite so clear cut. Here the media or societal frame becomes doubly important. As we said, "one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter," and the media or societal frame chosen will determine which the activist is.

Mark Juergensmeyer, in his book *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, begins his book by discussing the basic idea of terrorism, and how it is viewed by different societies and groups. Yet he believes terrorism is designed and executed simply for one purpose.

> "Terrorism is meant to terrify. The word comes from the Latin *terrere*, 'to cause to tremble,' and came into common usage in the political sense, as an assault on civil order, during the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. Hence the public response to the violence – the trembling that terrorism effects – is part of the meaning of the term. It is appropriate, then, that the definition of a terrorist act is provided by us, the witnesses – the ones terrified – and not by the party committing the act. It is we – *or more often our public agents, the news media* – who affix the label on act of violence that makes them terrorism. These are public acts of destruction, committed without a clear military objective, that arouse a widespread sense of fear."[12]
> (*emphasis added by the author*)

As we said before, depending on the media frame used, an act might or might not be considered terrorism. The level of news saturation, media violence fatigue or

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[11] W.A. Gamson. "Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: a constructionist approach." *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, pg 35.

[12] Mark Juergensmeyer. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. 3rd edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, pg. 5.

indifference, or even the prevailing societal viewpoint with respect to political violence, all become factors in determining what frame the media chooses to use, and may often determine the characterization of specific violent events.

Think of the following two hypothetical news stories:

o *Terrorists attacked a government train today, killing and wounding a number of multi-national force military personnel as they were being transported to a nearby military forward operating base. Witnesses said the terrorists first detonated a hidden bomb on board the train then ambushed the remaining troops as they attempted to flee the wreckage. Brigadier General Jos Orchellic, a spokesman for the multi-national forces, stated government forces responded to the attack, killing all insurgent forces believed to be around 200 rebel fighters. The Black Hand Group, a terrorist organization seeking to spread chaos and anarchy in Makal, is believed to be responsible for the attack, however a spokesman for the group denied their involvement with the morning attack.*

o *Reports out of Makal today state that resistance forces raided and destroyed an occupation government vehicle transporting military forces. According to a military spokesman, over 20 soldiers were killed in the attack, and an additional 70 were wounded. An unknown number of militants took part in the morning raid. Though the government has been quick to blame the Black Hand Group, a national resistance movement seeking to end the foreign occupation of Makal, a spokesman for the group re-iterated that their organization does not target non-combatants, including off duty military personnel.*

Both news stories are about the same attack on military forces, yet they each use different frames to describe the event. In the first article, the perspective is slanted in favor of the government, where there is no mention of actual government forces killed or wounded, yet a rebel body count is given. Additionally, the use of the word "terrorist" to describe

the fictional Black Hand Group, along with a very clearly dismissive definition of goals, are all designed to de-legitimize the organization in the eyes of the media outlet's readers. The second story supports the opposite perspective. In this version, the militants are described as resistance forces, the attack is described as a "raid," and there is no inflammatory language towards the attackers such as the use of "ambushed the forces while fleeing" to describe how the attack was carried out. Additionally, the fictional Black Hand Group is described in more positive language as resistance fighters against a foreign occupation. Ultimately the different choice of media frames, the "terrorism" frame in the first article and the "resistance to occupation" frame in the second, leave the reader with very different impressions of the conflict and parties involved. This example should illustrate why questions of media framing and bias become very important when covering armed political conflict. As one can see, depending on the words used to describe a group, the information presented or not presented, and even the tone of a news article can all change the readers' perception of an armed group or conflict.

Therefore, if most armed political groups rely heavily on the news media to disseminate their political message, influencing the frames used to describe the armed groups becomes an important part of any opposition's media and communications strategy. According to Arizona State University's Consortium for Strategic Communication's report "Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihadi War of Ideas," there are three strategic goals for communications and media in jihadi operations.[13] First they must legitimate their movements by establishing its social and religious credentials while still engaging in violent acts that ordinarily would violate the

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[13] Please Note - though the report cited concentrates on militant Islamic groups, the general underlying communications principles can be applied to most if not all armed political groups.

norms of society and tenets of Islam. Second, they aim to propagate their movement by

spreading messages to sympathetic audiences in areas where they want to expand, both

inside and outside their traditional regions of influence. For example, the al Qaeda

Network will design messages specifically for the Middle East and greater Muslim

World, but they will also design messages for "secular" Muslims, and other anti-Western

movements residing in traditionally Western oriented countries. These communications

prepare the way for political efforts that precede establishing actual militant operations.

Third, groups often seek to intimidate their opponents. This applies to both known

existing enemies as well as current regional sympathizers who might later turn against the

group.[14]

   As illustrated in our discussion on framing, the definitions and name choices for

events and groups is very important to the success and failures of opposition media

strategies. In the case of this paper, we are talking about defining militant groups, and

separating them from criminal organizations and other thugs or gangs.[15] For the

purposes of this paper, we have chosen to use "armed political opposition groups,"

because the term is the broad and generic. Another appropriate term would be "non-state

actors," or "non-state armed groups," both generic and broad like the chosen term. All

the groups being discussed in this study are armed, they all have political agendas, and

lastly they are all in opposition to government, regional, or internationally recognized

institutions. Yet rarely would a media outlet use this term, for the main reason that it is

too neutral and therefore would not fit well into any frames typically used to describe any

opposition movements.

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[14] *Supra* Corman Schiefelbein, pg 2.

[15] For example, groups with no political motivation for their actions, simply seeking to cause destruction
and anarchy "for fun" or other non-political reasons.

Before discussing the difference between a purely militant political group and a terrorist organization, we must first define the difference between armed political opposition groups and criminal organizations. In the US Air Force Academy's Institute for National Security Studies' paper *Armed Groups: A Tier-One Security Priority* there are four main categorizations of non-state armed groups: militias, insurgents, terrorists, and criminal organizations.[16] According to the paper, armed groups have the following three elements in common. One, all armed groups challenge the authority, power, and legitimacy of the state. Some seek to do so by overthrowing the government and replacing it, while other armed groups attempt to weaken, manipulate, or co-opt the state. Second, armed groups use violence and force. Many armed groups maintain political and paramilitary wings, with the political often refraining from violence. Yet ultimately the use of force is still a critical instrument of these organizations to achieve political or other objectives. Third, armed groups operate both locally and globally due to the developments of the information age. They are therefore able to expand the battlefield to attack state adversaries both at home and abroad.[17]

As noted above there are four generic classifications of armed groups: militias, insurgents, terrorists, and criminal organizations. This paper is primarily concerned with the first three types, and therefore it is important to define and better understand each category. *Militias* are generally categorized as a recognizable irregular armed force operation within the territory of a weak and/or failed state. The members of militias often come from the under classes and tend to be composed of young males who are drawn into

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[16] Richard H Shultz Jr., Douglas Farah, Itamara V. Lochard. *Armed Groups: A Tier-One Security Priority*. Colorado Springs: US Air Force Academy, Institute for National Security Studies, INSS Occasional Paper 57, 2004, pg. 16.

[17] *Ibid.*

this group because it gives them access to money, resources, power, and security.

Militias can represent specific ethnic, religious, tribal, clan, or other communal groups.

They may operate under the leaders of a factional leader, clan, or ethnic group, or on their

own after the break-up of the states' forces. They may also be in the service of the state,

either directly or indirectly.[18] Many militias in the post Cold War period have been

characteristically brutal, directing their violence more at civilians than at soldiers or other

militias. In fact, in conflicts involving militias, civilians are frequently the target.[19]

Militias have been central players in the politics of many multi-ethnic or identity

countries. Lebanon is a perfect example of a militia society, where many Lebanese seem

to be more loyal to their confessional group or clan than their country. This was

especially the case during the 1975-1990 Civil War, where confessional factions and their

militias were locked in an intractable political conflict where Sunnis fought Shiites,

Maronites fought Druze, and Christians fought Muslims.[20] Though the mid 1990s saw

the end of the Civil War, many militias simply went underground or, as in the case of

Hezbollah, continued to operate openly as an armed political faction. In the current Iraq

conflict, militias encompass the greatest number of armed political groups, with over 25

different groups operating throughout the country.[21]

Insurgents are groups which seek a protracted political and military set of

activities directed toward partially or completely gaining control over the territory of a

country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations.

Insurgents engage in actions ranging from guerilla operations, terrorism, and sabotage to

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[18] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 23.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 25.
[21] Anthony Shadid, Middle East correspondent for *The Washington Post*, in an interview with the author January 13, 2007.

political mobilization, political action, intelligence/counterintelligence activities, and propaganda/psychological warfare. All of these instruments are designed to weaken and/or destroy the power and legitimacy of a ruling government, while at the same time increasing the power and legitimacy of the armed insurgent group.[22]

The Insurgent category encompasses many different non-state armed groups. During the Cold War period, these groups consisted of leftwing revolutionary and national liberation movements, employing insurgency strategies with the overall objectives of overthrowing the state and carrying out radical political and social changed. Examples of these groups include the Sandinista FSLN organization in Nicaragua, the FMLN in El Salvador, the African National Congress anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, the Red Army Faction Bader-Meinhof Gang in Cold War West Germany, and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland. Then beginning in the 1980s new types of insurgent movements based on existing ethnic and religious identities began to emerge. Examples of these groups include the Democratic Party (DPK) and Patriotic Union (PUK) of Kurdistan, the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, the armed clans fighting Russia in Chechnya, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Religious cases include the People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) of Sudan, various Sikh and Kashmiri factions in India, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.[23]

Terrorists, and those groups who employ terrorism, have been defined in many different ways. If one were to ask five different terrorism experts for definitions, they would get five different answers. Further complicating the definition is that since the

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[22] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 18.
[23] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 19.

1970s, the term "terrorism" has frequently been used pejoratively to discredit and de-legitimize armed government opposition groups.[24] As the discussion on media frames should have illustrated, this is not simply a semantic issue. Whether or not one uses "terrorism" to describe violent acts depends on whether one thinks that the acts are warranted. To a large extent the use of the term depends on one's world view: if the world is thought to be peaceful, violent acts appear as terrorism. If the world is thought to be at war, violent acts may be regarded as legitimate. They may be seen as preemptive strikes, as defensive tactics in an ongoing battle, or as symbols indicating to the world that it is indeed in a state of grave and ultimate conflict.[25]

Juergensmeyer's discussions with militant activists provide a good example to the problem. Though described as "terrorists" by most media outlets and governmental organizations, these militants often had a very different world view.

> "When I interviewed militant religious activists and their supporters, I found that they seldom used the term 'terrorist' to describe what their groups had done. Several told me that their groups should be labeled militant rather than terrorist. A Lutheran pastor who was convicted of bombing abortion clinics was not a terrorist, he told me, since he did not enjoy violence for its own sake. He employed violence only for a purpose, and for that reason he described these events as 'defensive actions' on behalf of the 'unborn.' Activists on both sides of the struggle in Belfast described themselves as 'paramilitaries.' A leader in India's Sikh separatist movement said that he preferred the term 'militant' and told me that 'terrorist' had replaced the word 'witch' as an excuse to persecute those whom one dislikes. One of the men associated with the al Qaeda network essentially agreed with the Sikh leader, telling me that the

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[24] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 21.
[25] *Supra* Juergensmeyer, pg. 9.

word 'terrorist' was so 'messy' it could not be used without a lot of qualifications. The same point of view was expressed by the political leader of the Hamas movement with whom I talked in Gaza. He described his movement's suicide attacks as 'operations.' Like many activists who used violence, he likened his group to an army that was planning defensive maneuvers and using violence strategically as necessary acts. Never did he use the word 'terrorist' or 'terrorism.'[26]

By believing themselves to be activists, soldiers, martyrs, or any other term than "terrorists," these militants sought to legitimize their actions, even though many were contrary to the very religious and societal principles they sought to promote.

In general, terrorism can be defined as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear by an armed group through the threat and/or use of the most proscribed kind of violence for political purposes, whether for or in opposition to an established government. The act is designed to have a far-reaching psychological effect beyond the immediate target of the attack and to instill fear in and intimidate a wider audience. The targets of terrorist groups are increasingly non-combatants, many of whom under international norms have the status of protected individuals and groups.[27]

Terrorism is frequently associated with violence committed by disenfranchised groups desperately attempting to gain a shred of power or influence. Although these groups cannot kill on the scale that governments with all their military power can, their sheer numbers, their intense dedication, and their dangerous unpredictability have given them influence vastly out of proportion with their meager military resources. Some of these groups have been inspired by purely secular causes. They have been motivated by

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[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 21.

leftist ideologies, as in the cases of the Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru in Peru, and

the Red Army in Japan; and they have been propelled by a desire for ethnic or regional

separatism, as in the cases of Basque militants in Spain and the Kurdish nationalists in the

Middle East.[28] However most of today's "terrorist" organizations are believed to have a

more religious slant to their agendas, with most international attention focusing on the

Islamic world and militant Islamic groups such as the al Qaeda Network, Hamas, Islamic

Jihad, and, according to some government and international organizations, Lebanon's

Hezbollah.

What clearly differentiates "terrorist" groups from "insurgents" or "militias?" Is

it purely semantics and media frames, or is there something else? Again, Jeugensmeyer

provides an interesting comment:

> "The very adjectives used to describe acts of religious terrorism –
> symbolic, dramatic, theatrical – suggest that we look at them not as tactics
> but as performance violence. The spectacular assaults of September 11,
> 2001 were not only tragic acts of violence; they were also spectacular
> theatre. In speaking of terrorism as 'performance,' however, I am not
> suggesting that such acts are undertaken lightly or capriciously. Rather,
> like religious ritual or street theatre, they are dramas designed to have an
> impact on the several audiences that they affect. Those who witness the
> violence – even at a distance, via the news media – are therefore a part of
> what occurs. Moreover, like other forms of public ritual, the symbolic
> significance of such events is multifaceted; they mean different things to
> different observers."[29]

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[28] *Supra* Juergensmeyer, pg. 6.
[29] *Supra* Juergensmeyer, pg. 126.

Consequently, without the performance value necessary for terrorist attacks, there would be little of the same psychological repercussions or emotional response, leaving the target audience without an overwhelming feeling of terror.

Some have even argued the media play a significant role in terrorism, not only in the establishment of who is considered a terrorist through the use of media framing, but also in the actual practice of terrorism. Without the news media to cover and report a violent political action, would it still be considered terrorism? And even more importantly, would these "terrorist" actions still be done? Take for example the case of the brutal murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. Had his killers not video-taped his beheading, and subsequently sent copies of the video to various news agencies for broadcast, would his murder have raised the same type of international condemnation or fear? As Rajiv Chandrasekaran, former Washington Post bureau chief in Baghdad, put it, "there was always that fear, every time you went out to meet some one for an interview, you were always asking yourself 'am I going to be the next Danny Pearl?'"[30] Some believe this ability to capture the media, and through it national and international attention, has not only changed terrorist tactics but also the terrorist's perception of his role and potentialities.[31] According to RAND Corporation terrorism expert Brian Jenkins, "Terrorist attacks are often carefully choreographed to attract the attention of the electronic media and the international press. Taking and holding hostages increases the drama. If certain demands are not satisfied, the hostages may be killed. The hostages

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[30] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, former Baghdad bureau chief for *The Washington Post*, in an interview with the author November 27, 2006.

[31] H.H.A. Cooper. "Terrorism and the Media." In *Terrorism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* Yonah Alexander and Seymour Maxwell Finger, eds. New York: John Jay Press, 1977, pg. 144

themselves often mean nothing to the terrorists. Terrorism is aimed at the people

watching not at the actual victims. Terrorism is theater."[32]

The last generic classification of armed group, *criminal organizations*, is the least

relevant to this paper, however a brief description is important so as to differentiate from

other armed groups. Armed criminal groups' primary purpose is to operate outside the

law in a particular criminal enterprise. What clearly distinguishes criminal organizations

from other armed groups is their overall goal to maximize their profit, similar to a

legitimate business. The quest for money and the power that goes with it drives and

sustains armed criminal groups.[33]

We will constantly be returning and referring to these definitions in the later

chapters analyzing specific historical armed political opposition groups, specifically

when examining groups' official media strategies. As should be apparent from our

discussion of media framing, a key goal of any media strategy is to influence the rhetoric

and definitions used by the media to describe non-state armed groups, and an

understanding of group type definitions is essential for analyzing a group's actions.

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[32] Brian Jenkins, "International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict," California Arms Control and Foreign Policy Seminar, December 1975, p.4
[33] *Supra* Shultz, Farah, Lochard, pg. 29.

CHAPTER 3: *Ave, Caesar! Those of us about to die, salute you!*

- The Media Arena

Experts and scholars often describe political communications as a grand arena, a giant game of antagonists fighting over the hearts and minds of their audience.[34] Noted communications scholar Gadi Wolfsfeld has dedicated numerous works to the study of political communications, especially the interaction between political antagonists and the news media. Though most of this work deals primarily with the contest between political antagonists over the news media, specifically the contest over competing media frames, and focuses heavily on government actors and organizations, the model is still very relevant for our discussion. In this third chapter we will examine Wolfsfeld's *political contest model*, and apply it to our ideas about how non-state actors' interact with the news media.

Before we begin it must be noted that non-state armed groups are different than other political antagonists, specifically because they are armed. Though they often do utilize the same media strategies as traditional political organizations, the inherent presence of paramilitary elements in the groups' organizational structure will significantly change the playing field. This armed presence will always affect the interaction between the group and the media, as well as the relationship with other political actors. As will be described further later on, Wolfsfeld acknowledges and incorporates into his model the use of violence by political antagonists, especially as a way for groups to gain political leverage or to show their newsworthiness due to a proven willingness to engage in extreme actions.

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[34] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 1.

Wolfsfeld describes his model as "the best way to understand the role of the news media as part of a larger and more significant contest among political antagonists for political control."

> "I want to put the politics back into political communication. Many of those who have studied this issue have made the same mistake as novice protest leaders. They have been so blinded by the radiance of the news media that they have lost sight of the more powerful political forces that lay beyond them." [35]

This is a good starting point to make. Many opposition groups often fail to fully understand the political forces acting on the media above the actual conflict. Yet on the other hand, some opposition groups have put too much emphasis on this, and have begun to view the foreign news outlets as an extension of their nationalities' policy. Anne Garrels has covered conflicts throughout her career as a print and radio journalist. Currently a senior correspondent with National Public Radio, she's covered the war in Iraq for the past four years and has clearly noticed a change in posture. "In past wars, you could meet with rebels and talk with them, have a dialogue. But now we are limited. They see us as collaborators."[36]

The *political contest model* holds certain assumptions about the news media/antagonist relationship. According to Wolfsfeld, The relationship between political antagonists and the news media can be described as a "competitive symbiosis" in which each side of the relationship attempts to exploit the other while expending a minimum amount of cost.[37] Each side has assets needed by the other to succeed in its

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[35] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 3.
[36] Anne Garrels, Senior Correspondent for *National Public Radio*'s Foreign Desk, in an interview with the author December 11, 2006.
[37] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 13.

respective role.[38] Political activists and leaders rely on the press to get their message to a

variety of publics and the press relies on the antagonists for information and events that

can be turned into news. It is this exchange of information for publicity that explains an

important part of the relationship between the two systems.[39] However the power of a

given antagonist over a given news medium is based on the antagonist's level of

perceived news value on the one hand and the antagonist's need for the news media on

the other: the higher the value and the lower the need the greater the likelihood of an

antagonist having an influence on the press. This influence will be manifested in terms of

more access and an increased ability to have one's preferred frames adopted by the news

media.[40] Lastly the model rests on the premise that there are four major factors that

increase the inherent news value of antagonists: their level of political and social status,

their level of organization and resources, their ability to carry out exceptional behavior,

and their level of control over the political environment.[41] We will also utilize these four

factors in the fourth chapter where we discuss our *spectrum of violence media interaction*

model.

Wolfsfeld's model rests on five major arguments. First, the "political process is

more likely to have an influence on the news media than the news media are on the

political process."

