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Citation

Gilboa, Eytan. "The Global News Networks and U.S. Policymaking In Defense and Foreign Affairs." Shorenstein Center Working Paper Series 2002.6, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2002.

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The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy

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#2002-6

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By

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Paper #2002-6
June 2002

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wrote this work while a fellow at the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, of the Kennedy School of Government, at Harvard University. He thanks Alex S. Jones, the Center's Director and Dr. Pippa Norris, the former Associate Director for Research, for the invitation to conduct research at the Center. He also thanks the following outstanding academics, officials and journalists for making valuable comments on an earlier draft of this research paper: Thomas E. Patterson, Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press at the Shorenstein Center; Ambassador Jonathan Moore, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. for Refugee Affairs; Michael Waldman, President Clinton's Special Assistant for Policy Coordination and Director of Speechwriting, and a lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government; Richard N. Kaplan, former president of *CNN-US*, and Matthew V. Storin, former Editor of the *Boston Globe*. The author also thanks the Center's academic and professional staff including Nancy Palmer, the Executive Director; Edith Holway, the Director of the Fellows Program; Caroline Cooper, a Research Assistant; and Parker Everett, a Staff Assistant.

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Eytan Gilboa

Abstract

This study investigates the effects of global television news on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. While it found no evidence to support the "CNN effect," a theory that claims global television now determines policy, it does present evidence and analysis of other significant effects on various phases and dimensions of policymaking. This study also suggests that global news coverage has created political, professional, and ethical dilemmas for the three major groups of participants in policymaking: politicians, officials, and journalists. Furthermore, it asserts that these groups haven't yet sufficiently adjusted to the new television saturated environment of policymaking.

Introduction

During the last decade, the expansion of global all news television networks such as CNN International and BBC World, and particularly their ability to influence policy in defense and foreign affairs, has fascinated politicians, government officials, journalists, and scholars. This fascination resulted from a perception of the media in general, and television in particular, as being the most important power broker in politics. *Mediademocracy, medialism, mediapolitik, mediacracy,* and *teledemocracy* are but a few fashionable terms coined to describe this new media dominated political system. Application of the same perception to foreign policy and international relations yielded similar terms and concepts such as *telediplomacy* and *the CNN effect*. A basic assumption lies behind all these concepts. It asserts that images of what is happening in the world are given greater significance than what really happens. Since television creates images, policymaking has primarily become

what the veteran television journalist Robert MacNeil (1994, p. 125) calls "a contest of images." Based on his recent practical experience, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger confirms this observation by commenting that officials asking for his advice used to ask him what to *do*, but now ask him what to *say* (Neuman, 1996, p. 270).

Five characteristics best describe global television news coverage: (1) it is broadcast around the clock 24 hours a day; (2) it is transmitted in real-time; (3) it is broadcast from every place in the world to every other place; (4) it is headline dominated; (5) and it is live event-oriented. One should note however, that networks repeat recorded news programs throughout the day. Two particular formats are more significant: the breaking news and the continuing crisis coverage characterized by a special logo, such as *America at War* or the *Middle East Crisis*. These formats create more pressure on all the three groups involved in policymaking: editors push reporters to broadcast new pictures, reporters push leaders to respond fast to unfolding events, and leaders push experts and diplomats to produce instant policy analysis and recommendations.

This article begins with a discussion of the most powerful possible effect of global television - taking over policymaking. Authors have defined this effect, known also as the CNN effect, several different ways. Generally, however, this term refers to compelling television images, such as images of a humanitarian crisis, which force policymakers to adopt a policy, such as military intervention, that might otherwise not be in the national interest of their countries.[1] This study reveals an ongoing debate among politicians, government officials, journalists, and scholars, on the validity of the CNN effect theory. The debates are conducted both internally within each group and among them, but these exchanges haven't yet contributed significantly to resolving the issue. O'Neill (1993) and Ammon (2001) strongly support this theory but Mermin (1999) calls this theory a "myth," and Robinson (2002) exposes many of its serious weaknesses.