> "The political process has a major impact on the press because political
> power can usually be translated into power over the news media, because
> the political culture of a society has a major influence on how the news

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[38] Blumer, J.G. and Gurevitch, M. "Journalists' orientations to political institutions: the case of parliamentary broadcasting." In P. Golding, G. Murdock, and P. Schesinger (eds.). *Communicating politics: mass communications and the political process.* Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1986.
[39] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 14.
[40] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 16.
[41] *Ibid.*

media cover conflicts, because the news media are much more likely to
react to political events than to initiate them, because political realities
often determine how antagonists use the news media to achieve political
goals, and because political decisions have a major influence on who owns
the media and how they operate."[42]

At the same time Wolfsfeld concedes the news media does also influence the political

process. They help set the political agenda, they can accelerate and magnify political

success and failure, they can mobilize third parties into a conflict, and they are central

agents in the construction of social frames about politics.[43] These last points agree with

our broader discussion on the reasons why political opposition groups interact with the

news media.

The second argument is that "the authorities' level of control over the political

environment is one of the key variables that determine the role of the news media in

political conflicts."

"Political conflicts are characterized by moves and counter-moves as each
antagonist tries to initiate and control political events, to dominate
political discourse about the conflict, and to mobilize as many supporters
as possible to their side. Those who have success in these areas also enjoy
a good deal of success in the news media. The news media's role in these
conflicts is directly affected by the outcomes of such struggles. When
authorities succeed in dominating the political environment, the news
media find it difficult to play an independent role."[44]

On the other hand, Wolfsfeld believes that if the authorities lack or lose control it

provides the news media with a much greater array of sources and perspectives from

which to choose. This offers important opportunities for challengers to promote their

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[42] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 3
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 4.

own frames to the press.[45] Again this largely holds true to our main interaction

argument, however the point needs to be tweaked a bit. As previously discussed in the

framing section of the second chapter, a key goal of any groups' media strategy is to

affect the news media's choice of framing, so as to get their point of view, their

messages, and their rhetoric out to the larger audience. This then turns into a larger circle

of political gamesmanship between the opposition and authorities, and even the

opposition and the media. An increase in media coverage always results in an increase in

political prestige. Circularly, an increase in political prestige typically results in

increased coverage.

Yet as Wolfsfeld's second point makes clear, political prestige (or in the model's

case, political control) does not necessary result in *favorable* media coverage. Hamas is a

good example of this point. Though winning control of the Palestinian Authority in the

2006 elections, the international news coverage of their government remained

unfavorable, mostly due to the authorities' (such as the Israeli, US, and EU governments)

level of control, but also due to the poor relationship between Hamas and the

international press corps. Unlike Fatah (and the PLO before them), Hamas did not

cultivate the same kinds of working relationships with the news media. When they

suddenly found themselves the victors of the election, they quickly faced an uphill battle

to capture the media's favorable attention.

The third major argument is that "the role of the news media in political conflicts

varies over time and circumstance."

"The role of the news media in conflicts varies along with such factors as
the political context of the conflict, the resources, skills, and political

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[45] *Ibid.*

power of the players involved, the relationship between the press and each antagonist, the state of public opinion, the ability of the journalists to gain access to the conflict events, and last but certainly not least what is happening in the field. All of this is beyond variations in the antagonists' control over the political environment mentioned above. Thus, not only does the role of the news media vary across conflicts, it can also change within the course of a single conflict."[46]

Because of these factors, governments often accuse the press of sabotaging the war effort if any fair or favorable coverage (or even non-critical, non-negative coverage) of the opposition occurs; conversely opposition parties often criticize the press as government propaganda wings if opposition viewpoints are not consistently published. This point seems to lend credibility to our tweaking of the model's second point, especially where political context and relationships between the news media and opposition parties are concerned. The factors identified in this third point also heavily impact our own *spectrum of violence media interaction model*, and will be examined further in the fourth chapter.

The fourth argument is that "those who hope to understand variations in the role of the news media must look at the competition among antagonists along two dimensions: one *structural* and the other *cultural*."

"Antagonists compete over the news media along two major dimensions. They compete over access to the news media and they compete over media frames. The model will use two dimensions of analysis, each of which contributes an important perspective on these struggles. The structural dimension looks at the extent of mutual dependence between the antagonists and each news medium to explain the power of each side in the transaction. This offers important insights about which political actors

[46] *Ibid.*

are most likely to gain access to the arena. The cultural dimension of analysis focuses on how norms, beliefs, and routines all have an influence on the construction of media frames of conflict. This second dimension serves to remind us that political contests are also struggles over meaning in which success within the news media can lead to higher levels of political support."[47]

This fourth argument can be summed up in a simple phrase: "context matters." And when dealing with non-state armed groups, context becomes a key factor. Anthony Shadid, a foreign correspondent for *The Washington Post* based out of Beirut, puts this idea in clear terms. "The most important thing, the rule of thumb, is that local conditions dictate an organization's strategy."

> "Look at the [armed groups'] messages. They all emphasize different contexts based on local conditions. Then look at the access for each group. Groups with political power, with 'local legitimacy,' they all have easy access, and they're more than happy to talk to you when you've got a question. But those other groups, the more secretive, the clandestine ones, they typically don't have the same level of local or national support, and it shows in how difficult it is to talk to some one."[48]

We'll return to this central "context matters" theme in the fourth chapter when we discuss my own model, the *spectrum of violence media interaction model*.

The fifth and final argument is "that while authorities have tremendous advantages over challengers in the quantity and quality of media coverage they receive, many challengers can overcome these obstacles and use the news media as a tool for political influence."[49] This argument is extremely important for our study, as we are after all concentrating on how armed political opposition groups and the news media

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[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Supra* Shadid, interview.

[49] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 5.

interact, or in other words, how armed political opposition groups attempt to overcome authorities' obstacles and use the news media as a tool for political influence.

In order to properly utilize Wolfsfeld's model for our purposes, we must also take into account the real world dangers today's media face covering conflicts. Returning to the Grand Arena analogy, we realize the media spectators are not separated and protected from the action by panes of unbreakable glass, but are actually walking around the arena floor, weaving in and out between our political competitors. And though mostly aiming at each other, political antagonists will sometimes strike the media spectators, typically claiming by accident, but also often with calculated, premeditated purpose. As the spectacle becomes more hazardous for our media spectators, they invariably pack up and leave the arena, or hunker down near stable, yet often official, safe areas.

As discussed in our introduction chapter, the harassment of journalists is disturbing because of the important role reporters and other news media workers play in the development and maintenance of international society. As Mark D. Alleyne states in Chapter 6 "Killing the Messenger" of *News Revolution: Political and Economic Decisions about Global Information*, a free press "can be viewed as contributing to international peace in two ways. The first is directly, through the surveillance function the media plays, in such activities as covering wars and reporting atrocities, seeking out multiple sources of fact, and publicizing civil abuses that are often the cause of wars. The second is indirectly, by being the required institution of liberal democracies."[50] In other words, without news journalists to give objective reports on conflict zones, citizens of democratic societies become much less likely to intelligently push their elected leaders

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[50] Mark D. Alleyne. *New Revolution: Political and Economic Decisions about Global Information*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, pg. 110

to take correct actions. They may become victims to emotional slogans and speeches, and end up supporting erroneous and false assumptions provided to them by governments or other organizations with less than objective political agendas.

Ultimately threats by political antagonists, whether implicit or explicit, have the same effect: foreign journalists leave the area and usually the group doing the threatening receives almost universal condemnation in the international press. For example, on June 20, 1979, Nicaraguan government soldiers shot and killed ABC News reporter Bill Stewart and his interpreter. The two were killed in Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, when they attempted to talk with the national guardsmen who were manning a roadblock near the scene of fighting with the Sandinista rebels. As a result, the day after Stewart was killed, 32 journalists, including most of the American network TV crews, fled the country in protest and fear. The incident added to the stream of negative publicity against the Somoza government that eventually accelerated its demise.[51]

A similar phenomenon occurred in Iraq in 2004. As a Coalition Provisional Authority press officer, I often monitored or witnessed the daily activities of the local, regional and international news media. Following the reopening of their Baghdad bureau after a two month ban in early 2004, Al-Arabiya, an Arab language satellite channel out of Dubai, began using the term "insurgents" to refer to militants fighting against Iraq and Coalition security forces. Prior to the Iraqi Governing Council ban, Al-Arabiya had referred to groups as "martyrs," and I often noticed they would describe anti-coalition attacks as "resistance against the occupation forces." Arabiya's Baghdad bureau soon received verbal and written threats by groups against the station, accusing Arabiya of being a "Zionist media network" working with the Coalition, and urged the news station

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[51] *Supra* Alleyne, pg. 108.

to return to using the term "martyrs." After months of threats, insurgents set off a car

bomb outside the Baghdad bureau. The 1920s Battalions, a group taking its name from a

Shiite uprising against the British, claimed responsibility and released a statement, "thank

God, the building of the Arabic-speaking Americanized spy journalists was destroyed."[52]

However instead of capitulating to insurgent demands, Arabiya's management ordered

the term "terrorist" be used whenever describing any militant activity in Iraq. I soon

noticed that other regional TV stations and media outlets soon followed Arabiya's lead.

As discussed previously, if groups rely on the news media to influence their popular

legitimacy, then causing that same news media to view the group as an enemy and

worthy of contempt seems to be far from an optimal position. Of course some groups

would claim that at least their struggle made the news cycle. Yet a quick examination of

Hamas' current problems with the news media, the lack of favorable relationships due to

their previous anti-media activities, should make it clear to any would-be political activist

that a close and friendly relationship with the news media is critical for any future

political success.

Many Western journalists say today's conflict zones are some of the most

dangerous in history. According to data collected by the Committee to Protect Journalists

(CPJ), an independent non-profit organization dedicated to defending press freedom

world wide, the conflicts in Iraq and Chechnya are two of the most dangerous for

journalists, with over 29 killed in Chechnya, and 100 killed in Iraq since the conflicts

began.[53] Of the 100 journalists killed in Iraq, 18 were non-Arab (including Westerners

and non-Westerners), and 40 of the 100 were working for international news

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[52] "Car bomb kills seven at Al Arabiya TV in Baghdad." *Reuters News Agency*, October 31, 2004.
[53] "Journalists killed in past ten years." *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)*, at
http://www.cpj.org/killed/killed_archives/Intro.html

organizations.[54] In comparison, 58 journalists were killed covering the Algerian conflict

from 1993-1996, 36 were killed in the Balkans conflict from 1991-1995, 66 were killed

covering Vietnam from 1955-1975, and 68 were killed during WWII. Additionally, Iraq

in 2006 became the deadliest conflict year for journalists with 32 journalists killed, in

comparison to the previous "deadliest" record holder, 1995 in Algeria when 24

journalists were killed.[55] As a result it is well documented that the security situation has

forced most international media to close their Baghdad bureaus, or restrict their

correspondents to bureau hotels and the Baghdad International Zone, and to rely almost

strictly on local Iraqi stringers. This last measure has not mitigated the dangers, as many

local stringers have been threatened or killed by Iraqi militia groups.

Having discussed and examined Wolfsfeld's *political contest model* and the

dangers of conflict zone journalism, I will use the next chapter to describe and discuss my

own media interaction model, the *spectrum of violence media interaction model*. This

fourth chapter will be used to introduce the model, including a description of media

interaction types, indicators for each type, and finally historical and anecdotal evidence to

support the model.

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[54] "Iraq: Journalists in Danger." *CPJ*, at http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/Iraq/Iraq_danger.html
[55] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4: *What Goes Around, Comes Around*

- The Spectrum of Violence Media Interaction Model

As our brief discussion of Wolfsfeld's *political contest model* illustrated, the model provides a significant amount of usefulness for our discussion, yet at the same time is not quite the right fit. For each of the five arguments, there was certain additional information that needed to be considered or tweaking that needed to be done in order to better explain the interaction between the news media, especially the international news media, and armed political opposition groups. Additionally, Wolfsfeld's model is mostly concerned with the contest between antagonists over the news media, specifically the contest between authorities and non-authority political power seeking groups, or more plainly governments and rebels. I feel the model therefore leaves out the majority of the relationship building and interaction between the media and non-government groups. The model may discuss how much media coverage a group will receive, yet it spends little time discussing how the antagonists actually interact with the media to achieve specific objectives and results.

In order to properly analyze armed group behavior and answer my ultimate questions, I realized I would have come up with my own model, which I call the *spectrum of violence media interaction model*. My model is not meant to replace Wolfsfeld's; instead it is an augmenting model for *political contest model*, a "mod" if you will, which builds upon the model, and enhances it in certain directions, specifically the one outlined above. As such, I borrow many assumptions from Wolfsfeld, and some of the model arguments closely resemble the original version, however with the tweaks discussed in chapter three.

The first borrowed assumption is that the relationship between political antagonists and the news media can be described as a "competitive symbiosis" in which each side of the relationship attempts to exploit the other while expending a minimum amount of cost.[56] As stated earlier, each side has assets needed by the other to succeed in its respective role.[57] Political activists and group leaders rely on the press to get their message to a variety of publics and the press relies on the antagonists for information and events that can be turned into news. It is this exchange of information for publicity that explains an important part of the relationship between the two systems.[58]

According to Wolfsfeld, the power of a given antagonist over the news media is based on the antagonist's level of perceived news value on the one hand and the antagonist's need for the news media on the other. I argue that in armed political conflict, all parties to the conflict need the news media, and at the same time all parties are given relatively the same news value. This does not mean that all parties are treated equally by the news media, but rather that the news media will consider all violent actions by armed groups to be newsworthy. It is no secret that in the news world, politically motivated guns and bombs, especially those resulting in death and destruction, will always rate the front page. This is also consistent with Wolfsfeld's arguments. Regardless of this news norm, media frames, perspectives and biases will still influence the amount and type of news coverage a group receives. As opposed to the belief that perceived news value and need for the news will influence access and increased ability to have preferred frames used, I would argue that it is more national and media biases which ultimately influence armed conflict coverage.

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[56] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 13.
[57] *Supra* Blumer and Gurevitch.
[58] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 14.

The second set of assumptions I borrow from Wolfsfeld are that there are four major factors that increase the inherent news value of antagonists: their level of political and social status, their level of organization and resources, their ability to carry out exceptional behavior, and their level of control over the political environment.[59] My only addendum to this is that "inherent news value of antagonists" does not have the same weight in armed political conflicts as in peaceful political contests. For example, in a peaceful political contest, the authorities typically always enjoy a major level of newsworthiness. When the President of the United States makes a televised statement, it is typically covered live on all news networks, will be found instantly online in the new media, and will rate the front page the next morning in the news dailies. As the level of authority lessens, so too does news coverage; i.e. the Senate Majority Leader will typically receive large amounts of coverage, while an obscure first term congressman might receive little to no national news coverage without exceptional circumstances. Similarly, when a major international organization like the United Nations, or the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) release a new report on human rights abuses, they typically enjoy wide international media coverage. However, if a fictional Fletcher Human Rights Club were to have released the exact same report, little coverage besides the Tufts Daily would occur.

Wolfsfeld would agree that in armed political conflict that presence of guns and bombs suddenly evens out the playing field with respect to political antagonist newsworthiness. In Baghdad, every major International and local news outlets sends a reporter to cover US Military or Iraqi Government press conferences, because they are the official authorities, and the newspapers require official comment to properly cover a

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[59] *Supra* Wolfsfeld, pg. 16.

story. At the same time, every news outlet that can will send a reporter to cover a press conference by a spokesman for Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia, as they would send a reporter to cover any insurgent press conference or media event.[60] And as any quick glance at Iraq war coverage will show, excerpts from insurgent press conferences or statements will always have coverage. It is only when groups choose not to interact with the news media that coverage is absent.

Therefore, assuming the news media considers all armed political opposition groups to be inherently newsworthy, the four major factors concerning a groups' level of political and social status, their level of organization and resources, their ability to carry out exceptional behavior, and their level of control over the political environment will therefore help explain how and why armed groups choose to interact with the news media. These four major factors, combined with the assumed symbiotic relationship between armed groups and the media, will serve as the backbone of our media interaction model.

My *spectrum of violence media interaction model* consists of three independent yet relational arguments. The three arguments are the result of my personal analysis of eight first person interviews, four secondary source works on the media, terrorism, and armed groups, and the careful study of over 180 news articles and organization reports concerning conflict zones, wars, rebel movements, terrorists, and armed groups. Utilizing these three arguments I created a framework and spectrum of interaction types, and identify three main groupings which describe different ways non-state armed groups interact with the news media. As these three groupings rest on the two extremes and the middle of the spectrum, some armed groups will obviously not fit perfectly into any of

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[60] *Supra* Chandrasekaran, interview.

the three types. The point is that the spectrum is fluid, and groups will move across the

spectrum depending on circumstances and events. On the other hand, some groups may

exhibit traits of one interaction type throughout their entire group "life." We will refer

frequently to these groupings in our later group case studies.

The **<u>first</u>** argument of my model is that *<u>armed groups who enjoy a high level of</u>*

<u>political and social status, or a high level of legitimacy on a local, regional, or</u>

<u>international level, utilize positive, non-violent media interaction techniques.</u> In fact

often these groups are more tolerant of a free press than the official government security

forces.[61] As stated in the last chapter, "context matters." Regardless of their historical or

government reputations, the local context on the ground will always be the greatest

determinant of a group's perspective towards the news media. Those groups who enjoy

broad local, regional, or international support will effectively act as quasi governments,

tend to include group ministries or departments, and often provide civil services and other

relief to the population living in their sphere of control. In some cases the opposition

groups even have members in parts of the official government structures being opposed,

as is the case with Sinn Fein (the IRA's political wing) members in the Westminster

Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, members of

Hezbollah in the Parliament of Lebanon, and members of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi

Army militia in the new Iraqi Government and Iraqi Council of Representatives. In the

end, as a group becomes more political, and in turn politically responsible to more

constituents and followers, they are forced to interact with the news media or face losing

a legitimate political contest with their own political opposition.

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[61] *Ibid.*

Additionally armed opposition groups with high levels of local, regional, or international legitimacy will gladly interact with members of the news media, mostly because they have less to fear.[62] Those groups who receive support from local, regional, or international populations aren't worried that a visiting journalist might be a government spy. Their group's offices are well known, well established, and often receive direct mail and other communications. They see a clear benefit in having Western journalists around to air their views, to act as a message vehicle to the world. And when official governments refuse to meet and interact with armed groups, especially those they have listed as terrorists, the journalists can act as proxy negotiators. David Ignatius remembers the PLO interacting with Western journalists for this reason.

> "Back in Beirut in the 1980s, US and Israel officials refused to meet with the PLO or other Lebanese militia groups, and so Western Journalists were able to act as proxies for groups, especially in terms of their legitimacy. The PLO would meet with journalists, would protect and secure the hotels where journalists stayed. They would make themselves present whenever they could for interviews. They saw us as a useful messenger to disseminate their core political messages. And this was true for the other groups that I would come in contact with. Druze, Lebanese Forces, Amal, they all saw us this way."[63]

No matter how violent the groups' reputation, as long as they command a high level of legitimacy they will treat the news media with a positive communications outlook.

Though designated as a "terrorist" organization by the previous South African Apartheid regime, the Apartheid-era African National Congress (ANC) made it a well known internal rule never to threaten or harm journalists, even employees of the State

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[62] *Supra* Ignatius, interview.
[63] *Ibid.*

media. "One clear goal was to create contacts and relationships with both internal and external press." Mac Maharaj, former South African Minister of Transportation and before that an ANC Internal Commander, spoke with me about the ANC's non-violent media strategy. "Our strategy was based on wooing the media through persuasion, not threats, utilizing instruments of criticism and reason. We never saw any benefit in using force against the media, because then our legitimacy would be threatened, but also this type of sensationalism would be completely against the ANC basic principles."[64] Dr. Z. Pallo Jordan, former ANC Minister of Information and current South African Minister of Arts and Culture, agrees with Maharaj.

> "The more favorably one impresses the media, the better. The ANC necessarily had to interact with the international media in order to inform the people of the world about the struggle for freedom in South Africa and to explain its cause. There was tremendous benefit from this because the overwhelming majority of the world's people regarded racism as obscene and reprehensible. As most citizens form their opinions based on what information they receive through the media, therefore anyone hoping to shape the public mind has to interact with the media to ensure that it carries information about them."[65]

Both gentlemen made it absolutely clear that the official position of the ANC was to treat all journalists professionally and non-violently. Any other posture would have shattered the anti-apartheid movement. "Understanding that the role of the media was essential for communication and information," says Dr. Jordan, "it would have been 'shooting oneself

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[64] Mac Maharaj, former ANC Internal Commander and South African Minister of Transportation, in an interview with the author February 1, 2007.
[65] Dr. Z. Pallo Jordan, former ANC Minister of Information and current South African Minister of Arts and Culture, in an interview with the author February 20, 2007.

in the foot' to threaten or to attack those whom we hoped could convey that information to the wider world."[66]

Frequently attacked by Western governments as a purely violent, anti-western organization, Hezbollah has also practiced a non-violent media strategy since the end of the Lebanese Civil War in the mid 1990s. Though Israeli officials and other critical governments have accused Hezbollah of controlling international journalists based in Lebanon,[67] especially during the summer of 2006 Lebanon War, most international journalists covering Hezbollah have vocally and strenuously denied these claims. Anthony Shadid, the *Washington Post* reporter who has covered Beirut, Iraq, and the Greater Middle East since the mid 1990s, told me he has never once felt threatened or coerced by Hezbollah or any of their supporters. "Hezbollah has never posed a danger to me. They have a full press office, and it treats [foreign journalists] like any official government would. Those who claimed 'advocacy journalism' during the summer war, saying we covered it the way we did because we were afraid to 'cross Hezbollah,' were just saying that to discredit what was really going on."[68] On August 4, 2006, freelance journalist Christopher Allbritton posted an entry in his blog *Back to Iraq: Edition du Liban*, where he discussed his treatment by Hezbollah forces. "On several right-wing blogs, including the National Review Online, a comment I made about Hezbollah's security measures and their 'hassling' of journalists has been taken to mean that we're all Hezbollah stooges here … or something. This is not true."

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[66] *Ibid.*

[67] see Marvin Kalb. "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict." *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, RWP07-012, February 2007.

[68] *Supra* Shadid, interview.

"Let's set aside that the Lebanese Internal Security also has photocopies of our passports. The reason for the hassling and the threat was that a reporter had filmed or described either a launching site or Hezbollah positions. (I'm not sure which.) To the best of my knowledge, that's been the extent of the hassling. I'm going to get in trouble for this, but I think it's a reasonable restriction. This is the exact same restrictions placed on journalists by the Israeli army and by the Americans in Iraq. I don't think threatening journalists is cool at all, and it certainly doesn't endear me to them, but that has been the extent of Hezbollah's interference in our coverage."[69]

US media icon Seymour Hersh, the Pulitzer Prize winning *New Yorker* writer who broke the stories on the My Lai massacre and the US military's mistreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison, also defends Hezbollah's media strategies. "I've never once been threatened by Hezbollah. Sheikh Nasrallah just wants to talk to people…he'll talk to any American at any time. These groups want to get their point across to the American People. They want Americans to believe they are good people, and will therefore act professionally towards journalists seeking to interview them."[70]

Even in Iraq the more popularly respected armed groups play by these rules. Though behind some of the worst attacks on Coalition and Iraq security forces, as well as the general Sunni population, Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia has never kidnapped or physically harmed any Western journalists. Though other violent militias and splinter groups of the Mahdi Army have made it a practice of targeting foreign media, all of the journalists I interviewed have never felt threatened by the "mainstream" organization, and have often interviewed leaders at the organizations offices in Baghdad

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[69] Christopher Allbritton. "Silence…" *Back to Iraq: Edition du Liban*, August 4, 2006, at http://www.back-to-iraq.com/archives/2006/08/silence.php
[70] Seymour Hersh, author and contributor to *The New Yorker* magazine, in an interview with the author January 26, 2007.

and An-Najaf. Anne Garrels, from *NPR*'s foreign desk, has covered conflicts all over the globe and reported from Iraq since the March 2003 invasion. Her experience with the Mahdi Army is a typical exmple. "I could easily go see Sadr for an interview, but questions all had to go into his offices before hand. His people wouldn't threaten me, but he might stalk out if I asked a follow-up or a question not on the list."[71] David Ignatius had similar experiences. "The Mahdi Army, the Badr Bridages; both were interested in showing us that they were doing good civic work. They were very interested to talk with Western journalists to show their responsible side, and they knew this would have a better impact than threatening us."[72] Unfortunately the Mahdi Army militia is beginning to splinter, and those groups which break away from Sadr's tight control begin to act more as criminal gangs. As they split from the political organization, they lose local support, and often tend to view the news media in less positive and hostile terms.[73]

The **second** argument of my model is that *armed groups with strong central organization structures and significant resources will have thoroughly planned out and clearly disseminated media strategies.* These groups tend to understand the role of journalists and include the news media in their strategic planning. This does not necessarily mean that a heavily centralized group will have a more favorable or positive position towards the news media. In fact, a heavily centralized group could conceivably have a strong overall leader who is firmly against interacting with the news media and view them as perfectly legitimate targets of war. However my belief that centralized groups are more likely to interact with the news media stems from direct interview

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[71] *Supra* Garrels, interview.
[72] *Supra* Ignatius, interview.
[73] *Supra* Shadid, interview.

questions,[74] analysis of news reports, and the historic actions of the centralized and decentralized armed groups examined for this study.

The term "centralized groups" also does not mean the group is centrally located or even centrally headquartered, but rather that the group has a centralized hierarchy with a clear leadership and decision making structure. Similar to groups enjoying broad forms of population support, these groups will often field an official press office or public affairs wing, and even applies to those groups with reputations or stances considered hostile towards the news media. Therefore the presence of strong central structures does not mean that the group's media strategies will necessarily be positively oriented or non-violent towards the media, though often groups with strong centralized structures will attempt to influence the media and therefore interact with them on a greater basis. And when this happens the media will know who to speak with when seeking comment, and will also know that when a group's spokesperson goes on the record, they really do speak for the group.

Today's Hezbollah fits this example very well, and even Israeli officials have acknowledged their media prowess due to a strong central leadership revolving on Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah. Shimon Peres, Israel's Vice Premier, grudgingly praised Hezbollah's media strategy during the 2006 Lebanon War, recognizing that Hezbollah did a better job of handling media coverage than the Israelis did. "Hezbollah united around a spokesman of no little talent - Nasrallah," Peres said. "We relentlessly attacked one another. One person blamed the other and the net effect was negative."[75] David Ignatius, the *Washington Post* columnist agrees, adding "Hezbollah is very well organized, and have a

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[74] see Appendix A for a list of interview questions.
[75] Steve Weizman. "Peres calls Lebanon war a 'mistake.'" *Associated Press*, March 22, 2007.

major media strategy including a strong spokesman [Nasrallah], official radio, TV, and print media, and have even organized a media conference in Beirut which I was invited to speak at."[76]

> "A centralized organization comes to understand that if the group wants to be taken seriously, the intimidation style just doesn't work. If they want to play in the global world, they have to act responsibly. Some of these groups have nothing to say. They just want to kill people. Journalists figure that in this sense of adding us as available targets, they're not useful to talk to. But when groups want to negotiate gains for them and recruit supporters to their cause, they have always turned to reporters to discuss their options."[77]

Though Hezbollah originally became famous in the 1980s for their alleged kidnappings of Westerners during the Beirut Civil War, today's Hezbollah views the news media, especially the foreign news media, from a much different viewpoint.[78]

The ANC was also well known for their centrality of messages, and considered their media strategy to flow from their overall movement strategy.[79] Though its media operations were spread over four countries, the UK, Zambia, Tanzania, and South Africa, the ANC believed in a strong media strategy focusing on the common message approach. "It was a common approach," says Dr. Jordan, "'singing from the same hymn book,' rather than centralization that made for effectiveness."

> "No two ANC publications were the same; no two ANC radio broadcasts were the same; no two ANC media spokespersons were the same or emphasized the same aspects of the ANC message. But having dealt with a number of different media agents and communicators of the ANC, a

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[76] *Supra* Ignatius, interview.
[77] *Ibid.*
[78] *Supra* Hersh, interview.
[79] *Supra Maharaj.*

journalist would go away with the same message, not different messages."[80]

This same concept has often been utilized by many successful political parties and movements all over the world. Though political organizations may be diffused across a geographic area, as long as the spokespeople maintain a central message, commonly known as "staying on message," the news media covering the group will often create new frames to fit the message.

Often a group's centralization is congruent with their level of local, regional, or international support. In many cases, those groups receiving broader support end up seeing the need for more centralized, even more bureaucratic, organizational structures in order to maintain those services or actions which result in greater support.[81] However the reverse is not necessarily true. A group with a very centralized leadership structure will not necessarily enjoy broad local, regional, or international support. Even though there is an ongoing debate concerning the al-Qaeda Network's structure, questioning just how centralized and effective is the leadership under Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, many of those who believe bin Laden and Zawahiri are in control admit the al-Qaeda Network exhibits a very poor and negative media strategy. In the past, bin Laden and his top lieutenants were known to grant interviews even to the Western press, yet today it is almost impossible to find any group offices or official spokesman even in "friendly" countries.[82] Consequently, any person or group claiming to speak on behalf of al-Qaeda is rigorously vetted by the news media before their statements or viewpoints are added to the news stream.

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[80] *Supra* Jordan.
[81] *Supra* Chandrasekaran, interview.
[82] *Supra* Garrels, interview.

This same idea applies to the World Wide Web. Heavily centralized, or "more legitimate," groups often incorporate official websites to use as additional message boards or media information points. These websites also provide a good gauge for how centralized the group is. For example, Hezbollah maintains an official headquarters website for the movement, www.hizbollah.org,[83] which provides information on Hezbollah viewpoints, latest interviews, press releases, and general information on the group. The IRA's political wing Sinn Fein also maintains only one website dedicated to the group. Yet less centralized groups often have multiple sites with varying messages and no clear information structure. For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who have been waging an internal struggle over leadership for a number of years, has four different websites dedicated to the cause, each pushing four different messages.[84] And doing a Google search on "Al Qaeda" results in absolutely no "official," or even claiming to be official, network websites. The closest one comes to any "official" or "legitimate" al-Qaeda websites are the clearing house "Jihadist" message boards often pointed to by counterterrorism experts. There is no direct or explicit evidence which proves groups that rely on message boards are more violent and negative towards the news media, however I find it difficult to believe it coincidental that those groups who exclusively utilize message boards and anonymous media tapes also have a violent history towards the news media.

My **third** and final model argument is that *groups with the ability to significantly impact their political environment recognize the role of the news media in political*

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[83] Technically two websites, www.hizbollah.org (English) and www.moqawama.org (Arabic). In addition various Hezbollah quasi-ministries, as well as the office of Hezbollah's leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, maintain department specific websites, much like any legitimate national government.
[84] These sites include *EelamWeb* at www.eelamweb.com; *LTTE Peace Secretariat* at www.ltteps.org; *Tamil Eelam* at www.eelam.com; and *Tamil Nation* at www.tamilnation.org.

contests and seek to positively influence them to further their own political goals. While

Wolfsfeld stated that groups with greater ability to affect their political environment

made them more newsworthy, the reverse is also true, that these groups will seek out the

news media in order to project their own messages and political goals, as well as increase

their political power and legitimacy. These groups understand that in a modern political

environment, even if your spokesman only gets one quote from a 30 minute interview

into the published news story, that's one more quote than any number of other opposition

groups who were ultimately ignored by the news media. And with each news quote, the

groups' level of importance increases, until one day when that "thirty minutes translates

into half a column."[85] These groups recognize that the news game is like a "Catch 22 in

reverse. To get in the news you must have some kind of importance, some kind of

political power," says Seymour Hersh, a reporter who's no stranger to political

gamesmanship. "But often the only way to get that power is to be seen in the news media.

All groups want to talk. They all want their 15 minutes of fame."[86]

Like my first and second arguments, this third one can have a close relationship to

the first two, yet is also applicable independently. It should be no surprise that groups

enjoying a high level of local, regional, or international legitimacy would often

consequently have a greater ability to affect their political environment. Hezbollah,

Hamas, and Sadr's Mahdi Army militia provide good examples of these groups. Not

only do all three groups enjoy significant legitimacy among their local populations, but

all three have members in their national parliaments with significant political clout.

Hezbollah's members in Lebanon's cabinet and National Assembly are able to effectively

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[85] *Supra* Maharaj.
[86] *Supra* Hersh, interview.

stall the government utilizing parliamentary and constitutional procedures, and the party has been known to organize a massive street protest or two.[87] Hamas won the Palestinian Authority's 2005 "national" elections, and recently agreed with Fatah to form a new coalition government. And in Iraq, politicians closely aligned with Sadr's militia, which holds great political control in Baghdad's sprawling slum Sadr City as well as the southern cities of Karbala and Najaf, hold ministry posts and blocks of political power in the National Assembly.[88] As legitimate political players, these groups have all been known to regularly speak with both the local and international news media.

Other groups that come close to this category would be the IRA and the LTTE. However in both cases neither group has great ability to affect their political environment. Though members of Sinn Fein sit in the United Kingdom's House of Commons, they are known as absenting members, and as such can not realistically influence parliament decisions concerning North Ireland one way or the other. Similarly, pro-LTTE Tamil MPs belonging to the Tamil National Alliance party in the Sri Lankan parliament have very little influence over Sri Lankan government decisions. Though there is good evidence to suggest many Tamil's support the LTTE's efforts to create and secure a separate Tamil state in the Tamil majority regions of Sri Lanka, this local support clearly has not translated into political influence. While both groups are known to interact with journalists, there is so far little evidence to suggest they have actively sought to utilize the news media to increase their influence over their political environments.

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[87] see the "Million Man" protest of 2004 and the 2005/2006 Beirut work strikes and protests surrounding the Rafiq Hariri Murder Tribunal.
[88] *Supra* Garrels, interview.

Lastly the ANC, as an opposition group with tremendous local, regional, and international support, was officially banned in South Africa in 1960. Though greatly representative of the people, and easily able to organize massive protests and work strikes throughout their years of official forced political hiatus, the ANC prior to 1990 was unable to directly affect the South African political environment on their own, and therefore sought to achieve their goals through combined international pressures on the Apartheid regime.[89] Consequently they turned to the international news media to help influence foreign populations towards their viewpoint of the conflict, while continuously hoping to persuade and put pressure on the local media, due in large part to significant local support.[90]

Utilizing my three arguments described above, I created a table spectrum delineating three types of armed groups and their expected interactions with the news media. Though there are three divisions on my spectrum, this is not to say that all armed groups will fall into one of the three categories, nor is it to say that a group will always act according to the same category. Many groups have historically been known to move back and forth along the spectrum. As we will discuss in a later chapter, Hezbollah is a very good example of such a group, being known in the 1980s as a violent anti-Western group which kidnapped and targeted foreign media, to today holding quasi-academic media conferences and peacefully influencing the press during major conflicts. Lastly these groupings apply specifically to a groups' interaction with the news media, not the general population. All of these groups are violent or have used violence in the past, and have historically attacked government facilities, security forces, and other human targets.

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[89] *Supra* Maharaj.
[90] *Supra* Jordan.

A group with a non-violent orientation towards the news media will make it a practice never to target or threaten journalists, though they would have no problem killing or attacking who they see as legitimate combatants.

The first group type, type "A" for lack of a more appropriate name, lies on one extreme of the spectrum, and groups belonging to this category would be known to have a positive and non-violent interaction relationship with all news media, both foreign and domestic. They will view all journalists as non-combatants, and believe the news media should be afforded all manner of protections. These groups easily fit the three model arguments. Groups are typically involved in providing social and civil services, along side their more violent activities, and given such activities enjoy significant levels of local, regional, or international legitimacy and support. They are highly centralized and bureaucratic, with clear leadership and decision making hierarchies and quasi-ministerial organizations. These groups are known to maintain significantly staffed press offices, and "employ" sophisticated and well versed spokespersons along with inside journalists responsible for a group's media network. All groups in this category consider a well planned media strategy essential to their overall movement's strategy and goals, and put high priority on influencing the global media for legitimization and messaging. Lastly these groups often have strong "official" political representation within local government structures, and typically hold leadership positions in the "official" parliamentary opposition.

Indicators for group type "A" include the presence of publicized official groups spokespersons and well known group offices, the heavy use of press releases, open media events, and official group press credentials. Additionally these groups will maintain only

one official group website, and will provide their own broadcast (TV), radio, and print media outlets.

In fact one of the most important or strongest indicators of a type "A" group is the presence of a broadcast TV network and studio. The physical limitations imposed on a group maintaining a broadcast network station require the group to meet all three model arguments, and require a significant level of local and regional legitimacy. In addition, TV network offices and studios provide a prime target to any group's enemies, in addition to the usual economic costs a modern TV studio incurs. Lastly type "A" groups will have published policies of non-violence towards the news media, and often towards "non-combatants" [91] as well.

Examples of group type "A" include the apartheid-era ANC; the IRA and Sinn Fein; the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of 1980s El Salvador; the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP); and contemporary Muslim Brotherhood. Figure 1 is a tablized version of type "A."

Figure 1 Type "A"

Descriptions	Indicators
o *positive and non-violent interaction relationship with both foreign and domestic journalists, and all journalists are considered non-combatants.* o *typically involved in providing social and civil services, and enjoy significant levels of local, regional, or international legitimacy and support.* o *highly centralized and bureaucratic, with clear leadership and decision making hierarchies and quasi-ministerial organizations.* o *maintain significantly staffed press offices, and "employ" sophisticated and well*	o *presence of publicized official groups spokespersons and well known group offices.* o *heavy use of press releases, open media events, and official group press credentials.* o *maintain only one official group website.* o *provide their own broadcast (TV), radio, and print media outlets.* o *published policies of non-violence towards the news media, and often towards "non-combatants.*

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[91] Non-combatants do not necessarily refer to civilians. In many cases, even the type "A" group will not recognize those civilians they see as complicit with the opposed government as non-combatants.

versed spokespersons and journalists. o *incorporate and employ a well planned and disseminated media strategy.* o *have strong "official" political representation within local government structures, and may even hold leadership positions in the "official" parliamentary opposition*	

     The second category of group types, type "B," lie somewhere towards the middle of the spectrum. It is mostly associated with groups in transition between one end of the spectrum to another, and is more of a place holder than a good descriptor. For lack of a better designation, it is a neutral interaction type, and groups belonging to this type are generally non-violent towards foreign press and prefer local or regional news media, yet they are also known to threaten or target the media over negative or unfavorable news coverage. Their physical infrastructure is typically known, however mostly off limits to non-group members. These groups are known to conduct interviews, yet typically in a reactive capacity, and journalists contact leaders through interlocutors versus official press officers or spokespersons. They are more centralized than the type "C" group, yet have a semblance of hierarchies including "national leaders," and consequently will have multiple messages and websites concerning the group. These groups may have a semblance of local legitimacy, though usually it stems from a common cause with the people versus any sort of provided social or civil programs. Additionally they may have allies in the local parliamentary bodies, yet few known national or international backers.

     Indicators for group type "B" include the presence of known group offices, yet also with the known caveat that journalists don't just show up uninvited, statements attributed to leaders of the movement in news stories, and reactionary press releases and statements. These groups are also known to create official group press credentials, but

for the utility of keeping tabs on reporters than anything else. Type "B" groups may have

multiple websites affiliated with them, but no official site. Lastly these groups will

typically have a radio or print media outlet associated with the group, yet never a

broadcast TV network or studio.

There is a broad range of groups fitting into this group "B" neutral zone and

include Hezbollah (the closest of the "B" groups to the type "A" groupings); Hamas; the

Serbian, Bosnian, and Croatian militias during the Yugoslavian civil war of the early

1990s, and the Serbian and Albania militia found in Kosovo in the late 1990s; the Muslim

Brotherhood from 1928 to roughly the mid 1980s; the Chechen militias of the early to

mid 1990s; and the early anti-occupation insurgent groups in Iraq prior to March 2004.

Figure 2 is a tablized version of type "B."