This study distinguishes between effects of global coverage on outcome, as is the case with the CNN effect research, and effects on the policy process. It argues that the effects on policymaking are far more complex than is usually meant by the CNN

effect. It suggests that no sufficient evidence has yet been presented to validate the CNN effect theory, that this effect has been highly exaggerated, and that the focus on this theory has deflected and diverted attention from the significant effects global television does have on policymaking. "Constraining" rather than "controlling" policymakers is a more valid analytical concept for analyzing the effects global television has on policymaking. When considered in this way, global television is only one of several factors competing to influence decisions. "Constraining" refers to the pressure global coverage applies on leaders to respond quickly to events, to the limiting of policy options, and to changes in the work of experts, diplomats, and communications professionals.

A basic triangular relationship among the media, government, and public opinion anchors most studies of the effect global television is having on policymaking. In this context the media doesn't have power of its own, power resides in the public, and to the extent the media has power, it is derived from its perceived ability to stimulate or even shape public opinion (Gurevitch, 1991; Bennett, 1994; Seaver, 1998; Nacos, Shapiro, & Isernia, 2000). The CNN effect theory is based on this context of media effects. Yet this study departs from the triangular relationship and demonstrates effects that are more direct in their application and independent of public opinion. In addition, this study explores effects of global coverage on political and strategic issues. Global television news is affecting, perhaps in different ways, policymaking in areas such as economics, trade, health, culture, and the environment on a worldwide scale. Documenting and analyzing effects on policymaking in these areas require a separate investigation.

The main purposes of this article are: (1) to systematically examine the direct and indirect effects global television coverage is having on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy; (2) to explore the consequences of these effects for politicians, appointed officials, and communication professionals; (3) to assess the quality of research conducted on the topic; and (4) to suggest preliminary paths for effectively coping with challenges and dilemmas. Research used to accomplish these purposes is qualitative and is based on testimonies and writings of policymakers, journalists, and communication professionals, and on case studies of major

international events of the last decade. The approach is interdisciplinary and is based on joint application of concepts and theories from the fields of both communication and international relations. The article begins with a critical analysis of the CNN effect theory, it continues with the effects of real-time coverage, and ends with dilemmas created by these effects for all the participants in the policy process.

Driving Policy

The CNN effect theory resulted primarily from policymakers' reflections on the roles played by global television networks, particularly CNN, in major international conflicts of the post-Cold War era. These include coverage of the Chinese government crackdown on students' protest in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989; the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and war following Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait; the Russian coup attempt of August 1991; and the civil wars and humanitarian interventions in Northern Iraq (1991), Somalia (1992), Rwanda (1994), Bosnia (1992-1995), and Kosovo (1999).

The Theory's Origins

The testimony of principal policymakers on the factors that had the greatest impact on their decisions provides evidence on the effects of global television. Several major policymakers indeed spoke and wrote about these effects on foreign policymaking. In the early 1980s, Lloyd Cutler (1984), President Jimmy Carter's Legal Counsel, was surprised by "how much television news had intruded into both the timing and the substance of the policy decisions that an America president is required to make" (p. 223). Former Secretary of State James Baker III (1995) wrote that "the terrible tragedy of Tiananmen was a classic example of a powerful new phenomenon: the ability of the global communications revolution to drive policy" (p. 103). He added that since then "in Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Chechnya, among others, the real-time coverage of conflict by the electronic media has served to create a powerful new imperative for prompt action that was not present in less frenetic time."

Another former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, told the Senate: "Television's ability to bring graphic images of pain and outrage into our living rooms has heightened the pressure both for immediate engagement in areas of international crises and immediate disengagement when events don't go according to plan" (Neuman, 1996, pp. 14-15). Lower level foreign policy officials made even more assertive statements. A U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck (1996) wrote: "The media got us into Somalia and then got us out" (p. 174). Non-American officials have also expressed similar opinions. For example, former U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has complained "CNN is the sixteenth member of the Security Council" (Minear, Scott, & Weiss, 1996, p. 4), and former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd (1997, p. 11) blamed foreign correspondents covering the Bosnian crisis for advocating military intervention by being the founding members of the "something must be done" school.

Hurd and other Western leaders referred to reporters who were critical of Western inaction in humanitarian crises such as when CNN's Christiane Amanpour confronted and lectured President Bill Clinton in a live telecast of the program "Global Forum" from Sarajevo in May 1994: "*As a leader of the free world, as leader of the only superpower, why has it taken you, the United States, so long to articulate a policy on Bosnia? Why, in the absence of policy, have you allowed the U.S. and the West to be held hostage to those who do have a clear policy, the Bosnian Serbs? And do you not think the constant flip-flop of your administration on the issue of Bosnia sets a very dangerous precedent and would lead people such as Kim Il Sung or other strong people to take you less seriously than you would like to be taken"* (Ricchiardi, 1996, p. 25). The stunned Clinton responded "No, but speeches like that may make them take me less seriously than I'd like to be taken."

Statements made by senior officials and incidents such as Amanpour's lecture may imply loss of policy control to global television, as if leaders can no longer make decisions on the basis of interests but are also driven by emotional public opinion aroused by television coverage. Yet politicians and senior policymakers have offered diverse and often contradicting views on this claim. In a policy meeting, held on July 17, 1995, Clinton is quoted as saying, "We have a war by

CNN. Our position is unsustainable, it's killing the U.S. position of strength in the world" (Woodward, 1996, p. 261). According to Morris (1999), Clinton complained that "TV reporters are doing their damnedest to get me to enter a war" (p. 165). However, he only talked about media "pressure" to intervene militarily in Bosnia. Although he was sensitive to both horrible violence and to the media coverage of his policies, he successfully resisted the pressure to change his policy of non-intervention for several years.

Contrasting Views of the CNN Effect

Senior policymakers have provided a more complex view of the effects of global news coverage. Colin Powell who has accumulated a substantial record both in war and diplomacy has observed that "Live television coverage doesn't change the policy, but it does create the environment in which the policy is made" (McNulty, 1993, p. 80). Anthony Lake, a scholar and Clinton's first National Security Adviser, acknowledged that public pressure driven by televised images was increasingly a factor in decision-making on humanitarian crises, but added that other factors such as cost and feasibility were as important (Hoge, 1994, p. 139). Finally, when commenting on Canada's policy toward the 1996 refugee crisis in Eastern Zaire, the Canadian senior diplomat Brian Buckley (1998) wrote that the media were crucial in focusing international attention on the crisis, but "they did not determine the policy, the key decisions, or their implementation" (p. 38).

Diplomats and journalists have also debated the effects of global television on policymaking. One interesting exchange occurred in 1993 between the veteran diplomat George Kennan and CBS's reporter and anchor Dan Rather. On the day the U.S. Marines landed in Somalia, December 9, 1992, Kennan (1996, pp. 294-297) wrote in his personal diary that this was "a dreadful error of American policy" accepted by the public and the Congress because of television coverage. *"There can be no question that the reason for this acceptance lies primarily with the exposure of the Somalia situation by the American media, above all, television. The reaction would have been unthinkable without this exposure. The reaction was an emotional one, occasioned by the sight of the suffering of the starving people in question."*

Almost a year later, Kennan published this commentary in the *New York Times* (September 30, 1993, p. A25) eliciting a sharp denial from Dan Rather titled "Don't Blame TV for Getting Us Into Somalia" (October 14, 1993, p. A22). Rather cited humanitarian crises where, despite the coverage of atrocities, the U.S. didn't intervene and asserted: "Reporters sometimes feel strongly about the stories they cover, and some may wish for the power to direct public opinion and to guide America policy—but they don't have it." He added that television must provide the people with information with which they can form their own opinions. Kennan responded (October 24, 1993, 4/p. 14) however, that television didn't provide the information needed to make sound judgments on Somalia or any other international event: "Fleeting, disjointed, visual glimpses of reality, flickering on and off the screen, here today and gone tomorrow, are not the information on which sound judgments on complicated international problems are to be formed."[2]

The Scholarly Evidence

Scholarly and professional studies of the CNN effect present mixed, contradictory, and confusing results. Scholars and journalists focused primarily on the humanitarian interventions in Northern Iraq (Schorr, 1991; Shaw, 1996) and Somalia. Cohen (1994) wrote that in the 1990s television "has demonstrated its power to move governments. By focusing daily on the starving children in Somalia, a pictorial story tailor-made for television, TV mobilized the conscience of the nation's public institutions, compelling the government into a policy of intervention for humanitarian reasons" (pp. 9-10). But using careful content analysis and interviews with decision makers in Washington and Africa, Livingston and Eachus (1995) concluded that the U.S. decision to intervene militarily in Somalia "was the result of diplomatic and bureaucratic operations, **with news coverage coming in response to those decisions**" (p. 413, emphasis added). Similarly, Mermin (1999) claimed that "The case of U.S. intervention in Somalia, in sum, is not at heart evidence of the power of television to move governments; it is evidence of the power of governments to move television" (p. 136).