Figure 2 Type "B"

Descriptions	Indicators
o *generally non-violent towards foreign press and prefer local or regional news media.* o *known to threaten or target the media over negative or unfavorable news coverage.* o *physical infrastructure is typically known, however mostly off limits to non-group members.* o *will conduct interviews, yet typically in a reactive capacity, and journalists contact leaders through interlocutors versus official press officers or spokespersons.* o *more centralized than the type "C" group, with hierarchies including "national leaders."* o *have multiple messages and websites.* o *groups may have a semblance of local legitimacy, though usually it stems from a common cause with the people versus any sort of provided social or civil programs.* o *may have allies in the local parliamentary bodies, yet few known national or international backers.*	o *presence of known group offices, yet also with the known caveat that journalists don't just show up uninvited.* o *statements attributed to leaders of the movement in news stories, and reactionary press releases and statements.* o *known to create official group press credentials, but for the utility of keeping tabs on reporters.* o *may have multiple websites affiliated with them, but no official site.* o *groups will typically have a radio or print media outlet associated with the group, yet never a broadcast TV network or studio.*

The third category of group types, type "C," lies on the opposite end of the spectrum from type "A." If type "A" groups have positive and non-violent postures towards the news media, type "C" groups are negative and extremely violent, viewing the foreign news media mostly as enemy combatants and purposefully target the media for assassination or kidnapping for propaganda purposes. These groups are typically decentralized and operate exclusively as independent cells, however some groups that resemble criminal gangs do typically have strict hierarchies. These groups distrust most news media, though they will utilize local and regional media should they have a widespread message or threat to disseminate. When this does occur, they do not seek to utilize the media for legitimization purposes, but strictly to intimidate their enemies and spread fear among local, region, and international civilian populations. Instead of rely on "mainstream" media to disseminate messages, these groups heavily utilize the new media including the World Wide Web, along with recruitment tapes and videos specifically disseminated through clandestine channels. They have no known official group offices or headquarters, and any interviews related to the group are never with group leaders or members, but rather with "friends" or someone "connected" to the group. Group type "C's" embody the reversal of my three arguments, typically seeking to gain power through fear instead of influence or legitimacy. Though these groups will have political motivations and demands, and claim popular backing in some areas, the reality is that they typically target their own people and civilians, and often lose any support from the local population fairly quickly. Even when given safe haven by sympathetic or disinterested governments, these groups will remain in the shadows and outside major

population areas, and will often be hunted down by those same governments should political considerations warrant actions against them.

There are very few indicators for these groups, simply because they are so covert. In fact it is the lack of indicators which points to group "C." The lack of official group offices or ready contacts for interviews, along with a public viewpoint of fear and violence against any non-group members are the main indicators. Another typical indication is the historical use of violent propaganda videos, and more recently beheading videos. Posted group messages on specific known websites are often the only indicators or proof that a group exists or is still active. Lastly, the use of anonymous tapes and videos typically indicate a group belongs to the type "C" category.

The most famous examples of group "C" would be the al-Qaeda Network, consisting of Osama bin Laden's group in Afghanistan/Pakistan, al-Qaeda in Iraq, the Iraqi version of the group, formerly heading by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and the "many" shadowy and unknown cells that are alleged to exist throughout the world. Other examples of type "C" groups would include the Chechen insurgents groups and militias, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army (FARC), and the estimated 25 different Iraqi death squads, militias, and gangs with no known political affiliation taking part in the current Iraqi Civil War. Figure 3 is a tablized version of type "C."

Figure 3 Type "C"

Descriptions	Indicators
o *generally negative and extremely violent, viewing the foreign news media as enemy combatants.* o *purposefully target the media for assassination or kidnapping for propaganda purposes.* o *typically decentralized and operate exclusively as independent cells.*	o *lack of indicators which points to group "C."* o *lack of official group offices or ready contacts for interviews.* o *public viewpoint of fear and violence against any non-group members.* o *historical use of violent propaganda videos.*

o *distrustful of most news media, though they will utilize local and regional media should they have a widespread message or threat to disseminate.*	o *Posted group messages on specific known websites are often the only proof that a group exists or is still activel.*
o *seek to utilize the media strictly to intimidate their enemies and spread fear among local, region, and international civilian populations.*	o *use anonymous tapes and videos.*
o *heavily utilize the new media including the World Wide Web, along with recruitment tapes and videos specifically disseminated through clandestine channels.*	
o *no known official group offices or headquarters, and any interviews related to the group are never with group leaders or members.*	
o *typically target their own people and civilians first.*	

I will continuously return to the *spectrum of violence media interaction model* in our last few case study chapters to help analyze and understand certain armed political opposition groups' media strategies, and hopefully use it to help predict the future actions and strategies of today's militant movements.

CHAPTER 5: *The Long Walk for Mzabalazo*

- The African National Congress (1961-1992)

This first case study chapter will examine a Group Category "A" example, those groups known to have a positive and non-violent interaction relationship with all news media, both foreign and domestic. These groups will view all journalists as non-combatants, and believe the news media should be afforded all manner of protections. In this case study chapter I shall examine South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), exploring specifically the movement's years from 1961-1992. These are the years when the ANC mostly fits the categorization of an armed political opposition group, and it is during this time that all of their violent actions took place. Prior to 1961 the ANC was a non-violent political opposition party, and after the negotiations in 1992 the ANC renounced political violence. As the case study will show, during these years the ANC fits well into the Type "A" category, exhibiting almost all of the indicators expected, and providing many examples for my *spectrum of violence media interaction model's* three arguments. And ultimately the ANC was successful movement, as not only did the movement greatly contribute to the end of Apartheid, but it also became the ruling majority political party of South Africa.

Roots of the movement:

Formed on January 8, 1912 by John Dube, Pixley Seme and Sol Plaatje along with chiefs, people's representatives, church organizations, and other prominent individuals, the declared aim of the ANC was to bring all Africans together as one people

to defend their rights and freedoms.[92] For the entirety of its first 50 years the ANC was committed to non-violent action and protest against the Afrikaner-led minority white government's policies of racism and oppression. During the 1940s the ANC changed from the careful organization it was in the 1930s to the mass movement it was to become in the 1950s. In 1944 the ANC Youth League was formed. The young leaders of the Youth League - among them Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo - based their ideas on African nationalism, and believed Africans would be freed only by their own efforts. The Youth League aimed to involve the masses of people in militant struggles. Following the increased attacks on the rights of black people and the rise of extreme Afrikaner nationalism created the need for a more militant response from the ANC. Harsher racism also brought greater co-operation between the organizations of Africans, Coloureds and Indians. In 1947, the ANC and the Indian Congresses signed a pact stating full support for one another's campaigns.[93]

On March 21st, 1960, the peaceful non-violent ANC movement would come to an end. At Sharpville in the Vaal South African police opened fire on an unarmed and peaceful crowd protesting the new Pass Laws, killing 69 and wounding 186. Additionally the government banned the ANC, and declared a state of emergency arresting thousands of Congress. Subsequently the ANC took up arms against the South African Government in 1961. The massacre of peaceful protestors and the subsequent banning of the ANC made it clear to the activists that peaceful protest alone would not force the regime to change. As Dr. Z. Pallo Jordan, the former ANC Minister of Information and current South African Minister of Arts and Culture, explained to me in

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[92] "Mzabalazo – a history of the ANC" from the *African National Congress* official homepage, at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/about/umzabalazo.html
[93] *Ibid.*

an interview for this study, violent armed struggle had become the logical next step for the movement. "The ANC was a liberation movement in the tradition of the Indian National Congress of India, or the FLN (National Liberation Front) of Algeria."

> "All these movements regarded themselves as descendant from the democratic and national revolutions of 19th century Europe and the political tradition that is the inspiration for the UN Declaration of Human Rights. As such, they proceeded from the Clausewitzian adage that: 'War is politics, employing other means.' Thus even a movement like the INC of India, who never employed armed struggle, would have seen recourse to such tactics as the pursuance of a political objective."[94]

The ANC went underground and continued to organize secretly. *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), the armed wing of the ANC, was formed to "hit back by all means within our power in defense of our people, our future and our freedom."[95] Over the next 18 months MK carried out 200 acts of sabotage. But the underground organization was no match for the regime, which began to use even harsher methods of repression. New "anti-terrorism" laws were passed to permit the death penalty for sabotage and to allow police to detain people for 90 days without trial. And in 1963, police raided the secret headquarters of MK, arresting the leadership, which led to the *Rivonia Trial* where the leaders of MK were charged with attempting to cause a violent revolution.[96]

Courting the news media:

Applying my *spectrum of violence media interaction model* clearly puts the ANC into the Type "A" category. An armed group who enjoyed a high level of legitimacy on a local, regional, and international level, the ANC clearly utilized positive, non-violent

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[94] *Supra* Jordan.
[95] *Supra* Maharaj.
[96] *Supra* History of the ANC.

media interaction techniques. My background research of the ANC visibly showed them to be more tolerant of a free press than the official South African security forces. As opposed to the South African police, known for their often brutal crackdowns and detentions of any media favorable of the anti-Apartheid movement, I never discovered any historical record of ANC operatives harming or threatening local or international journalists. At the same time there is much anecdotal and published evidence pointing towards the ANC employing active media campaigns.

By the 1960s, the ANC had become the most well known anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and enjoyed significant local legitimacy and support. Though other groups like the Pan Africanist Congress existed and undertook operations against the White apartheid government, no other group appealed as widely as the ANC, nor did any other group enjoy the same level of control and influence over local politics. And though the ANC believed it was up to local South Africans to take down apartheid, the movement's leadership also recognized success would rest on the political support and mobilization of potential international allies against the regime.[97] This led to clear media policies and strategies designed to court the international media in order to influence positive media coverage.

The leadership always believed positive international media coverage would in turn lead to political anti-Apartheid actions by foreign populations sympathetic to the ANC's cause. "We had to first target the media of the countries that were closest to the Apartheid regime," explained Maharaj. And with the United Kingdom still the closest ally of the Apartheid Regime, naturally the ANC media team engaged the BBC.

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[97] *Ibid.*

"The point was to make the biggest impact on both our followers and the

enemy. The nexus throughout this whole endeavor was UK. Not only

could they put the greatest pressure on the regime, but any coverage by

major outlets like the BBC was naturally picked up inside South Africa as

well. That way we circumnavigate around the White dominated media,

and the government stance. So the starting point with the international

media was always focused on making the big impact."[98]

And what about those media who wouldn't be swayed or influenced by the ANC's

message? Were they violently threatened or coerced? "No," answered Maharaj. "The

strategy had to be based on wooing the media through persuasion, not threats, utilizing

instruments of criticism and reason. The media is like a herd; if you threaten one, they all

soon hear about it, and then your credibility is destroyed. No, even with the local State

owned media we never saw any benefit in using force against journalists."[99]

The escalation of violence in the 1960s saw both the South African government

and the ANC recognizing the importance of the news media. For the ANC the foreign

media became doubly important, as the majority of internal media was white or state

owned, and the South African government had already passed laws making it difficult for

any local South African media outlet to favorably interact or cover the ANC.[100]

Ultimately they understood that the more favorably one impresses the media, the better.

And though becoming a politically violent movement starting in the 1960s, the ANC

continued to categorically proscribe violence or threats against the news media.[101]

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[98] *Supra* Maharaj.
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] *Ibid.*

An affinity for the news media came naturally to the ANC, as three of the "founding fathers" were newspaper editors and owners. For example, founding President Dr. John L. Dube was the founder and editor of *Ilanga lase-Natal*; Walter B. Rubusana was the editor of *Izwi laBantu*; and Sol Plaatje was the editor of *Coerante eaBatswana* and had been engaged in struggles against censorship and for greater media freedom for decades.[102] Additionally the ANC had always been closely tied to many local newspapers, media outlets that because of their relationship with the ANC quickly came under the vengeful eye of the South African government. By the 1950s, the apartheid regime had serially illegalized and suppressed five consecutive weeklies that supported the ANC. The list included *The Guardian*, banned in 1952 and then replaced by *The Clarion*, which was banned in 1953. This paper was replaced by *Advance*, banned in 1955, and then replaced by *New Age*, banned in 1962. Lastly came *The Spark*, which was also banned in 1963. Three other titles, *The Torch*, *Contact* and *The Africanist* were also banned in 1963. Finally in September 1977 the apartheid government banned a slew of newspapers and editors.[103]

It was this history, along with the origins of many of the ANC's founders, which led the ANC to cultivate a profound respect for freedom of the media amongst its ranks and supporters. According to Dr. Jordan, it was that record of defense of media freedom which would have been sullied by attacks on journalists and or on other media players.

"In the ANC's relations with the foreign media, not only was the ANC cultivating the media for its communications needs, but also as another means of breaking through the information barriers erected by apartheid

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[102] *Supra* Jordan.
[103] *Ibid.*

through banning orders and the repression of media and journalists in

South Africa….Reaching out to the media, and to the foreign media, came

naturally to a movement whose entire history was shaped by the struggle

for freedom of expression and freedom of conscience."[104]

Mac Maharaj echoed Dr. Jordan's statements, saying, "The ANC never believed that

journalists could be legitimate targets, not for fear, and definitely not for getting in the

news. This type of sensationalism would be completely against the ANC's basic

principles."[105] Throughout our entire interview he made it clear that the ANC leadership

felt any violence towards the media would quickly have a de-legitimizing effect on the

overall movement.

Degree of centralization:

Though geographically decentralized across four main operational areas, the ANC

contained a highly centralized leadership hierarchy which maintained effective control of

all their internal and external operatives. As their four point strategy illustrates, a clear

and comprehensive media strategy was integral to their overall goal of ending the

Apartheid regime. And having a leadership historically tied to the media, the ANC's

strong hierarchy effectively disseminated this media friendly viewpoint throughout the

movement so that all ANC operatives understood that violence was never to be used

against any news media, regardless of whether they were local South African or the New

York Times.

The ANC's overall strategy rested on four inter-related and mutually supporting

pillars: (a) an effective clandestine presence inside South African the shape of an

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[104] *Ibid.*
[105] *Supra* Maharaj.

underground network of activists; (b) mobilizing the majority of Africans, Coloureds and Indians in mass struggles, big and small, in opposition to apartheid and racism; (c) the armed actions of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (the military wing); and (d) mobilizing international support for the struggle and isolating the apartheid regime.[106] The ANC's relations with the foreign media were therefore structured by the requirements of this fourth pillar, as the ANC recognized the necessity of having to interact with the international media in order to inform the people of the world about the struggle for freedom in South Africa and to explain its cause.[107]

The ANC leadership, proceeding from the premise that "armed struggle was the pursuance of what was essentially a political struggle," regarded political action as superior to military action.[108] This strategy required that there be constant political engagement with all players who could impact on the course of the struggle, including the foreign news media. If the belief that the media are an important player in modern societies is true, where most people rely on it for information about the world and even their own societies, then most citizens will consequently form their opinions based on what information they receive through the news media.

Following this central belief, the ANC central leadership sought to utilize foreign media to convince foreign populations and governments to isolate the apartheid regime, hoping that as more and more people throughout the world regarded apartheid as reprehensible then in the end it would be easier to overthrow it.[109] Consequently the ANC opened four main media offices in each of the movement's four main operating

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[106] *Supra* Jordan.
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] *Supra* Jordan.
[109] *Ibid.*

areas: London in the United Kingdom, Lusaka in Zambia, Dar-es-Salaam and Morogoro in Tanzania, and South Africa itself. Though spread out over these four main media zones, the ANC communications team utilized the common messaging approach which I discussed in my argument on a groups centralization chapter 4.

Additionally the ANC's media and information departments worked tirelessly to disseminate the message both internally and externally. According to Dr. Jordan the ANC broadcast a total of 31 hours per week from various points in Africa; produced at least six regular publications, including a cultural journal, a women's news sheet, a youth news sheet and a magazine, a news-clipping service and the army journal, *Dawn*. ANC underground units produced a number of ephemeral news sheets and bulletins, and the movement inspired the emergence of an "alternative media" inside South Africa, supported by donor funds from outside organized by the ANC. *Radio Freedom*, the ANC's broadcast radio station, allowed the ANC to speak to millions of people on a sustained basis every week. Through the broadcasts the ANC could send covert and open messages to its activists inside the country sustaining the morale of supporters by reinforcing their commitment, and other media, including leaflets, pamphlets, booklets, posters, records, and later video tapes were sent into the country on a regular basis.[110]

Yet at the same time the ANC recognized that though it had its own media, the message was not likely to reach where daily newspapers, TV programs and radio broadcasts reached. As Dr. Jordan explains, "Why would anyone in say Omaha, Nebraska trust a magazine or journal from some unknown/little known movement?"

"It was easier, more productive and more likely to produce results if the information came from the trusted political editor or foreign correspondent

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[110] *Ibid.*

of the daily newspaper the Nebraskan read everyday. So, speak to the

foreign correspondent of the daily from Nebraska. If you have a strong

case, there is no reason why he/she should dismiss what you say."[111]

In addition to the conventional media interaction, the ANC would allow "friendly"

journalists to "tag along" or "embed" with ANC units, even when conducting tactical

operations.[112] Because of their high degree of centralization and control even in exile,

the ANC leadership and internal commanders trusted operatives to respect the news

media. "We felt our operatives knew that any violence towards journalists would be

contrary to our objectives," explained Maharaj. Because of their centralized media

structure, the ANC leadership actively encouraged all members to build relationships

with journalists. "We would work with any sympathetic journalists, and after a while

these journalists would increase the voice and sympathetic coverage of the ANC and the

anti-apartheid mission. The ANC needed to maintain the sympathy against apartheid.

Building relationships with journalists and respecting the media's role contributed greatly

to the strength of the organization."[113]

Influencing the agenda:

While the ANC enjoyed a high degree of local, regional, and even international

legitimacy in its later years, they were unable to directly influence South African politics

through "legitimate" government institutions. Though legally banned as a political party

in 1960, the ANC was still able to successfully influence local and international politics

through the effective use of the news media. Through efficient international messaging

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[111] *Ibid.*
[112] *Supra* Maharaj.
[113] *Ibid.*

and other media campaigns, the ANC was able to influence international public opinion against the Apartheid regime, resulting in international boycotts of goods, business and financial services, entertainment, and other successful political actions.

What techniques did the ANC use to influence the news media? As both Dr. Jordan and Mac Maharaj made clear, violence, and the threat of violence, against journalists was never to be used in order to influence favorable media coverage. Instead the ANC's media team worked tirelessly on building positive and mutually beneficial relationships. "In most instances," says Dr. Jordan, "especially with US media, the method was to enter into extended conversations with the media, to give background, to fill in the details that were absent from the State Dept country briefs, and to offer the journalists the opportunity to shed stereotypes of 'Marxist-inspired terrorists' or 'Soviet-backed guerrillas' by getting to know the people they were talking to."

> "'Humanizing' the ANC was an essential part of such engagement. Though everyone thought they knew what apartheid was, once you got talking, they were quite shocked at the detail, US citizens often thought they were seeing Orville Faubus in the school house door writ large, only to discover that apartheid was an extremely comprehensive system of oppression, closer to Nazism than the segregation of 'separate but equal.'[114]

Journalists who were engaged in such in-depth briefings and discussions in general terms had a better grasp of the issues, and the quality of their reports and stories improved, even if they remained critical of the ANC.

Ultimately this strategy worked. Reporters and journalists from the international media, often people who had been knocking at their editor's door for years about what

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[114] *Ibid.*

they saw as a developing news story, suddenly saw the floodgates open after 1984.

Editors became interested in what they knew, whom they knew and in the opinions of the

people they had been talking to for years.[115]

A quick research exercise utilizing Lexis-Nexis helps prove Dr. Jordan's point.

Looking at the period from 1961-1983, or roughly the first 22 "violent" years of the

ANC, a search of the terms "African National Congress" in four prominent US and

British new dailies, specifically *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The

Guardian,* and *The Financial Times,* yields 282 news stories. The breakdown includes

167 *New York Times* stories (roughly 59.2%), 80 *Washington Post* articles (roughly

28.4%), a shocking 0 news stories in *The Guardian*, and only 35 articles in *The Financial

Times* (roughly 12.4%). However the period from 1984-1992 is dramatically different.

During this period, there were a total 5,241 news articles published by the four dailies,

with 1,564 articles in *The New York Times* (roughly 29.8%), 982 stories in *The

Washington Post* (roughly 18.7%), 1,358 articles in *The Guardian* (roughly 25.9%), and

1,337 stories in *The Financial Times* (roughly 25.5%).