Other studies provide a more complex view of the CNN effect, in that they assess the influence of coverage in a broader context. The veteran journalist and

BBC World anchor Nik Gowing (1994) agrees CNN coverage has drawn attention to crises and may have evoked emotional public reactions, but based on interviews with policymakers in several countries, he concluded that they resisted pressure to act solely in response to television news reports. He noted that in 1991, the United States and Western governments refrained from intervention in the Bosnian crisis despite substantial news coverage of atrocities. In a later study (2000, pp. 211-212), he uses the reversal of U.S. policy toward the 1996 catastrophe in Burundi to demonstrate the opposite example: willingness to intervene despite the absence of television coverage. Strobel (1997) also used interviews with policymakers and also reached similar conclusions.

A valid scientific approach to the study of the CNN effect requires two interrelated comparative analyses: (1) an assessment of global television's impact on a specific foreign policy decision in comparison to the relative impact of other factors, (2) application of this procedure to several relevant case studies. Jakobsen (1996) employed a similar methodology and discovered that CNN coverage was an important factor because it placed the crises on the agenda; but still the decision to intervene "**was ultimately determined by the perceived chances of success"** (p. 212, emphasis added). In a more recent study (2000), he furthered argued that "interventions are unlikely to follow unless they can be conducted quickly with a low risk of casualties. Since this is rarely the case, media pressure on reluctant governments are most likely to result in minimalist policies aimed at defusing pressure for interventions on the ground" (p. 138). Robinson (2000) found a similar result in his study of the 1995 and 1999 Western interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo. In an earlier work (1999), he also shows that the CNN effect theory contradicts both Chomsky and Herman's (1988) "manufacturing consent theory" and Bennett's (1990) "press indexing theory," which argue that the media reflect and in general support the official policy of the establishment, particularly in defense and foreign affairs.

Various studies' findings essentially cast doubts about the popular notion of officials losing policy control to the media. The CNN effect theory has been defined very broadly, but to test it, this theory had to be operationalized in a very narrow way. When this is done, as has been demonstrated in several studies, it becomes

easier to disprove many of its claims and implications. This finding doesn't necessarily mean that the concept is always invalid. A narrower definition and research that combines communication theories with theories of international conflicts may yield more convincing results. Livingston (1997) examined what he called "variations of CNN effects" by applying agenda setting to a typology of military interventions, and this was a step in the right direction. Robinson (1999) proposes to resolve the contradiction between the CNN effect theory and the "manufacturing consent theory" by examining and applying to case studies two critical variables: policy certainty and framing. If uncertain policy and pro-intervention framing are found to be associated with intervention decisions, and the opposite with non-intervention then "theoretical support will be found for the claim that the media causes intervention" (p. 308).

The CNN effect has been exaggerated and it may occur, if it all, only in rare situations of extremely dramatic and persistent coverage, lack of leadership, and chaotic policymaking. Many references to this effect suffer from a fundamental confusion between "controlling" and "constraining" or "pressuring" policymakers. The two effects aren't identical. Only "controlling" matches the CNN theory, but evidence of "constraining" has been mostly used to validate it. Another problematic assumption confuses cause and effect relationship between coverage and policy. One should make a basic distinction between cases where a government wishes to intervene, and therefore not only does not object to media coverage of atrocities but actually initiates or encourages it, and cases when a government is reluctant to intervene and consequently resists media pressure to do so. Global television can't force policymakers to do what they intend to do anyway. Finally, Jakobsen (2000) relates how the entire focus on the CNN effect misses the point because it ignores the effects global television is having on two other important conflict phases: pre-violence and post-violence. Lack of coverage and attention characterize the media's attitude toward these phases of conflict and other significant aspects of international relations, yet scholars have devoted very little attention to the effects of this deficient coverage on policymaking.

Chasing Real –Time Coverage

While there isn't yet sufficient evidence to support the claim that global television is becoming a controlling actor in the formulation of policy toward international conflicts, it certainly affects many important dimensions of foreign policy and diplomacy. As such, it may be constraining rather than determining policy. By constraining this study means that while global news coverage may alter or even disrupt the routine policymaking process, primarily the work of the professional bureaucracy, and while leaders may have to reorder priorities, they don't feel forced to follow a particular policy called for by the media or implied by coverage.

Global television constrains the policy process primarily through the high speed of broadcasting and transmitting information. As noted by Van Dinh (1987, p. 32), the speed of diplomatic messages has in the 20th century gone from weeks to minutes. This difference is clearly demonstrated by the time American presidents had to officially respond to the construction and destruction of the Berlin Wall (McNulty, 1993, p. 67). In 1961, President Kennedy had the luxury of waiting eight days before making the first American official statement on the construction of the Wall. In 1989, President George Bush had less than eight hours to make a statement on the destruction of the Wall. In less than 30 years the time for policy response has dramatically shrunk. One should note however, that this condition is not always automatic. It depends on the circumstances of the challenge or the threat. Despite the dramatic coverage of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001, the media pressure was not powerful enough to require an immediate retaliation, and President George W. Bush took the time necessary to develop an adequate response.

Competing Sources of Information

In traditional diplomacy, ambassadors and state representatives dominated several important areas of diplomacy: representing their countries, communicating their

government's positions, negotiating and concluding agreements, gathering information about the countries to which they were posted, and recommending actions to policymakers back home. But the communication and information revolutions have substantially eroded the ambassadors' central position in all four areas. The 1992 U.S. presidential candidate Ross Perot made the following observation: "Embassies are relics of the days of sailing ships. At one time, when you had no world communication, your ambassador spoke for you in that country. But now, with instantaneous communication around the world, the ambassador is primarily in a social role" (Neuman, 1996, pp. 270-271). Michael O'Neill, former editor of the *New York Daily News* (1993) agrees: "thanks to the communications revolution and new technology, the old world of diplomacy is itself in ruins… And ambassadors become a threatened species, like snail darter fish" (pp. 177-179). Indeed, heads of state and ministers talk and negotiate directly, in secrecy or in public, with their counterparts. Their negotiations are conducted primarily through official and unofficial meetings and visits, but also via mass and interpersonal communication.

In addition, in many recent crises global television coverage has replaced ambassadors and experts as the source of critical information and evaluation on what is happening in the world. An American official acknowledged that "diplomatic communications just can't keep up with CNN" (Hoffman, 1991). Richard Haass, also complained that "he could see an event or speech live on CNN at 2:00 p.m. but he had to wait three hours or more before the CIA could deliver its own updated news and commentary to the NSC office" (McNulty, 1993, p. 73). In view of these gaps, no wonder that President Bush's press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, said that in many international crises "we virtually cut out the State Department and the desk officers ...Their reports are still important, but they often don't get here in time for the basic decisions to be made" (McNulty, 1993, p. 71). Bush himself admitted during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis: "I learn more from CNN than I do from the CIA" (Friedland, 1992, pp. 7-8).

Sometimes conventional diplomatic messages, regardless of their depth and sophistication, don't have the same effect on policymakers as do televised images

from the field. Hurd acknowledged that "when it comes to a distant but important conflict, even all the Foreign Office cables do not have the same impact as a couple of minutes of news video" (Hopkinson, 1993, p. 11). Fitzwater recalled that during the violence in Tiananmen Square they were getting reports and cables from the American Embassy in Beijing, "but they did not have the sting, the demand for a government response that the television pictures had" (Hoge, 1994, p. 140). Similarly, during the 1991 Russian coup attempt, Boris Yeltsin's phone messages to Washington didn't sufficiently impress Bush until the actual arrival of television broadcasts from Moscow showing Yeltsin's visible and viable resistance. Only then did the U.S. administration become convinced the resistance was serious, and proceeded to take actions to support Mikhail Gorbachev (Friedland, 1992, pp. 42-45; Donovan & Scherer, 1992, p. 317).

Tone of Reportage

The tone of television coverage, not only its contents, may challenge policymakers. Fitzwater (1995) observed that presidents must be very careful in making policy statements when television "sets the tone or mood of response for America. A president has two options: lead that response and set the tone…or reflect that tone in some symbolic way" (p. 264). If a president fails to recognize the television tone of events he is likely to be judged "as out of touch or out of his head." Fitzwater ignored a third option: changing or overriding the tone. He thought that Bush failed to recognize the tone of the reports on the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. This was one of the most important events of the Twentieth century, and television reporters expected Bush to immediately declare and celebrate a spectacular American and Western victory in the Cold War. He thought however, that he should make only a low key statement in order to avoid an embarrassment to Gorbachev and other Eastern European leaders (Bush & Scowcroft, 1998, pp. 149-150). The conditions in Berlin were fragile and Russia could have second thoughts and even reverse its policy on German unification. Consequently, Bush's approach looked uninspired and somewhat apathetic.