1984 was clearly a watershed year for the entire ANC. Following brutal police

crackdowns on anti-apartheid protests across South Africa, the ANC stepped up their

resistance. Township operatives organized strikes and boycotts to make black townships

"ungovernable," and MK guerrillas began killing farmers, policemen and accused

collaborators.[116] Yet the ANC's media teams had been extremely successful in building

relationships and influencing the regional and international media, and as a result many

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[115] *Supra* Jordan.
[116] *Supra* Maharaj.

international daily newspapers categorized the attacks as "actions of dissent,"[117] "civil rights strikes,"[118] and "Blacks being forced to turn to violence" because "Whites blocked all peaceable options to them.[119]

If our assumptions about the influence of the news media on political and public opinion are true, then it logically follows that as a result of this favorable coverage many major world celebrities and notable international politicians took up the call against Apartheid. In January 1985, United States Senator Edward Kennedy visited South Africa to show his anti-apartheid support, and was hosted by Bishop Desmond Tutu, the recipient of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. Senator Kennedy also visited Nelson Mandela's "banned" wife, Winnie Mandela. In the summer of 1985, anti-apartheid rallies and protests took place in New York City, Atlanta and Washington, and world famous musicians, including Bruce Springsteen and Miles Davis, released the anti-apartheid disk "Sun City," which included the Top Ten rock-music chart song "Free Nelson Mandela." Other artists, playwrights and film starts refused to perform in South Africa. Even Chase Manhattan joined the cause and refused credit to South African institutions including a major university. Finally in November 1985, South African Minster of Justice Kobie Coetsee made an unexpected visit to Mandela who was hospitalized for prostate surgery. Though there is no direct anecdotal evidence linking these events to international media coverage of the ANC, I believe it follows logically from our media evidence and assumptions. In any case it clearly marked a turning point in relations between the South

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[117] Anthony Robinson. "Why the pressures are different this time." *The Financial Times*, November 15, 1984.

[118] Flora Lewis. "Honoring the peace crusade." *The New York Times*, October 19, 1984.

[119] Editorial. "Freeing Nelson Mandela." *The Washington Post*, December 30, 1984.

African government and the ANC, for upon Mandela's return to prison, he was put in a separate cell from his comrades so the government could have private access to him.[120]

It is easy to find examples of most Type "A" indicators throughout the ANC case. As clearly shown, the ANC maintained well known offices in three of their four main areas of operation (South Africa being the exception as the group had been banned in 1960), along with easily accessible press officers and spokespersons. The ANC heavily utilized on-the-record interviews and background briefings, press conferences and events, and published many different periodicals along with *Radio Freedom*, the official ANC broadcast radio outlet. Lastly the ANC had a well known policy of non-violence towards the news media. The only Type "A" indicators not present are due primarily to the local political context (the banning of Blacks from most levels of government, and the unofficial outlawing of any political parties in any way sympathetic to the ANC), and the technology of the day (throughout most of the ANC's history, there was no World Wide Web or Satellite TV).

Ultimately the ANC was successful in their struggle against the former Apartheid Regime of South Africa. This success was clearly due in no small part to the ANC's well planned and effective media strategy. By advocating a positive relationship with the news media, the ANC proved that even violent movements who have been categorized by their governments and other international groups as terrorist movements can successfully rise to prominence and international legitimacy.

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[120] David Fanning, Indra deLanerolle, Producers. "The Long Walk of Nelson Mandela." *Frontline*, original airdate on May 25, 1999. Transcript and other information at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/

CHAPTER 6: *Terrorist Organization or Lebanese Robin Hoods?*

- Hezbollah, the Party of God

The second case study chapter will examine a category Type "B" example. As stated previously in my Chapter 4 discussion on category Type "B" groups, this category is more of a place holder or median example than a fit for most groups. In fact very few groups will meet exactly the criteria used to describe Type "B" groups, and often only as they swing through different points on my spectrum. Groups belonging to this type are generally non-violent towards foreign press and prefer local or regional news media, yet they have also been known to threaten or target the media over negative or unfavorable news coverage. Hezbollah is a good example of such a group, as they have been accused of exhibiting violent tendencies towards journalists in the past, yet have clearly shifted towards mostly peaceful media interaction techniques over the past 12 years. And in the recent summer 2006 war with Israel, Hezbollah exhibited a relatively non-violent media orientation. Though currently designated a terrorist organization by the US, many other nations and regional organizations, including the European Union, have refused to follow the US's lead, and not only because Hezbollah is considered a major provider of social services, operating schools, hospitals, and agricultural services, for thousands of Lebanese Shiites and Lebanese of other faiths living in Hezbollah controlled areas.

Of all the groups examined for this study, Hezbollah provides the best example of a group whose international/regional legitimacy and reputation are based almost exclusively on the media frames used to describe the group. There is no question that Hezbollah is a violent armed political opposition group. However the news media has clearly played a role in national and international designations of "terrorist organization"

versus "guerilla movement." Consequently my discussions in Chapter 2 on media framing and definitions should be firmly kept in mind. Additionally Hezbollah also creates an interesting situation because they have kidnapped and killed foreign journalists in the past, however the evidence suggests these actions were not done because the victims were journalists and Hezbollah sought to influence their reporting with violence, but rather because they were citizens of a targeted nation. These actions therefore make my analysis a bit more difficult as I seek to determine if these violent actions had wider implications for the journalist community's coverage of the movement.

Unlike my Chapter 5 case study example of the ANC, Hezbollah's "freedom of the press" track record is not anywhere close to being perfect and there is much anecdotal evidence to suggest harassment and off color threats towards journalists have occurred in recent years.[121] Additionally I requested interviews with both Hezbollah's media relations office and spokesman, as well as a public relations officer from *Al Manar TV*, however my requests for interviews were never responded to. It is for these reasons that they would currently be placed on a point of my *spectrum of violence media interaction model* some where between type "A" and type "B" groups.

Roots of the movement:

Hezbollah entered the international stage in the 1980s during the height of Lebanon's 15 year Civil War, calling itself a national resistance movement dedicated to fighting the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Since that time Hezbollah has been *accused* of a number of notorious incidents carried out in Lebanon, including the 1983

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[121] However it should be noted that even with this anecdotal evidence from 2004, 2005, and 2006, in both the mainstream media and blogosphere, neither the Committee to Protect Journalists nor Reporters Sans Frontiers have included reports against Hezbollah in their Annual Reports from the same years.

attack on the US Marine barracks in which 241 Marines died and simultaneous attack on the French barracks where 58 French soldiers died, the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut where 58 Americans and Lebanese were killed, and complicity in the kidnapping of US citizens including journalist Terry Anderson and CIA station chief William Buckley.

Additionally Hezbollah's security apparatus is *believed* to operate in Europe, North and South America, East Asia, and other parts of the Middle East, and is believed to be responsible for a number of other high profile terrorist attacks. In 1985 *suspected* Hezbollah members hijacked TWA flight 847 and held 39 Americans on board hostage for weeks. In addition, the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural centre in Buenos Aires are *attributed* to Hezbollah. Lastly, in June 1996, Hezbollah *allegedly* attacked the Khobar Towers housing complex in Dharan, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 US servicemen and wounding hundreds of others. Lastly, certain notorious international criminals such as Imad Fayez Mugniyah are *considered* to be key planners of Hezbollah's worldwide terrorist operations, and have been *linked* to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda Network. Hezbollah has strongly denied involvement in all of these actions, stating it has only fought other Lebanese militias during the Civil War, as well as US and Israeli military and security forces.

I have intentionally italicized "ownership" words throughout the previous paragraphs. I do this not to make any political or attribution statement, but rather to remain academically objective. As I stated in this chapters' introductory paragraph, the

US and a few other nations[122] have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and accused them of the previous crimes and events listed above, while most other nations and international organizations have refused to designate the group as a terrorist entity. The argument made is that while there have been allegations and accusations against Hezbollah, there have been neither court convictions for the crimes nor definitive internationally recognized evidence linking Hezbollah to these actions. And as stated above, Hezbollah has categorically denied their involvement while other organizations have claimed responsibility.

These designations have typically washed over onto national newspaper frames, where most US based media typically describe Hezbollah using the "terrorist" media frame,[123] while other international and regional media describe Hezbollah alternatively with the "resistance" and "national struggle" frames. Interestingly, because of these disparate media frames and narratives, Hezbollah since 1996 has been seeking a successful public relations campaign in the US, and in October 2004 Hezbollah's South Lebanon Commander Sheikh Nabil Qaouk said the militia wanted to build strong relations with American journalists and academics.[124]

Courting the news media:

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah attacked an Israeli Defense Force position, killing eight soldiers and capturing two. In response Israel launched an air and ground campaign into Lebanon, ostensibly designed to rescue the two captured soldiers and finish

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[122] Those countries designating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization include the USA, Israel, The Netherlands, and Canada. In additional, Australia and the UK have designated Hezbollah's External Security Organization.
[123] There are notable exceptions, including *The Washington Post* which has consistently identified Hezbollah as a "militant group," and even more recently with just the term "Hezbollah movement."
[124] Michael J. Totten. "Guess who's coming to Iftar." *L.A. Weekly*, December 15, 2005.

Hezbollah once and for all. With this action coming during the time of the "US War on Terror," most media experts would have assumed US, UK, and Israeli based media would firmly take the side of Israel in the conflict, and utilize the "terrorist" frame heavily to describe Hezbollah. This was largely *not* the case. In fact the majority of international mainstream media[125] utilized frames sympathetic towards Hezbollah and the Lebanese resistance or alternatively negative towards Israel's actions during the war. In the end, instead of projecting images of an armed group committing indiscriminate acts of terror, destabilizing Lebanon and refusing to give up their arms, the media frame was Lebanese resistance guerillas protecting their homes against an overbearing and much more powerful neighbor.

Though supporters of Syria during the occupation of Lebanon until 2004, and advocating the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, Hezbollah was able to steadily build a strong political and military support base among Lebanon's Shiite population, as well as cultivate supporters and allies among Lebanon's other faiths, and are today considered the main leader of Lebanon's opposition bloc. In effect Hezbollah has become the most powerful single political entity in Lebanon, according to many experts and observers.[126] Outside of Lebanon, Hezbollah has received moral and political support throughout the Arab World,[127] and even some "Western" nations have consistently supported Hezbollah politically as a legitimate nationalist organization.[128] During the Summer 2006 War with Israel, Hezbollah's popularity and legitimacy

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[125] "Mainstream media" here refers to the traditional, non-blogosphere media.
[126] David Igantius. "Beirut's Berlin Wall." *The Washington Post,* February 23, 2005.
[127] This is in addition to the often cited support from Syria and Iran.
[128] For example, prior to the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and subsequent Hezbollah movement against a special UN tribunal, French President Jacque Chirac was known to have supported Hezbollah as a resistance and nationalist movement on a number of occasions. He has become much less vocally supportive, however he has still refrained from labeling Hezbollah a terrorist group.

increased tremendously among the average Lebanese, the Arab Street, and around the

globe. In fact, following the war many international lawyers and academics have begun

debating the US designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, with some claiming

the label never should have been applied in the first place.[129] Yet regardless of any

labels, it can clearly be seen that Hezbollah enjoys significant local, regional, and

international legitimacy as well as political support.

As I stated in Chapter 4, armed opposition groups with high levels of legitimacy

will gladly interact with members of the news media, because they recognize the clear

benefit of having Western journalists around to air their views and to act as a message

vehicle to the world. Hezbollah's actions and professional relationships with many

notable Western journalists illustrate their understanding of this central practice. In July

2000, following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah southern commander

Sheik Nabil Qaouk boasted to New York Times reporter John Kifner about Hezbollah's

successful use of the media in its fight against Israel. "The use of media as a weapon had

an effect parallel to a battle," he told Kifner, describing in detail how Hezbollah

videotaped its successes for distribution to the media. "By the use of these films, we

were able to control from a long distance the morale of a lot of Israelis."[130] Additionally

they were able to influence international actors and organizations to support a call for

Israel to pull out of Southern Lebanon.

Since his days covering the Lebanese Civil War, *Washington Post* columnist

David Ignatius has continued a professional and objective relationship with Hezbollah

and its leadership. This relationship has lead Ignatius to return to Beirut many times to

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[129] Franklin Lamb. "Why is Hezbollah on the Terrorism List?" *Counterpunch.com*, April 6, 2007, available at http://www.counterpunch.com/lamb04062007.html

[130] John Kifner. "In long fight with Israel, Hezbollah tactics evolved." *The New York Times*, July 19, 2000.

cover and interact with the group. In fact in September 2003 Ignatius accepted an

invitation to speak at a Hezbollah sponsored conference on the Israeli-Palestinian

Conflict in order to learn more about the group, with the caveat stipulation that he was

"free to say what I wanted, even if others attending the gathering disagreed."[131] And the

reaction to his stipulation? Ignatius wrote that his comments "produced murmurs in the

hall and some criticism later from other delegates."[132] However in a personal interview

Ignatius told me that he was never threatened by the group because of his comments or

viewpoints, and that "members of Hizbollah and other Arab media attending the

conference openly applauded me for my commitment to objectivity."

> "They knew I'd always be honest in my reporting; that I would give their
> side of the story a fair chance along with others' viewpoints. And while
> they would want me to always report exactly what they had to say, they
> knew that professionally that just wasn't going to happen. But at least
> they understood I wouldn't fall into a US bias or other nonsense against
> them."[133]

Journalist Seymour Hersh echoed similar ideas in another interview with me. "Hezbollah

and other groups like them feel they have an important story; they know it's an important

story to share with a global audience. But the truly smart ones, like most of the guys

Hezbollah have got working for them, they understand we're not going to just print

anything they say. They know we've got to put it all into context."[134] As Hersh

explained to me, Hezbollah has a solid media message they want to put out, but they also

understand that when reporters "look like stooges," then the audience stops listening.[135]

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[131] David Ignatius. "Hezbollah's success." *The Washington Post,* September 23, 2003.
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] *Supra* Ignatius, interview.
[134] *Supra* Hersh, interview.
[135] *Ibid.*

Of course there is still suspicion with Hezbollah even when dealing with known journalists like David Ignatius. In another *Washington Post* column on Lebanon, Ignatius describes a 90 minute interview with Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah. As Ignatius describes it, "Even by Middle East standards, his security is very tight. He works inside a gated enclave in this city's southern suburbs. Before the guards let you into his headquarters, they examine not just your tape recorder and cell phone but your wedding ring, ballpoint pen and credit cards."[136] This is further evidence to show that Hezbollah is not quite a Category "A" group; though enjoying a significant amount of legitimacy and support, Hezbollah must still remain cautious and vigilant for security threats. Their offices are known about within their areas of control, yet because of the constant threat from rival militias and governments, most Hezbollah offices are typically not well marked from the outside.

Other journalists' anecdotes provide further commentary on the group's strict security standards and occasional belligerence towards the news media. Michael J Totten described his experience attending a Hezbollah sponsored *iftar* in his December 2005 *LA Weekly* article "Guess who's coming to *Iftar*" as a "failed impression" after Hezbollah held his passport and press ID during the dinner and segregated him away from the female attendees.

> "It's true that Hezbollah no longer harms Western civilians. If it did, it
> would be grouped with al Qaeda and destroyed militarily. The group's
> leaders are smart enough to know that much. But reining in the
> belligerence, the authoritarianism, the intolerance and the menacing - that
> is too much for it right now. Those things are too much a part of what
> Hezbollah is. Even its media-relations office, the office that is supposed

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[136] David Ignatius. "Nothing to talk about." *The Washington Post*, October 7, 2003.

to establish contacts with Westerners who might sympathize with it, the office that hired the happy-faced, seemingly friendly Hussein Naboulsi [Hezbollah's press secretary], can't keep its mask on for long. Just the slightest nudge with your pinkie is enough to break its delicate public-relations propaganda system in half." [137]

It is clear that Hezbollah understands the importance of the news media in keeping their legitimacy and political support especially during times of crisis in Lebanon and the region, and obviously seeks to grow media relationships. However these past examples also illustrate why the group retains a less than positive reputation throughout the Western world. Yet if history is any indication, Hezbollah will only improve their attitude and public relations skills further as their political control in Lebanon increases.

Degree of centralization:

Hezbollah's centralized group structure and strong leadership hierarchies have long been touted as models for other violent and non-violent organizations, as well as a movement which enjoys a highly effective regime of internal discipline and concealment.[138] Even their "sworn enemies," the Israelis have grudgingly praised the strong control the central leadership is able to exert over the movement's followers and areas of control. As stated in Chapter 4, Shimon Peres, Israel's Vice Premier, recently commented on Hezbollah's media strategy during the 2006 Lebanon War at an Israeli government hearing, believing that Hezbollah did a better job of handling media coverage than the Israelis did because of their centrality of message. "Hezbollah united

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[137] *Supra* Totten.
[138] "Hizbollah: Rebel without a cause?" *Middle East Briefing*, International Crisis Group, Amman/Brussels, July 30, 2003.

around a spokesman of no little talent - Nasrallah," Peres said. "We relentlessly attacked one another. One person blamed the other and the net effect was negative."[139]

A recent Harvard Shorenstein Center report also illustrated Hezbollah's strong centralized leadership, though the paper was trying not to be complimentary. Criticizing Hezbollah as a "closed society" who exploited the power of the news media during wartime as compared to the "open society" of Israel, Marvin Kalb, a senior fellow at the center, commented that during the war "no Hezbollah secrets were disclosed, but in Israel secrets were leaked, rumors spread like wildfire."

> "…It was hardly an accident that Hezbollah, in this circumstance, projected a very special narrative for the world…that depicted a selfless movement touched by God and blessed by a religious fervor and determination to resist the enemy, the infidel, and ultimately achieve a 'divine victory,' no matter the cost in life and treasure."[140]

Leaving aside the fact that Kalb does not quite correctly characterize Hezbollah's nationalist stance on the most recent war Israel,[141] the idea that Hezbollah firmly took their opportunity to utilize the news media to spread their own narrative against Israel should not be shocking to anyone. Additionally, during my time as a press officer for the US government, we were constantly reminded to maintain OpSec, or operational security, and most governments have laws against leaking classified information. Criticizing Hezbollah as a "closed society" because the leadership maintained full control over information security seems a bit misguided.

Hezbollah maintains a well known and well staffed press office. Their media relations officers have professional looking business cards, have studied communications

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[139] *Supra* Weizman.

[140] *Supra* Kalb.

[141] see Hezbollah's Press Office Website at www.hizbollah.org for discussion of Hezbollah as "Lebanon's resistance force," not religious as Kalb contends.

and journalism at Western Universities,[142] and, according to anecdotal evidence and my personal interviews with journalists who have covered Lebanon in the past, the public affairs officers have acted in ways consistent with the normal actions and activities of the professional public relations staff of most of the world's governments, including the US. While there have been anecdotes of verbal harassment and accusations of media bias leveled at different journalists, this has not been any more violent than the typical US public affairs criticism of media during the current Iraq war. Hezbollah also clearly relies on a well thought out and strong media strategy, and has been for almost a decade now if news reports from the 1990s, 2000 Israeli pullout from Lebanon, and the latest 2006 war's reports are accurate. When not utilizing their leader Sheikh Nasrallah, their spokesmen's and deputy's quotes and comments have consistently been in line with the central messages being forth by Nasrallah. And it is quite evident that their "savvy media operation" has realized that separate messages targeting various segments, whether various Lebanese, regional, or international audiences, have proven extremely beneficial and successful for the movement.

When I asked Anthony Shadid, the *Washington Post* reporter who's covered the recent Iraq War and Beirut for the past five years, his idea of a good example of strong central leadership, he immediately pointed to Hezbollah. "Hezbollah is by far the most structured and well organized group I've ever dealt with. And they were much more accessible and easier to deal with than any one else. They have a full press office, and I knew their press spokesmen, and could easily reach them for comments or interviews if I needed to."[143] He made clear to me that when the Hezbollah spokesman told him

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[142] *Supra* Totten.
[143] *Supra* Shadid, interview.

something, Shadid knew he was speaking for Nasrallah. "When their spokesman gave me a quote, I knew that was the official message. There was never a question of 'on-the-record' or not. They simply stayed with the approved message. No Hezbollah press officer would ever speak anonymously on background - the personal risk was too much."[144]

However as I pointed out in my second argument of Chapter 4, just because a group has a centralized media structure doesn't not mean it will be entirely positive towards the news media. As illustrated in the previous section, Hezbollah's significant political support has not erased a fear of being infiltrated by anti-Hezbollah forces. And again, Hezbollah *is* somewhere between a Type "A" and "B" group. Consequently their strong central leadership and hierarchy has put into place strict yet uniform security plans which are fully adhered to and supported by the group's media relations staff.

Researcher Julie Goodman, a 2004 International Reporting Project research fellow, described her own experience with Hezbollah's security team in her article "Journal: Hezbollah and media access," as "control freaks."

> "As required, I came to the meeting with a list of questions I planned to
> ask, an advantage we rarely afford our American sources. But unlike
> initial interviews here in the United States, this meeting was for Hezbollah
> to ask me questions, not the other way around. Danny [Hezbollah Press
> Officer] photocopied my passport and my press ID, read over my list of
> questions, then handed me a two-page application to fill out asking for my
> home and work addresses. He wanted to know what the focus of my story
> was, who I wanted to speak with, who my audience was, and what my
> fellowship program was all about. The meeting was short and ended with

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[144] *Ibid.*

no indication of whether I would have an interview, leaving me no way to plan my stay here." [145]

Christopher Allbritton, a freelance journalist and author of the blog *Back to Iraq: Edition du Liban* described a similar treatment by Hezbollah security forces in one posting, and his later criticism of certain US based blogs claiming he was being unduly influenced by Hezbollah.

> "Let's set aside that the Lebanese Internal Security also has photocopies of our passports. The reason for the hassling and the threat was that a reporter had filmed or described either a launching site or Hezbollah positions. (I'm not sure which.) To the best of my knowledge, that's been the extent of the hassling. I'm going to get in trouble for this, but I think it's a reasonable restriction. This is the exact same restrictions placed on journalists by the Israeli army and by the Americans in Iraq. I don't think threatening journalists is cool at all, and it certainly doesn't endear me to them, but that has been the extent of Hezbollah's interference in our coverage."[146]

As Allbritton pointed out, the Lebanese Internal Security office also holds passport photo copies of all journalists, a practice most government press entities also do. And he also makes the valid point that in Iraq, the first thing the US Coalition Press and Information Center (the US military central press office) has any journalist do is fill out three pages of forms and hand over the passport or ID for photocopying and a mini-background check.

Though a Type "B" organization, Hezbollah owns and operates a number of media outlets through the group owned Lebanese Media Group, including *Al-Manar TV* (the Lighthouse), an Arab language satellite channel with an estimated 10-15 million

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[145] Julie Goodman. "Journal: Hezbollah and media Access." reprinted from *The Clarion-Ledger*, Jackson, MS, *International Reporting Project*, 2005 at http://www.internationalreportingproject.org/stories/lebanon/pf_lebanon_media.htm
[146] *Supra* Allbritton.

worldwide daily viewers, *Al-Nour* radio station (the Light), and a monthly magazine

Kabdat Alla (the Fist of God). *Al-Manar TV* broadcasts in Arabic, English, French and

Hebrew, and is considered the group's key player in what Hezbollah calls its

"psychological warfare against the Zionist enemy,"[147] and an integral part of Hezbollah's

plan to spread its global message. *Al-Manar TV* also maintains a news website in both

Arabic and English.

Lastly, like other heavily centralized organizations, Hezbollah maintains one

official website, though it is split between English and Arabic versions.[148] Additionally

each of its quasi-ministries, social services wings, and sponsored charitable organizations

maintain separate websites specific to each department. Yet like any other well oiled PR

campaign, the central Hezbollah "Brand" is prominently featured and promoted on all

websites.[149] As opposed to the common description by the US and Israeli governments

of a radical Islamic organization seeking to create an Islamic republic in Lebanon, Brand

Hezbollah invokes images of national Lebanese solidarity and resistance. In fact, a quick

examination of Nasrallah's website, "Promise…," shows only a call for national unity,

and prominently utilizes universal Lebanese images.[150] It is clearly geared towards a

Western audience, and includes user/member posts from across the globe calling for a

new Lebanese government. Additionally it provides local, regional, and international

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[147] From "al-Manar TV: about" at http://web.manartv.org/html/about.html

[148] Though I understand each website maintains the same content, the use of different website addresses figures into Hezbollah's foreign vs. local messaging strategy.

[149] Brand Hezbollah consists of the often visible Hezbollah flag (an uplifted fist holding an AK-47 assault rifle with "Party of God" behind on yellow field), national Lebanese resistance images (e.g. Lebanese national symbols such as the cedar tree, or a Lebanese youth with the national flag around their shoulders and flag face paint), and national Lebanese solidarity slogans and colors (red, white, and green).

[150] see "Promise…," at http://english.wa3ad.org/

news,[151] as well as sections on the secretary general, media affairs, polls, issues &opinions, along with links relating to international law and resistance, along with historical resistance cases such as the Irish resistance, the American resistance, and even a page for the American "Sons of Liberty" group.

Influencing the agenda:

Hezbollah currently holds14 Lebanese parliamentary seats (out of 128), and is a partner member in Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's government holding two ministry positions and endorsing a third. Hezbollah is also the leading party in the Resistance and Development Bloc, which controls 35 seats in the parliament. Additionally in February 2006 Hezbollah's Resistance and Development Bloc signed a memorandum of understanding with Lebanese General Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, the leaders of another parliamentary bloc controlling 21 seats. This memorandum included a broad range of reforms, from guaranteeing equal media access for candidates to allowing expatriate voting, that was designed to level the slanted political playing field underlying the Future Movement coalition's grip on power. The FPM-Hezbollah memorandum met with virtually unanimous assent in the Shiite community and, according to poll by the Beirut Center for Research and Information, 77% approval in the Christian community.[152]

These facts should indicate the level of political influence Hezbollah has inside Lebanon, especially as one of the chief leaders of the official opposition movement. Their influence has led to at least two major national non-violent protest movements, as

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[151] For example, on April 17, 2006 the news crawl underneath the website's name began with news of the Virginia Tech shooting.

[152] Gary C. Gambill. "The Counter-Revolution of the Cedars." *Mideast Monitor*, vol. 1, No. 2, April/May 2006, at http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0604/0604_1.htm

well as at least one government political stalemate. Yet as a primarily Shiite[153] armed

group, their increased local political power in Lebanon has resulted in a decrease of

political clout in the Greater Muslim World. Hezbollah is often seen closely associated

with Iran and Syria; two regimes that the majority Sunni Muslim led Arab World are

loathed to see as real power brokers. As a response to Hezbollah's rising local political

clout, many regional Sunni Arab regimes have quickly sought to marginalize the group

on the World stage. [154]

However during the height of the summer 2006 war, Hezbollah enjoyed a

significant amount of regional and international support, primarily due to their successful

media outreach campaign which clearly influenced international news media coverage.

As has previously been discussed, Hezbollah quickly recognized the importance of

international support for their fight against Israel. By successfully utilizing a well

thought out and centralized media strategy to promote the organization as the "pro-

Lebanon, pro-national unity" resistance force, Hezbollah was able to capitalize on

international sympathy for Lebanon, even though Hezbollah technically provoked the

Israeli response to their capturing of IDF two soldiers.

So what media interaction techniques has Hezbollah successfully utilized? As has

been stated frequently in this case, Hezbollah is not quite a Type "A" group, however

many Type "A" interaction techniques are used by the group resulting in a well planned,

centrally endorsed, and top-down led media strategy. This strategy encompasses all the

hallmarks of a typical public relations campaign, with group leadership and press office

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[153] Hezbollah also includes the "Lebanese Resistance Brigades," which is a multi-faith fighting force.
[154] Seymour Hersh. "The Redirection; Is the Administration's new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?" *The New Yorker*, March 5, 2007, pg 54.

interviews and comments, press office guided tours of "media friendly" locations,[155] positive media relationship building actions and events, and a clear willingness to provide information and assistance to the news media. Of course most of these events and actions will be staged propaganda events, but as truly great media opportunities are mostly the result of luck, being at the right place at the right time, a good public relations officer will often have to create those "perfect" media opportunities. Gadi Wolfsfeld's symbiosis argument easily fits this situation. The best media situation for an antagonist is clearly one where the media must rely heavily, if not exclusively, on an armed group for information, pictures, and sound bites. By almost exclusively controlling the Lebanese view, and by being more than happy to share this view and information with the news media, Hezbollah was able to control the news narrative.

Two famous *CNN* anecdotes provide good examples of Hezbollah's media strategy as an alternative weapon against Israel in this past summer's war. Though clearly showing Hezbollah's attempt to influence the news media through access control, staged events and pictures, the examples also illustrate Hezbollah's understanding of the importance of the news media in international conflict, especially when dealing with the now standard 2 minute TV package peace and quick cable news sound bites. Interestingly enough this material was found all over "right-wing" and "pro-Israel" US based blogs and websites. The bloggers sought to discredit Hezbollah by pointing out their control and attempts at influencing the media, however at the same time they provide a clear validation for my media interaction argument.

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[155] Media friendly here refers to locations which would provide useful media pictures or actions – for example, if Hezbollah is trying to show the plight of the Lebanese civilian, a "media friendly" location would be a bombed out apartment building, or patient filled hospital emergency ward.

In the first example, *CNN*'s Anderson Cooper on July 24th's addition of

"Anderson Cooper 360°" commented on Hezbollah's control of journalists' access to

subjects in southern Lebanon, and also the staging of scenes for the international press to

record. Yet at the same time he inadvertently helped Hezbollah by continuing to

broadcast those very same images, and lending credibility to Hezbollah as a professional

media machine which recognizes the importance of media pictures. Describing

Hezbollah's orchestration of events, Cooper broadcast the following.

> "...After letting us take pictures of a few damaged buildings, they take us
> to another location, where there are ambulances waiting. This is a heavily
> orchestrated Hezbollah media event. When we got here, all the
> ambulances were lined up. We were allowed a few minutes to talk to the
> ambulance drivers. Then one by one, they've been told to turn on their
> sirens and zoom off so that all the photographers here can get shots of
> ambulances rushing off to treat civilians. That's the story - that's the story
> that Hezbollah wants people to know about. These ambulances aren't
> responding to any new bombings. The sirens are strictly for effect..."[156]

The sirens may be strictly for effect, and the entire tour was obviously a Hezbollah staged

show, but the ultimate pictures broadcast all over the West were those ambulances and

damaged buildings. It is Hezbollah's message showing the Lebanese plight that makes

the news, not Israel's alternative message of justified air strikes. Regardless of the "right-

wing" blog's bias and rhetoric, from a Public Relations perspective this was clearly a

Hezbollah success.

The second *CNN* example is from the previous day's segment of the *CNN*'s media

program "Reliable Sources," where host Howard Kurtz asked *CNN*'s senior international

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[156] Anderson Cooper. "Anderson Cooper 360°." *CNN*, July 24, 2006.

correspondent Nic Robertson about the difficulty of independently verifying claims made by Hezbollah.

> "There's no doubt about it: Hezbollah has a very, very sophisticated and slick media operation...They deny journalists access into specific areas. They can turn on and off access to hospitals in those areas. They have a lot of power and influence. You don't get in there without their permission...And when I went we were given about 10 or 15 minutes, quite literally running through a number of neighborhoods that they directed and they took us ...They had control of the situation. They designated the places that we went to, and we certainly didn't have time to go into the houses or lift up the rubble to see what was underneath. Hezbollah is now running a number of press tours every day, taking journalists into this area. They realize that this is a good way for them to get their message out, taking journalists on a regular basis."[157]

Again, the bloggers commentary concerning this report condemned Hezbollah for employing and forming a media strategy to peacefully influence the media utilizing event planning, access control, and other time honored government public affairs techniques. Of course that's the point of having a press office full of public affairs officers. If a groups' press officers did not set up guided tours, did not create access areas and media spectacles, then they wouldn't be doing their job. And by maintaining this type of media environment, Hezbollah made sure the news media needed Hezbollah's help and input as much as Hezbollah needed the news media to get their message out. This is exactly the type of situation Gadi Wolfsfeld discusses in his *political contest model.*

Type "A" groups will also employ access controls, staged events, and forced media walkthroughs, however they will rely more on their well grown media relationships as opposed to indirect threats against those news media who "step out of

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[157] Nic Robertson. "Reliable Sources." *CNN*, July 23, 2006.

line." Unfortunately for Hezbollah's reputation, they have exhibited both professionalism and threats in the past. Michael Totten's description of being told "we know where you live" is a clear example of the further work Hezbollah needs to undertake. Though Totten's article goes on to point out that Hezbollah spokesman Hussein Naboulsi later apologized and blamed the threat on being "stressed out," the reputation damage was clearly already done.[158]

Where Totten's experience occurred in 2005, other "altercations" with Hezbollah during the summer 2006 war were much less threatening. Veteran BBC Middle East correspondent Jim Muir recounts a very different and more professional Hezbollah in his article "Four Weeks in Lebanon," from the CPJ's Fall/Winter 2006 *Dangerous Assignments* report. In his article, Muir describes arguing with a Lebanese Army officer about the live filming of outgoing rocket fire. Arguing that the live shot would endanger civilians, the officer quickly left after the BBC crew argued back. Then Hezbollah showed up.

> "A few hours later, at night, Hezbollah itself turned up. We were told firmly but politely, that anyone filming outgoing rocket fire would have his camera confiscated. No argument was brooked. We decided if rockets were fired from behind us while we were live, we would pan away and explain that we had been asked not to show the location of fire because we were told it might endanger civilians. The issue didn't arise…and apart from that, we had no interference from Hezbollah….It was in Hezbollah's interest to allow maximum press coverage since the facts on the ground – hundreds of civilians crushed under the rubble of their own homes – spoke for themselves."[159]

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[158] *Supra* Totten.
[159] Jim Muir. "Four Weeks in Lebanon." *Dangerous Assignments*, Committee to Protect Journalists, Fall/Winter 2006, pg 53.

The main gist of this article was to describe the BBC's difficulty in covering the war in southern Lebanon because of the danger from Israeli air strikes on any ground movement, including well marked press vehicles. Interestingly Muir had recently arrived in Lebanon after covering the Iraq war, a conflict he described as "much less dangerous in terms of being bombed, but far more dangerous in terms of being kidnapped and murdered, a risk that never crossed our minds in South Lebanon."[160] If you contrast the Hezbollah media control and harassment stories with the Israeli Defense Force's reputation of constantly targeting both local and international press as they attempted to move around the country, you can immediately understand the positive impact Hezbollah's non-violent interaction techniques had with the news media.

This case provides many Type "A" indicator examples, however there are also clearly Type "B" indicators as well. While it is well known that Hezbollah maintains full press offices, along with professional quality business cards including office addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses, the actual locations of most of their offices are not clearly marked. And even the ones that are marked, such as the main media relations office, are typically set back from the street and not easily identifiable. However according to media evidence, personal interviews and anecdotes, their media staff is easily accessible, helpful, and at most times completely professional. As the Totten article points out, their professionalism has been known to slip, and there is evidence to support the belief they favor local and regional Arab media over international media. Yet at the same time Hezbollah has clearly made efforts to increase their relationship with the foreign media, and the American media especially. Further indicators of the Hezbollah media machine include *Al-Manar TV*, *Al-Nour* radio stations, and their monthly magazine

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[160] *Ibid.*

Kabdat Allah. And according to my personal interviews with journalists who have covered Hezbollah in the past, all interviews were on-the-record, as were most media briefings, including major media events. However like the typical Type "B" group, Hezbollah has never publicly published or broadcast a specific policy of non-violence towards the news media, and there are a number of historical incidences including the kidnapping and killing of foreign journalists in the 1980s and 1990s. Lastly Hezbollah enjoys significant real and allied representation in the Lebanese national parliament. This status has allowed Hezbollah to create and produce major political and media spectacles, thereby increasing their use and reliance on the news media to spread their message of legitimacy and resistance.

CHAPTER 7: *Soldiers for a "New Caliphate"*

- The Al-Qaeda Network

My last case study chapter will focus on a Category Type "C" group. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Type "C" groups lie at the opposite end of the spectrum from Type "A" groups, and represent the most violent and media-negative organizations. This is not to say that they are adverse to utilizing the news media; far from it actually. These groups also hope to utilize the news media in order to increase their political and social legitimacy and power. However as I stated in Chapter 4 their methods are completely opposite from a Type "A" group. Where Type "A" groups use positive, non-violent media interaction techniques, Type "C" groups use negative, ultra-violent media techniques in order to strike fear into the hearts of their "enemies." While Type "A" groups seek to send legitimizing or messages of international unity and support, Type "C" groups seek to send messages glorifying their atrocities and rallying their supporters. And when Type "A" groups attempt to influence undecided observers by building positive and mutually beneficial relationships, Type "C" groups attempt to influence the undecided by threats of violence and destruction.

The al-Qaeda Network is today's most famous Type "C" example, and generally fits the model well. The group has been known to have interacted quite peacefully at times in the past, most notably the 1998 John Miller *ABC News* interview with Osama bin Laden. But apart from a small number of Western news media interviews, al-Qaeda and its leadership have interacted almost exclusively with the regional Arab media, most notably Al Jazeera. Yet even their relationship with Al Jazeera has been problematic, to the point that their current relationship consists solely of Al Jazeera broadcasting parts of

messages and tapes produced by the group, and even these media actions happen rarely at best.

As a self proclaimed organization of terror,[161] al-Qaeda is not media averse; in fact it has a highly orchestrated media strategy that it relies on to spread its messages of terror and belief. In fact, as my discussion in Chapter 2 on terrorism shows, without the news media to spread their message and broadcast pictures of their actions, al-Qaeda would be a terribly ineffective terrorist organization. However instead of relying on the traditional news media to spread their messages and information, al-Qaeda media operatives have become reliant on the internet and new media platforms. This has become especially apparent after regional Arab satellite networks continuously questioned their motives and actions following some particularly horrific terrorist attacks against fellow Muslims. And like other Type "C" groups, there is no one stop web-shop for al-Qaeda, but rather they will release and post video messages on "Jihadi" web boards and other sympathetic websites.   Yet as this case study will show, al-Qaeda's reliance on the internet has not been without its own drawbacks and weaknesses.

Unfortunately Type "C" groups are by their very nature ultra-secretive and covert, and consequently my analysis is based exclusively on news reports and think tank articles. Therefore this case study chapter is likely to be the least accurate analysis of the three due to a lack of first person interviews and information.

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[161] see John Miller's May 1998 *ABC News* interview with Osama Bin Laden, where bin Laden states "terrorism can be commendable… The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants and the aggressors and the enemies of Allah, the tyrants, the traitors who commit acts of treason against their own countries and their own faith and their own prophet and their own nation. Terrorizing those and punishing them are necessary measures to straighten things and to make them right. Tyrants and oppressors who subject the Arab nation to aggression ought to be punished." at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html

Roots of the movement:

The al-Qaeda Network is the successor of the Services Office, a clearinghouse for the "international Muslim brigade" opposed to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the 1980s, the Services Office, run by bin Laden and the Palestinian religious scholar Abdullah Azzam, recruited, trained, and financed thousands of foreign *mujahadeen* (holy warriors) from more than fifty countries, primarily with the international blessing and assistance of the US, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Bin Laden hope to use these fighters to continue his "holy war" beyond Afghanistan, and in 1988 he formed the al-Qaeda Network.[162] Though referred to in the singular, al-Qaeda has always operated as an umbrella network, organizing, coordinating, and managing a number of different terrorist organizations and individuals with similar societal and religious ideologies. The group has never established a single headquarters, and is known to have operated out of a number of different countries. In addition government officials believe al-Qaeda has autonomous underground cells in some 100 countries, including the United States. Law enforcement has broken up al-Qaeda cells in the UK, the US, Pakistan, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Albania, Uganda, and elsewhere.[163]

Al-Qaeda's political ideology is built on the "three foundations." The first point is "the *Quran*-Based Authority to Govern," which means the creation of an Islamic state governed solely by *sharia* law. Secular government or "man-made" law is considered unacceptable and deemed contrary to Islamic faith.[164] The second point is "the Liberation of the Homelands." Al-Qaeda's leadership has argued that reforms and free

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[162] From "Al-Qaeda Backgrounder," *Council on Foreign Relations,* July 7, 2005 at http://www.cfr.org/publication/9126/
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] Christopher M. Blanchard. "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology." *Congressional Research Service*, The Library of Congress, June 20, 2005.

elections will not be possible for Muslims without first establishing "the freedom of the

Muslim lands and their liberation from every aggressor." They also emphasize the

importance of establishing control over the Middle East's energy resources and describe

the Muslim world as "impotent and exposed to the Israeli nuclear arsenal."[165] The third

point is "the Liberation of the Human Being." The leadership has articulated a vision of

a contractual social relationship between Muslims and their rulers that would permit

people to choose and criticize their leaders but also demand that Muslims resist and

overthrow rulers who violate Islamic laws and principles. They criticize hereditary

government and identify a need "to specify the power of the *sharia* based judiciary, and

insure that no one can dispose of the people's rights, except in accordance with this

judiciary."[166] Though these political positions sound somewhat reasonable, al-Qaeda has

attempted to implement them through violence, designating any Muslims who don't

agree with their exact version of Islam as apostates who must be killed.