Representing television journalists in a pool organized to broadcast the president's message, CBS's Lesley Stahl (1999) thought "Bush with what looked like a frown, sat there so limply, he actually listed in his chair. And his voice, instead of expressing the excitement of the moment whined" (pp. 355-356). These observations were reflected in her report and Fitzwater concurred with her criticism. A decade later, Stahl explained in her book that "Bush's assuring the Soviets was the right approach" but she added that "surely there was a way to satisfy the soul without threatening Gorbachev. Reagan would have found it." This case exemplifies careful diplomacy and poor communication strategy, not the pressure created by real-time coverage. Given his strategic rationale, Bush would have most probably expressed the same sentiment even if he had much more time to think about the appropriate U.S. response. In this case, Bush and Fitzwater did not even attempt to override the tone set by television for the event. This case however, illustrates a challenge of which leaders must be aware and with which they must cope.

Diplomatic Maneuvers

Global television has also created new worldwide opportunities for propaganda, misinformation, and diplomatic manipulations (Gilboa, 2000). For example, leaders make what is described as a significant statement which is broadcast live on local or global television, hoping that what they say will in turn assume a dynamic of its own and undermine and confuse the plans of the rival side. Two examples from American-Iraqi confrontations illustrate this challenge. During the Gulf war, just before the beginning of the ground assault, Saddam Hussein made a statement designed to create the impression that he was ready to accept the allied conditions to end the war. Television anchors and reporters around the world quickly suggested that the war might be over, and leaders of U.S. allies jammed the White House switchboard to learn what the U.S. intended to do (McNulty, 1993, pp. 70-71).

Bush thought Hussein's peace plan was false but was worried that the Iraqi leader might snatch "a victory from the jaws of certain defeat" (Bush & Scowcroft, 1998, pp. 474-475). He and Baker felt they had less than 30 minutes to dismiss the Iraqi deal or risk the disintegration of the coalition fighting Hussein (Rosenstiel, 1994, p.

28). According to McNulty (1993) Bush told the officials he assembled to deal with this challenge: "We've got to get on the air fast to answer all these people who either don't know what to do or want us to do something we don't want to do" (pp. 70-71). Bush wanted to inform all 26 members of the international coalition confronting Iraq of the White House's position. Fitzwater said that the quickest and most effective way for transmitting this evaluation was CNN, because "all countries in the world had it and were watching it on a real-time basis" (Wriston, 1997, p. 174). In this particular case, both the challenge and the response were played on global television, but Bush won the game. He correctly identified the challenge and effectively neutralized it.

In November 1998, Saddam Hussein was much more successful in employing a similar tactic. In response to his defiance of UN resolutions on inspection and dismantling of weapons of mass destruction, Clinton authorized a military attack on Iraq. U.S. planes were already in the air when an Iraqi official told CNN that his government will comply with the U.S. and the U.N. demands and that an official commitment to that effect is being faxed to the U.N. (Schorr, 1998, p. 11; Feist, 2001, pp. 715-716). U.S. officials monitoring CNN informed Clinton about the broadcast and he immediately issued an order to abort the mission. Despite the renewed Iraqi commitment, Hussein continued to ignore the U.N. inspection resolutions and the U.S. demands that he comply with them.

Leaders have always used the press, particularly the "elite newspapers," to obtain information and insights on other countries and world affairs. But global television has become a much more immediate, dramatic and powerful source. The faster pace of diplomatic exchanges conducted on global television has altered decision-making processes, particularly in acute crisis situations. Valuable information, observations and suggestions from overseas diplomatic and intelligence sources may no longer arrive in time to have the desired influence on decisions, and when information does arrive in time, it has to compete with dramatic televised images and ongoing reportage of crises and foreign policy issues. Policymakers have also to take into consideration the tone of coverage, and deal with attempts of foreign leaders to undermine their policies and plans through messages delivered on global television,

primarily via the "breaking news" format which even increases the pressure for an immediate response.