The al-Qaeda Network is believed responsible for a number of international

terrorist actions both against Western nations and fellow Muslim regimes and civilians.

A short list of incidents include the April 2007 Algiers bombing; the July 2005 Sharm el-

Sheikh, Egypt attacks; the July 2005 bombing of the London Underground; the March

2004 bomb attacks on Madrid commuter trains, which killed nearly 200 people and left

more than 1,800 injured; the May 2003 car bomb attacks on three residential compounds

in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; the November 2002 car bomb attack and a failed attempt to

shoot down an Israeli jetliner with shoulder-fired missiles, both in Mombasa, Kenya; the

October 2002 attack on a French tanker off the coast of Yemen; Several spring 2002

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[165] *Ibid.*
[166] *Ibid.*

bombings in Pakistan, as well as three assassination attempts on Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf; the April 2002 explosion of a fuel tanker outside a synagogue in Tunisia; the September 11, 2001, hijacking attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; the October 2000 *U.S.S. Cole* bombing; and the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In addition al-Qaeda operative Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is believed to be personally responsible for the gruesome filmed beheading of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl.

The Iraqi wing of the al-Qaeda Network, formerly led by deceased terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, is thought responsible for numerous actions, including seven separate beheadings of Westerners working in Iraq; 131 separate suicide car bombings including the 2003 truck bombing of the Baghdad UN headquarters and ICRC headquarters; and over 25 non-bombing actions against coalition military, Iraqi government, and Iraqi civilians. Additionally al-Qaeda in Iraq is believed to be responsible five different international attacks in Jordan and Lebanon, including the 2005 Amman, Jordan bombing which killed 60 Jordanians and wounded over 115 others.

Courting the media:

If al-Qaeda's ultimate goal is to reinvigorate the Islamic *umma*[167] in confrontation with the West and to direct this mobilized Muslim community in a revolutionary transformation of the international order, then it must target not only the small minority of radicalized *jihadists*, but the "median voters" of the Arab Muslim public.[168] These Muslims are not themselves necessarily Islamist, but deeply concerned about issues such as the Palestinians and Iraq, disenchanted with corrupt and authoritarian Arab regimes,

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[167] *Umma* is translated to mean "people," or "Muslim people."
[168] Marc Lynch. "Al-Qaeda's Media Strategies." *The National Interest*, March 1, 2006.

and thus potentially receptive to anti-American politics. Al-Qaeda's media strategy is therefore inseparable from its political strategy, as its terrorism and rhetoric must work toward the common goal of heightening Islamic identity and sharpening the confrontation of that identity with the West.[169]

However the Al-Qaeda Network is far from popular in the Muslim World, even though many sympathetic organizations have sprouted up in the past years. In addition it has held little if any regional or international political legitimacy, and has been seen more as a political tool or guest by those few states who have offered the group safe haven over the years since the exile from Saudi Arabia in the 1990s. While some Arab and Muslim populations have been sympathetic to its attacks on US and other Western targets, public opinion polls have shown very little real support for the organization and its methods,[170] primarily due to their strict and narrow minded interpretation of Islam, their reliance on the practice of *takfir*,[171] and the subsequent violence against those they have designated. And has al-Qaeda's actions against fellow Muslims and Muslim countries have increased and become even more devastating, public antipathy towards the organization has also increased.

International counter-terrorism experts believe the Al Qaeda Network has been conducted a sophisticated public relations and media campaign over the last ten years using a series of faxed statements, audio recordings, video appearances, and Internet postings. They believe these messages have been designed to induce psychological

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[169] *Ibid.*
[170] see "Large and Growing Numbers of Muslims Reject Terrorism, Bin Laden." *World Public Opinion.org*, The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), University of Maryland, June 30, 2006.
[171] *Takfir* is the process for calling some one "kafir" or "non-believer, specifically aimed at Muslims. Al-Qaeda has been known to us *takfir* against any and all Muslims who do not adhere to their strict interpretation of Islam as apostates and *kafir*.

reactions and communicate complex political messages to a global audience as well as to specific populations in the Islamic world, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Bin Laden and his deputies have personally stated their belief in the importance of harnessing the power of international and regional media for Al Qaeda's benefit, and Al Qaeda's central leadership structure has featured a dedicated media and communications committee tasked with issuing reports and statements in support of the group's operations.[172] Some officials and analysts believe that Al Qaeda's messages contain signals that inform and instruct operatives to prepare for and carry out new attacks.

As I discussed in the introduction, al-Qaeda's methods to reach those media benefits and goals are very different than my Type "A" group example the ANC. In fact they have nothing in common. Where the ANC sough to build relationships with the foreign news media in order to put pressure on the Apartheid Regime, al-Qaeda can not afford to build relationships with the foreign news media, especially for fear that the news media could actually be an intelligence operative or a Western assassin. Again, local context matters. When an organization holds no local political legitimacy and very little real local support, and therefore can not openly operate in a country without fear of military or law enforcement actions, they have almost no tendency to interact with the foreign news media. As I said, it is simply too dangerous and potentially costly to trust a journalist not to act as an intelligence agent and give away your position. Even if you take every precaution to hide your location during the interview, there is too high a risk that a potential "tracer device" might be hidden in the large number of electrical equipment today's conflict journalist lugs around with them. Consequently, all of bin

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[172] see Hassan M. Fattah. "Al-Qaeda increasingly reliant on media." *The New York Times,* September 30, 2006.

Laden's Western interviews take place before September 11th, and most take place while he is in exile in Sudan before being kicked out of that country in 1998. Post 1998, and especially after the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, taped al-Qaeda interviews are exclusively with the Arab news media, and extremely infrequent at that. It is for this reason that al-Qaeda and other Type "C" groups are forced to switch to anonymous manifesto tapes and audio recordings to get their message out.[173]

Additionally there is no evidence to suggest that al-Qaeda would even *want* to build relationships with the Western news media. Though they initially sought to build relationships with the regional Arab media, especially Al Jazeera, the interviews with the Western press have always been extremely hostile. Look at the John Miller *ABC News* interview. When Miller asks bin Laden about his *fatwa* calling on all Muslims to kill Americans where-ever they can, bin Laden replies that God has directed Muslims to "fight all unbelievers."

> "We believe that the worst thieves in the world today and the worst
> terrorists are the Americans. Nothing could stop you except perhaps
> retaliation in kind. We do not have to differentiate between military or
> civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets, and this is what
> the *fatwah* says….The *fatwah* is general (comprehensive) and it includes
> all those who participate in, or help the Jewish occupiers in killing
> Muslims."[174]

All of bin Laden's interviews have a similar tone: that for Westerners there is no negotiation or *rapprochement* available. They are not interested in what Westerners, and Americans in general, think about the organization. It would be very difficult to build a relationship with journalists after you have finished telling them they are targets for

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[173] *Supra* Ignatius, interview.
[174] *Supra* John Miller *ABC News* interview.

violence simply because of their nationality. Additionally the Daniel Pearl tragedy

solidified the Western press's viewpoint towards Al-Qaeda, a long with a fair amount of

non-Western international and regional news media. By disrespecting the former

conventions of press immunity, and by specifically kidnapping and publicly beheading a

member of the news media to spread a message of hate and fear, al-Qaeda sent its own

message to the news media: you are enemies, we will kill you, and we will use your death

to further our own goals.[175]

Of course as a Type "C" group this very act is labeled a victory. If a group hopes

to spread messages of fear and hatred through the news media, there was no better way

than the Miller interview and Pearl beheading. And at the same time, any one with

similar political ideologies or militant sympathies would see al-Qaeda in a more

legitimate light. Not only was al-Qaeda capable of attacker US military and economic

targets, but through violent actions against Western journalists the organization can

spread terror in every newspaper page, every blog, and every radio and television sound

bite. If the goal of a militant organization is to "terrify," then publicly terrifying the news

media, and successfully influencing them to broadcast their own feelings of terror is

priceless.[176]

Al-Qaeda has also had difficulties building relationships and influencing the Arab

news media as well. Perhaps this has also been a result of the group's declining

legitimacy and support in the eyes of the Arab world, but even Al Jazeera has become

more "hostile" towards al-Qaeda. This is not to say that Al Jazeera has in reality become

hostile towards the group, but rather they have added to the commentary and discussion

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[175] *Supra* Garrels, interview.
[176] *Supra* Chandrasekaran, interview.

on the groups and its ideology and goals; something that has tremendously displeased al-Qaeda.[177] In a January 2004 statement, bin Laden identified the Arab media as a primary source of deviation in the Muslim world: "The media people who belittle religious duties such as jihad and other rituals are atheists and renegades."[178] Al Jazeera's approach to these videos has hardly been one of willing propagandist, and it has changed over time. In June, when Zawahiri released a tape condemning Egypt's *Kefaya* ("Enough") movement,[179] Al Jazeera followed each excerpt with discussion by the Islamist lawyer (and Bin Laden critic) Montasser al-Zayat, Jordanian liberal Muhammad Abu Roman and Kefaya activist Ahmed Baha al-Din Sha'aban. This transformed Zawahiri's lecture into a dialogue and denied him the monopoly on political discourse he so craved. In January, Bin Laden released his first message in over a year, and Al-Jazeera invited the Arabic-speaking American diplomat Alberto Fernandez to respond.[180]

Consequently al-Qaeda has moved further underground, or perhaps the proper term would be "out of ground," and into the World Wide Web. This trend away from Arab satellite TV has been especially evident with the Iraq Wing of al-Qaeda formerly led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. While al-Qaeda had long been using the internet to disseminate its messages, to recruit, to coordinate, and to train potential *jihadists*, Zarqawi's dismissal of satellite TV from the start and his preference for the Internet suggests a profoundly different political strategy.[181]

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[177] *Supra* Lynch.
[178] *Ibid.*
[179] The *Kefaya* movement is a coalition of liberal, Arab nationalist, and moderate Islamist protestors challenging Mubarak's regime.
[180] *Supra* Lynch.
[181] *Supra* Garrels, interview.

Degree of centralization:

The al-Qaeda Network is considered today to be more of an umbrella management, training, and services organization rather than a physically violent terrorist group. And with the US led Global War on Terror, the organization has only fragmented more, to the point where it has become primarily a virtual organization.[182] Though officially led by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, most experts believe these "leaders" have very little control over the many cells and sub-organizations that make up al-Qaeda around the world. And even in places where the country leadership pledges their undying loyalty, the overall leadership has clearly taken no role.

Iraq is the perfect example of this. While I was a press officer with the Coalition Provisional Authority, we recovered information and documentation where Abu Musab al-Zarqawi pledged his entire group and resources to bin Laden. However as the years went by, we quickly noticed a change where recovered documents pointed to a rift between the Zarqawi and bin Laden. And when it came to any type of "media strategy," it was quickly apparent that al-Qaeda in Iraq was not interested in the main stream media, even the local and regional Arab ones. They would kill an Arab journalist as quickly as a Western one. Their entire media strategy revolved around taping and then distributing bloody and violent propaganda videos through underground and black market channels.

Outside Iraq the evidence is much the same. Though there are many *jihadi* groups pledging their loyalty and sympathy to al-Qaeda, there is very little evidence to suggest these groups receive any direction or management. And when it comes to the media, the strategy is even less centralized. Though the al-Qaeda Network is known to

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[182] Eben Kaplan. "Inspiring Terror." *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 30, 2006.

employ their own media production group, al-Sahab, there are also believed to be nearly 5,000 websites maintained by different terrorist groups, and more than a dozen groups producing their own video.[183]

This lack of centralization therefore means many competing media narratives being put forth by these various groups. And in the case of the bin Laden al-Qaeda Network, it means they are almost forced to act violently against the local, regional, and international news media, or they might literally lose "street cred."[184] "If they show signs of weakness," says Ignatius, "of seeming to 'negotiate' with the US or other Western regimes through the news media, another younger, more violent and radical *jihadi* will come along and try to take over."

> "Look at Zarqawi. After the video a few years ago where bin Laden
> offered a 'truce' with the West if they would leave Muslim lands, Zarqawi
> increased his bloody attacks in Iraq and even threatened bin Laden in
> messages with 'losing his resolve.' Soon the messages out of bin Laden
> quickly changed back to their old rhetoric."[185]

Very rarely will you now hear bin Laden or Zawahiri move away from the old rhetoric. They need to continue to spread their message of conflict and resolve as much to remain important as to recruit or terrorize their target audience.

This de-centralization of effort and message has also meant that the mission to "win the hearts and minds of Muslims" is completely failing. This is not to say that the US and her allies are having any measure of success. Far from it, as policy decisions concerning Palestine, Iraq, and other Muslim countries have much more of an impact than any manufactured rhetoric. It means that instead of having access to the mainstream

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[183] Robinson Report. "Lawmakers Urge Greater US Steps Against Terrorist Use of Internet." *Voice of America*, May 4, 2006.
[184] *Supra* Ignatius, interview.
[185] *Ibid.*

Arab and international media which would reach viewers across the globe, the al-Qaeda media message only reaches those viewers already sympathetic to the cause enough to sign into *jihadi* chat rooms and websites. In addition, the internet venues are typically password protected and rarely open to "the public." Therefore the message stays within the *jihadi* and Islamist circles, and very rarely has the desired effect of bolstering greater legitimacy and terrorizing the enemy.

Influencing the agenda:

Though the al-Qaeda Network has no official state representation, or even any governments or international organizations who have publicly announced sympathies for the group, they have been somewhat successful in setting and influencing the international agenda through their occasional yet clearly strategical use of the mainstream news media.

Prior to September 11, 2001, very few Westerners had heard the name Osama bin Laden or heard of the al-Qaeda Network. Though the group had attacked US and other international targets, they simply were not a household name, and the defense against terror was simply a law enforcement issue. However following September 11th, al-Qaeda has been a frequent part of the American policy discourse, along with much of the West. Almost every Western and developed country has developed new anti-terror legislation. The United Nations has created new anti-terror treaties and organizational groups. And the US and its allies have embarked on two very real wars. In addition these new Western led policies and actions have created a new global discourse concerning Islam and the Muslim world that might never had happened others.

While the actual physical attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the Madrid Subway, the London Underground, the Bali Night Club, the Amman hotels, and the Iraqi beheadings (to name a few of the more spectacular civilian oriented attacks), were all physically and psychologically violent for the immediate victims, it was the media images and subsequent terror responsibility tapes released by bin Laden that were played over and over again on mainstream media broadcasts which caused the true psychological mass terror sought out by al-Qaeda. Yet as the group has moved away from the traditional media, I believe their ability to influence the agenda has also decreased. There is no direct information or data to conclusively support this statement, only simple analysis and conjecture. However I believe further study after enough time has passed to collect enough data will corroborate my claim.

For example, on the eve of the Spanish general elections, the incumbent President Jose Maria Aznar and his party were strongly ahead in the poles, even though they had supported the heavily unpopular US invasion of Iraq and was a member of the "Coalition of the Willing." However on March 11th, just three days before the elections, an al-Qaeda cell operating in Europe detonated a series of coordinated bombs on the Madrid commuter train, killing 191 people and wounding 2,050. Immediately after the attack al-Qaeda released a video claiming responsibility (which was subsequently determined to be unreliable), leading many Spaniards to believe the bombing was in retaliation for Spanish troops in Iraq. Had the bombings been smaller, the same reaction would have occurred. It was the image of delivered death and destruction, and the psychological fear of further violence that influenced the Spanish electorate, along with the actual physical attack.

The July 2005 London Underground bombings are another good example. While the attacks did not influence any UK electorate or take down the Tony Blair government, they had a positive strategic effect on al-Qaeda's claims of Muslim oppression and heavy handedness by the West. International and Arab media broadcasts were filled with reporters on the new anti-terror laws (which were quickly spun as anti-Muslim) being enacted in the UK, and many images and articles on the ghettoization of Britain's Muslim and ethnic groups were also shown throughout the media. Bin Laden and Zawahiri could not have planned it any better, as their claims of a new Western anti-Muslim stance were quickly proven correct in the eyes of the Muslim Street.

Contrastingly their new media actions have had very little influence on the agenda, accept to increase the counter-terrorism rhetoric of government agencies and think tanks. As most of the *jihadi* videos are never seen by the average Muslim or Westerner, they receive very little traction and therefore become rather inconsequential. Unless a particularly gruesome video emerges, like videoed beheading of a Westerner, the main stream international and Arab media doesn't rebroadcast the images to the larger public, and they have little effect at terrorizing the enemy or increasing al-Qaeda's legitimacy. Though these videos can be found all over the Arab black market, they are treated more as gruesome novelty items, like terrorist trading cards, versus real public relations messages.[186] And if the major public opinion polls are accurate, this reliance on the narrow field internet versus an open mainstream media campaign has resulted in a steady decline of popular support.

This case provides all the typical Type "C" indicators, along with one or two Type "B" indicators. As a Type "C" group, al-Qaeda does not have any official

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[186] *Supra* Fattah.

headquarters or even known controlled areas. Where there used to be certain sections of Baghdad that were known to by "al-Qaeda in Iraq friendly," even those have been lost as the Sunni Muslims living there have become tired of the oppressive foreign fighters.[187] Consequently al-Qaeda has been forced to move into the virtual "safe haven" of the internet, where they primarily conduct their media activities utilizing websites and internet chat rooms. In this virtual world they create and publish *jihadi* videos, which are typically violent scenes of attacks on enemy forces and civilians. Though al-Qaeda maintains its own media production group, al-Sahab, the group is not involved in any TV or radio broadcasts, but rather exclusively web based productions. Lastly, when al-Qaeda does seek to interact with the mainstream media, it is exclusively through local and regional media, and typically as anonymous videos and audio recordings of either bin Laden or Zawahiri.

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[187] see "All Iraqi Ethnic Groups Overwhelmingly Reject Al-Qaeda." *World Public Opinion.org,* The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), University of Maryland, September 27, 2006.

CHAPTER 8: *Hazardous Duty*

- The Future of War Reporting, Iraq and Beyond

When I began my research for this study, I hoped to find answers to a number of pressing questions concerning the news media and the coverage of armed political conflict, but more importantly I hoped to be able to shed some light on the future of war reporting and help figure out whether the world is seeing a permanent negative shift in the interaction techniques utilized by non-state armed groups. As a government public affairs veteran of the current Iraq War, my trying to better understand the relationships between the many Iraqi non-state armed groups and the foreign news media seems like an important professional reason for this study. But trying to understand and predict the violent actions (or hopefully non-violent actions) of armed groups, with the hope of maybe helping make war journalism a little bit safer for my friends and colleagues seems to be a more noble goal. Though merely a graduate school master's thesis, I believe this study is a logical second step, following Gadi Wolfsfeld's important work on the contest between political antagonists over the news media, towards helping the communications world and security studies field better understand the relationships and activities involved in armed political conflict.

In this final chapter I will answer my introductory questions in addition to providing predictions for armed groups' activities in Iraq, specifically how I expect them to behave towards journalists in the future. By utilizing anecdotal evidence from news reports, information from my personal interviews with journalists who have extensively covered Iraq, drawing on historical data from successful groups, and lastly applying my own *spectrum of violence media interaction model* to better known groups currently

operating in Iraq, I believe my predictions will have a very high probably of being correct. However I must offer an important disclaimer. As I have mentioned previously, and will mention again later, local events and context become extremely important to armed groups' actions. While the answers to my introductory questions will remain the same regardless of future events, my predictions for Iraq are based solely on information obtained prior to the submission of this study.[188] Should any significant events involving the major actors in Iraq occur, my predictions could easily become only half correct or even meaningless.