Facing Dilemmas

The faster speed of diplomatic exchanges on global television presents major dilemmas to all the main participating actors in the foreign policy process: political leaders, experts, diplomats, editors, and journalists. Beschloss (1993) argued that this speed may force hurried responses based on intuition rather than on careful extensive policy deliberation, and this may lead to dangerous policy mistakes. He asked whether under the pressure of global television Kennedy would have had the time to carefully consider options to resolve the highly inflammable Cuban missile crisis. Kennedy had 13 days to make decisions and to negotiate an acceptable agreement with the Soviets to end the crisis. The veteran journalist Daniel Schorr (1998) also worries about the time pressure factor: "Think about the communication age we live in and the way nail-biting officials must make fateful decisions without time to think. And, if you are like me, you will worry a little bit when powerful people make snap decisions, trying to keep up with the information curve" (p. 11).

Time and Official Response

It is difficult to clearly correlate good decisions with the length of time available for policymaking. Great leaders may make the right decision fast and others may make wrong decisions even when they have weeks to deliberate all their options. It is logical to assume however, that in most cases, the more the time a leader has for collecting information, consultation and thinking, the greater is his/her chance to avoid major mistakes. Yet the observations made by Beschloss and Schorr point to a difficult dilemma political leaders often face: if they respond immediately without taking the time to carefully consider policy options, they may make a mistake; but if they insist they need more time to think, or have no comment for the time being, they create the impression, both at home and abroad of confusion or of losing control over events. Leaders often tend to resolve this dilemma by providing some response rather than asking for additional time to deliberate a decision.

Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger acknowledged that "The public hears of an event now in real time, before the State Department has had time to think about it. Consequently, we find ourselves reacting before we've had time to think" (Pearce, 1995, p. 18). Lloyd Cutler (1984) explained why heads of state feel pressured to respond quickly even before they are ready. If a president doesn't respond quickly to a crisis, the networks may report that his "advisers are divided, that the president cannot make up his mind, or that while the president hesitates, his political opponents know exactly what to do" (p. 224). Rep. Lee Hamilton also told *Time* magazine (April 25, 1994, p. 14) that real-time television coverage puts leaders on the spot before they are ready to respond: "Policymakers are forced to react instantaneously. If you don't respond, it appears that you are ducking your responsibilities."

The problem is that a statement on television becomes a commitment to a policy that might be very difficult to reverse or even change, should a leader decide after careful consideration that this is what needs to be done. Moreover, any policy statement on global networks must take into consideration audience multiplicity. Before the global communication revolution, a leader could have used local media to send one message to his people and foreign media to send a different message to other peoples. Today this distinction has disappeared and a policy statement is reaching, at the same time, both local and foreign audiences, including enemies and allies. Sometimes, this requires a balancing act that in turn may take considerable time to articulate.

Creating High Expectations

The video clip pace of global news coverage may also create high expectations for instant results both in warfare and diplomacy. These and other international processes are highly complex and take time to complete. Public expectations for instant results are dangerous because failure to achieve them may result in huge disappointments. Powell (1995) was very concerned about the reports of CNN's Wolf Blitzer from the Pentagon immediately after the beginning of the Gulf War because "it seems as if all that remained was to organize the victory parade" (p.

508). Powell asked the Pentagon's spokesperson to tell Blitzer that "This is the beginning of a war, not the end of ball game." Media events that are broadcast globally, such as the signing of the Israel-PLO agreement in 1993 at the White House lawns, create high expectations for rapid peacemaking processes and reconciliation that cannot be realized, thus creating disillusionment and frustration (Gilboa, 2002, pp. 206-207).

The pressure global television applies on policymakers to "do something," particularly in severe humanitarian crises, may challenge policymakers beyond the specific case in question. Morris (1999) argues that "It is on foreign policy stage that we see most clearly the strengths and shortcomings of our presidents and other elected officials" (p. 163). Occasionally, failing to act in the face of horrific television pictures "quickly gives a president a reputation for weakness, ineffectuality, and dithering." Clinton faced this threat when confronted by television coverage of the war in Bosnia, but was willing to take the risk, at least for several years, mainly because he felt that the American public wouldn't support intervention in this crisis. However, Bush's perceived weakness in 1989 was a major factor in his decision to invade Panama (Gilboa, 1999).