I began my study by discussing how theorists of armed political conflict emphasize that successful revolutionary movements utilize the media, propaganda, and a well planned and organized public information campaign to effectively cast doubt on the legitimacy of the opposed government or military force. At the same time these successful groups have all partially relied on the news media in order to bolster their own legitimacy in the eyes of the global and indigenous population.[189] As I showed in my two "successful groups" case studies, the ANC and Hezbollah, and examples from the historical activities of other armed groups like the PLO and IRA, this relationship will usually be mutually beneficial if handled positively and professionally. The successful armed group seeks to persuade the media to publish their viewpoints and information, and in return the media gains valuable information about and access to the armed group and their areas of operation.[190]

My first question asked "if the rules have changed, if the relationship is no longer considered symbiotic and mutually beneficial by one party, what happens to the game?"

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[188] Submission of study occurred on May 1, 2007.
[189] *Supra* Corman and Schiefelbein.
[190] *Supra* Wolfsfeld.

I don't believe the rules *have* changed, and I don't believe they will given our current global norms regarding the news media. As my type "C" case study on al-Qaeda showed, the rules never changed; al-Qaeda decided they were losing and didn't want to play, and therefore took their game to the internet. This reliance on the internet has not made them any more successful; in fact, the evidence provided by PIPA opinion polls and PEW research polls continuously show that al-Qaeda and sympathizing groups are overwhelmingly rejected in Iraq and throughout Muslim World.[191] In contrast, the very successful Hezbollah movement has constantly relied on the news media to push their message and increase pressure on Israel.

Even in Iraq, where the situation on the ground is extremely dangerous for journalists, armed groups like Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army have recognized the utility of influencing the news media. In fact, Sadr and his people are known to have been instrumental in securing the release of a number of kidnapped journalists, including American journalist Micah Garen. Garen was kidnapped in the Iraqi city of Nasiriyah in August 2004, subjected to "the trauma and humiliation of being paraded on television," and "threatened with execution in forty-eight hours if US forces did not withdraw from the embattled holy city of an-Najaf."[192] According to a number of Western observers, al-Sadr saw the benefit in building a relationship with the Western media by showing how hard he and his people were willing to work to gain the release of one journalist, and an American journalist at that, while at the same time involved in a major standoff with

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[191] see *Supra* "All Iraqi Ethnic Groups Overwhelmingly Reject Al-Qaeda."; "Afghan Public Overwhelmingly Rejects al-Qaeda, Taliban." *World Public Opinion.org,* The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), University of Maryland, January 11, 2006; "Large and growing numbers of Muslims reject terrorism, Bin Laden." *World Public Opinion.org,* The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), University of Maryland, July 30, 2006.
[192] Micah Garen. "Kidnapping by any other name." *Four Corners Media.net*, December 21, 2005, at http://www.fourcornersmedia.net/commentary.htm.

Coalition forces at the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf.[193] This attempt to influence the

Western media seemed to have paid off, as many news outlets reporting the story

subsequently carried information and quotes provided by Sadr's people along with a

more sympathetic narrative surrounding the mosque stand-off.

My second question is also answered by the previous examples above. What does

happen when the messenger disappears? The group hoping to exploit the media loses out

and can not effectively get their message out. Though many counter-terrorism experts

discuss groups' use of the internet and "jihadi" chat-rooms, the evidence shows these

messages don't make it to a wider audience and therefore have very little impact for the

overall movement. Evidence supports the belief that the more these groups rely on the

internet, the more they become disconnected from the average global population. These

beliefs are also supported by news reports showing that the internet helps groups

consolidate their inner loyalty and recruitment activities,[194] yet at the same time these

messages either don't reach "the street," or have the opposite effect than intended. While

the few beheading and suicide bombing videos that actually are broadcast on satellite TV

and major international media outlets do cause fear in their intended audience, the

Western viewer, they also cause alienation among their own co-religionists and co-

nationalists. This is especially the case with videos of mass slaughter and indiscriminate

violence, such as occurred at the Amman hotel bombings.[195]

My third question is answered more by personal opinion, yet I believe it will

resonate with most journalists and public policy makers. Why is it important that armed

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[193] Dexter Filkins. "Reporter Freed As Rebel Cleric Brokers a Deal." *The New York Times*, August 23, 2004.
[194] see *Supra* Fattah.
[195] *Supra* "Large and growing numbers of Muslims reject terrorism, Bin Lade."

groups are covered objectively and fairly, and that conflicts and wars receive proper coverage? Again my case studies provide excellent answers to this question. If the international media had taken the narrative provided by the Apartheid regime that the ANC was purely a terrorist organization, South Africa might still have apartheid, and the ANC movement, along with other equal rights movements, might have ultimately been crushed. Though much work was done by ANC activists inside and outside South Africa, much of the international pressure was arguably the result of sympathetic news coverage for the ANC and against the Apartheid regime. The 2006 Summer War is another good example of news coverage possibly making a difference. Though US and Israeli officials were very outspoken against a ceasefire, publicly declaring their aim to continue the fight against Hezbollah no matter the cost in Lebanese civilian lives, the international community was predominantly for an early end to hostilities by both sides, as evidenced by the large numbers of peace rallies organized throughout many major cities. And much of the peace movement's arguments were provided and justified by media coverage of the event.

The current Iraq war provides another perfect example of why we need media coverage, especially now with US congressional action attempting to force a timetable for troop withdrawal. Throughout much of the war the foreign media has been hampered by not being able to properly cover the war. I am not saying the media has not been objective. In fact I believe the Western media has done the best job they can under the circumstances. But when media are trapped inside their own walled fortresses, unable to get out on the street and really interview the "common man," then a full understanding of the war is difficult to report. Therefore the predominant amount of coverage is by default

coverage of violent events like shootings, attacks, and car bombs, and consequently the majority Western belief is that Iraq is a country gripped by "an ancient and historical sectarian" Civil War, where American and other Western troops have no business operating.

The picture looks grim, with both Shia and Sunni leaders continuously calling for the withdrawal of American troops, and doing a good job of influencing the news media to use the "foreign occupation" frame versus a "foreign intervention" frame. Accordingly, congressional leaders have pushed forth a timed American military pull out plan, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada even went so far as to call the war "lost," simply because there is no other real information for them to base their assessment on, just as the public is provided with no other contrasting information. This may be the best and correct solution, yet without a full picture of the conflict, the American people and other Western populations simply don't have enough information to make an educated decision.

In addition, groups who might otherwise have been willing to utilize the media as negotiating go-betweens don't have the opportunity because again it is simply too dangerous for reporters to meet them and get their viewpoints. For example some Sunni tribal leaders have begun to fight back against the al-Qaeda led foreign fighters, and have chosen to align themselves with the Coalition and new Iraqi governments. Yet this story has received very little play in the news media, not because it is a positive news story as the "right-wing" would claim against the "liberal media," but rather because it is simply too dangerous to keep a correspondent out in the volatile Anbar province, even if that

correspondent is Iraqi.[196] This is not the journalists fault, but rather an extremely

unfortunate byproduct of a very dangerous security situation.

With so many different armed groups operating in Iraq, it becomes almost

impossible to have a universal interaction plan, especially when security becomes

paramount over any other concerns including scooping the competition. For example,

during my tenure in Iraq the major Western media outlets put together a press pool

rotation in order to decrease the security risk against them. Though it meant sharing all

stories and information equally among the foreign news media, it also meant the

organizations could band together to increase their collective security. This was simply

unheard of prior to the Iraq War. And as for group types operating in Iraq which foreign

media can implicitly trust, there are no Type "A" groups, though a few active Type "B"

groups are closer to the Type "A" end of the *spectrum*, including Sadr's Mahdi Army, the

Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) aligned Badr Brigades, and

the Kurdish *Peshmerga* fighters. Unfortunately for journalists, these groups are very

much in the minority, as most of the armed groups operating in Iraq are clearly Type "C"

groups, with the al-Qaeda in Iraq wing the most noticeable. As I have already discussed

the Iraqi wing of al-Qaeda in Chapter 7, I will not take any more space to discuss their

activities now, except to say their tactics and media viewpoints have clearly influenced

many other Type "C" groups.[197] Unless the global al-Qaeda Network changes their

overall media strategy, I see little possibility that the Iraqi wing will change their tactics.

Though the situation is clearly bleak, there is one Iraqi armed political opposition

group which provides an excellent example for other groups and this study. I have

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[196] *Supra* Chandrasekaran, interview.
[197] *Supra* Garrels, interview.

already mentioned Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia many times during this study which should be a good indication of the active role the movement continues to play in Iraq. Interestingly there are many strong parallels between the group and Lebanon's Hezbollah, including both groups' Shia Muslim religious affiliation, the "resistance against foreign occupation" reasons for founding the group, the believed financial and military support from Iran, the significant social services offered in their areas of control, their strong leadership hierarchy centered on a charismatic cleric, and the existence of known movement members in their respective country's national assemblies and ministries. And like Hezbollah, Sadr's Mahdi Army exhibits many positive media traits. However there are also some major differences between the groups, including their overall level of national and communitarian legitimacy and support, and their level of political and public relations sophistication. A deeper examination and comparison of these two groups, along with a look at the contrasting activities of these Shia organizations versus the operations of Sunni Muslim armed groups would be an interesting follow-on study.

Muqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army have been involved with Iraqi politics, and more specifically the anti-Coalition resistance movement, since the fall of the Ba'ath Party regime in April 2003. The group has attempted to organize a number of failed shadow government, however these attempts received little if any support from the Iraqi Shia population, especially when the group forcibly removed a popularly elected district council from their area. And though the group has also been involved with assisting residents of the Baghdad Shiite Slum "Sadr City" with a number of much needed civil services including health care, food and clean water, unlike Hezbollah the group's base of

"support" stems from their strict control of Sadr City more than these humanitarian activities.[198] They have attempted to increase their areas of control through militant activities, yet so far these attempts have all failed due to Coalition actions, the Iraqi Government, or actions against al-Sadr by Iraq's lead Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, whom Sadr has attempted to usurp on more than one occasion. And though members of the movement hold positions in the Iraqi National Assembly and Prime Minister al-Malaki's government, there are often confrontations between Sadr's political party and the larger and better established Shiite SCIRI and Dawa parties. Some observers have even argued that without the violent threat posed by his Mahdi Army militia, Sadr's political movement would be relatively inconsequential.[199]

Regardless of their actual political influence and militant activities, I believe of all the groups currently operating in Iraq the Mahdi Army has the greatest chance of becoming a Type "A" group. Though their level of political support and legitimacy is often disputed, they clearly enjoy some support, especially among the dispossessed Shia of Sadr City and others who view them as a symbol of resistance against the Coalition. There is also a clear central leadership structure with Muqtada al-Sadr at the top, however many observers now question his current level of control over the Mahdi Army militia, as the presence of splinter groups and anti-Sunni death squads have increased in the areas he claims to control.[200] Lastly, like their level of local support and legitimacy, Sadr's level of political influence is also often disputed, however it is clear his political party remains

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[198] *Supra* Garrels, interview.
[199] Robert Ford, in an interview with *TIME* magazine's Vivian Walt, September 16, 2004, where the author was the handling press officer.
[200] *Supra* Garrels, interview. Sadr is known to have condemned sectarian violence, yet the Mahdi Army militia has been implicated in many anti-Sunni attacks throughout Iraq.

an important faction and is typically courted by al-Maliki's government in order to keep peace amongst the Shia of Iraq.[201]

In order for the Mahdi Army to move along the spectrum from Type "B" to Type "A," they will need to add a number of "media friendly" elements. The first and most important action needed is for Sadr to reestablish his strong control over the entire Mahdi Army militia. Every one of the journalists I spoke to who has covered Iraq made it clear that while they were never threatened directly by Sadr or his close associates, they have noticed an increasing number of splinter groups fragmenting off from the Mahdi Army which have been much less interested in following "official plans" on dealing professionally with the media. This has increased the media's culture of fear as they now have no way of determining if these activities were ordered by Sadr or not. The second major action needed should be the establishment of group press offices and official spokesmen. Unlike Hezbollah or the PLO with their well known press spokesmen, Sadr's movement has utilized a number of different spokespersons with varying degrees of legitimacy.[202] Consequently the overall public relations culture and reputation of the group is often questionable. Additionally the media often require a local contact or fixer to set up any interviews, instead of a well established press contact mechanism. Lastly Sadr and his leadership circle should develop a concise and active media strategy, including a sophisticated plan to influence the media through relationship building and positive influence techniques, instead of strong arm tactics and implicit threats.

Finally, after examining and discussing a number of historical and currently operating armed political opposition groups, applying these groups to my *spectrum of*

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[201] see Qassim Abdul-Zahra. "Iraq: Cleric's allies quit Cabinet." *Associated Press*, April 16, 2007.
[202] *Supra* Shadid, interview.

violence media interaction model, and comparing and contrasting these groups with the current situation in Iraq, I believe I am now able to answer my central underlying question. The current situation in Iraq is *not* indicative of a new global relationship between armed groups and the media, but it is also *not* an anomaly. While the situation represents a new and different type of conflict zone, there are similarities to other conflicts, and there are clear resemblances between Iraqi armed groups and others outside of Iraq. What makes it the most different from other civil wars or anti-insurgency conflicts in the past is that Iraq presents the full gamut of armed groups; from political militias, to semi-autonomous security forces and sectarian "death squads," to full blown terrorist organizations, with most groups clearly apolitical opportunists versus legitimate political contenders choosing violence to achieve their objectives.[203] And for journalists assigned to cover the conflict, Iraq now holds the dubious distinction as the most dangerous media assignment in history,[204] in addition to being a conflict where narratives and frames seem to change and fluctuate on any given day.

The situation in Iraq is different from wars in the past, but it is by no means unique. The dangerous security situation has required journalists to take new precautions and operate in ways contrary to their norms, yet the seeds of these precautions and activities were originally seen in previous wars. Ultimately it is the local facts on the ground that determines how the players operate. It is the local context which encourages or discourages armed groups to interact certain ways with the news media, as they have always acted throughout history. In the end the players may change, yet the game remains.

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[203] *Supra* Shadid, interview.
[204] *Supra* "Journalists killed in past ten years."

Appendix A – *Interviews and Sample Questions*

1. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *The Washington Post*, November 27, 2006

2. Robert S. Ford, US Department of State, September 16, 2004

3. Anne Garrels, *National Public Radio*, December 11, 2006

4. Seymour Hersh, *The New Yorker*, January 26, 2007

5. David Ignatius, *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2006

6. Colonel Jeffrey Jones, US Army (ret.), January 13, 2007

7. Dr. Z. Pallo Jordan, Minister of Arts and Culture, Republic of South Africa,
8. February 20, 2007

9. Mac Maharaj, African National Congress, February 1, 2007

10. Anthony Shadid, *The Washington Post*, January 13, 2007

Sample Thesis Questions for Journalists:

1. What do you believe is the benefit of foreign journalists for armed political opposition groups? What benefit is there for armed political opposition groups to speak and interact with foreign journalists?
2. Do you believe there is a continuum of interaction for groups that you covered/reported on, or do you believe these groups continued with one particular media strategy throughout the conflict? Do you believe that foreign journalists are susceptible to being co-opted by insurgent groups?
3. How do you feel about the debate surrounding "Advocacy Journalism?" Do you believe the recent rise in media advocacy has impacted the broader relationship between armed political opposition groups and the news media?
4. Do you believe the nature (political, cultural, religious, etc.) of the armed group played a factor in their approach to foreign media? Did you find that certain types of groups were more likely to try and reach out to the foreign media?
5. Do you believe there is a difference in utilization of print versus broadcast media? If so, what were the different strategies employed by armed political groups towards these different mediums?
6. Did you ever personally feel threatened by specific groups? If no, what about the organization you worked for? If yes, in what way? Do you feel the threat was present at all times, or did the threat shift? Did you ever feel that the level of threat was related to the manner in which you were covering the antagonists, or

would the threat have been the same, no matter what you said about the antagonists?

7. Do you believe the organization of specific groups (e.g. centralized, highly bureaucratic leadership structure versus a decentralized one) plays a factor in their approach to foreign media?

8. What was the nature of your communications with armed political groups (e.g. face to face, email, telephone, etc.)? Was the communication done this way due to logistical constraints, or a perceived threat?

9. Did you know of cases where Western journalists consciously allowed themselves to be used by a group for political involvement? If yes, was this because of a specific perceived threat or for other reasons (ideological similarities, religious similarities, etc…)?

Thesis Questions for Experts:

1. In your opinion, what benefit is there for armed political opposition groups to interact with foreign journalists?

2. Do you believe opposition groups tend to use one type of interaction technique over another? What do you believe are the benefits of these different techniques?

3. Do you believe the nature (political, cultural, religious, etc.) of the armed group plays a factor in their approach to foreign media? Do you believe some types of groups are more likely than others to try and reach out to the foreign media?

4. Do you believe armed opposition groups have actively used (or sought to use) media outlets as "verbal weapons" against governments and militaries?

5. Do you believe there is a difference in utilization of print versus broadcast media? If so, what were the different strategies employed by armed political groups towards these different mediums?

6. Do you believe the organization of specific groups plays a factor in their approach to foreign media (for example, a centralized group like the IRA, PLO, or Hezbollah versus a decentralized group like many of the insurgencies in Iraq, or even Al Qaeda today)?

7. In your experience, have you known any foreign media to purposely allow themselves to be "used" by opposition groups? If yes, was this mainly due to ideological similarities or political affinities on the part of the journalist?

Thesis Questions for ANC:

1. In your opinion, what benefit was there for the ANC to interact with foreign journalists?

2. Did the ANC have a specific media strategy? Or was it more *ad hoc* (as opportunities presented themselves, leaders took advantage of them)? Was the media strategy focused exclusively internally (South African audiences) or was their a global communications focus?

3. Do you believe interaction with the foreign media positively contributed to the success of the ANC and the end of Apartheid South Africa?

4. Did the ANC tend to use one type of interaction technique over another? What do you believe were the benefits of these different techniques?
5. Did the ANC ever threaten or violently target foreign media in order to influence favorable coverage? Why or why not?
6. Do you believe the political, equal rights/end to apartheid nature of the ANC played a factor in their approach to foreign media? Do you believe this made the ANC more likely than other S African groups to try and reach out to the foreign media?
7. Did the ANC ever actively use (or seek to use) Western media outlets as "verbal weapons," or propaganda outlets, against the South African government and military?
8. Did you see a difference in interaction with print versus broadcast media? If so, what were the different strategies employed by the ANC towards these different mediums?
9. Do you believe the centralized organizational structure of the ANC played a factor in their approach to foreign media?
10. Did you ever know of any foreign media who purposely allowed themselves to be "used" by the ANC? If yes, was this mainly due to ideological similarities or political affinities on the part of the journalist?

Thesis Questions for Hezbollah:

1. In your opinion, what benefit is there for Hizbollah to interact with foreign journalists?
2. Does Hizbollah have a specific media strategy towards Western media? Or is it more *ad hoc* (as opportunities presented themselves, leaders take advantage of them)?
3. In the 2006 Summer war with Israel, many western journalists were able to cover the conflict from the Lebanese point of view. Did Hizbollah set up any programs to assist the media coverage?
4. Did any Western journalist ask to embed with Hizbollah elements? If yes, what was the outcome of the request?
5. In the 1980s, Hizbollah was accused of being behind a number of kidnapping attempts on foreign journalists. Today, journalists express almost no fear of that occurring. What caused Hizbollah to change their posture towards foreign journalists?
6. Do you believe interaction with the foreign media have positively contributed to the opposition movement?
7. Did Hizbollah tend to use one type of interaction technique over another? What do you believe were the benefits of these different techniques?
8. What types of techniques does Hizbollah use to favorably influence Western news coverage?
9. Did Hizbollah elements ever threaten or violently target foreign media in order to influence favorable coverage? Why or why not?

10. Did you see a difference in interaction with print versus broadcast media? If so, what were the different strategies employed by Hizbollah towards these different mediums?

11. Do you believe the centralized organizational structure of Hizbollah plays a factor in the approach to foreign media?

12. Did you ever know of any foreign media who purposely allowed themselves to be "used" by Hizbollah? If yes, was this mainly due to ideological similarities or political affinities on the part of the journalist?

Appendix B – *Bibliography of Works, Reports and Articles*

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