Fighting Impulsiveness: Excluding Experts

The foreign affairs bureaucracy is facing another dilemma: how to compete effectively with real-time information provided on the screen without compromising professional standards of analysis and recommendations. If foreign policy experts, military and intelligence officers, and diplomats make a fast analysis based on incomplete information and severe time pressure, they might make bad policy recommendations. Conversely, if they take the necessary time to carefully verify and integrate information and ideas from a variety of sources, and produce in-depth reliable reports and recommendations, these may be irrelevant if policymakers have to make immediate decisions in response to challenges and pressure emanating from coverage on global television.

Diplomats stationed abroad cannot and shouldn't compete with global television for information on unfolding events. They obviously wouldn't serve any purpose if

they simply digest and transmit to their foreign ministries and national security organs information they see on television or read in newspapers. Hurd (1997) explains that diplomacy today is still very important because it is "needed to provide not facts and figures, but the relationship between those facts and figures, together with insights into the likely behavior of those who take the resulting decisions" (p. 185). No matter how much media coverage of international affairs, particularly television coverage, is solid and extensive, it is still confined to the more dramatic occurrences and to sound bites. "Television," wrote Gergen (1991), "is an instrument of simplicity in a world of complexity. In a report of 80 seconds—150 words at most—a television reporter cannot provide context or background" (p. 50). Diplomats are much better equipped than reporters to use significant personal contacts to fill in the wide gaps in the context of events left by global news coverage.

Standards of Journalism

The global communication revolution also presents professional and ethical dilemmas to editors and reporters, even to the most experienced ones. Reporters are expected not only to report what they see and hear but also to understand and explain events to audiences around the world, albeit in a manner consistent with the time constraints of television. Due to technological advances it is possible today to carry in a few suitcases all the equipment needed to broadcast, and it takes only minutes to prepare for live reporting. Yet fast reporting may be incomplete at best and very inaccurate at worst (Seib, 2002, p. 13). Global news editors apply pressure on correspondents to file reports as soon they arrive in a relevant location. Often, though, while reporters are able to transmit pictures, they may not know the context and meaning of events, and don't have the time to absorb, reflect and explain what they see. This is especially difficult for non-resident reporters, who usually are less familiar with the specific background of an event in a foreign place. However, due to budget cuts in foreign bureaus and news production, increasingly such reporters are dispatched to cover foreign affairs. Consequently, their reports may be incomplete, distorted, and even misleading. In extreme cases, leaders who use these reports as a significant information source, may adopt wrong policies.

Editors face an additional dilemma stemming from the emerging new highly accessible and affordable communication technologies, which allow almost anybody to videotape events. CNN receives footage from local stations as a part of exchange deals, so the origins and biases of a tape can be unclear. In addition, the rise of networks such as the Middle Eastern Al-Jazeera has created a new pool of questionable sources and footage. Thus, editors receive an enormous outpouring of information coming from outside their normal and regular channels and sources. Gowing (2000, p. 217) called this new phenomenon "the supermarket of war videos" but the problem isn't confined to war coverage. Editors are tempted to use these sources due to the competition and constant pressure to adequately feed the 24-hour news cycle. The problem is how to select under pressure relevant materials, and the dilemma is whether to broadcast pictures that editors may not even know when, where, and how they were videotaped. NBC's Tom Wolzien said he was worried about overseas video because "by the time the tape gets on the air, nobody has the foggiest idea who made it or whether the pictures were staged" (Sanit, 1992, p. 17). But Rosenstiel (1994) argues that the consequences of this practice are actually far more severe: "The networks' loss of control over their pictures did more than make life tough: it lessened journalistic standards" (p. 30). Thus, both policymakers and consumers must take these limitations into account.

The pressure of real-time all news channels may also confuse "a reporter's personal opinions and his relying of facts" (Gowing, 2000, pp. 219-220). This confusion becomes more problematic in coverage of severe cases of widespread violence directed primarily at civilians. Several correspondents covering the Bosnia war crossed the professional lines, supported the Muslims, and vigoursely advocated military intervention against the Serbs. The availability of all news global channels allowed them to mount a media campaign against one party to the conflict. Prominent journalists such as Christiane Amanpour (1996), Martin Bell (1997), and Ed Vulliamy (1999) strongly defended their one-sided coverage of the war. Bell called his approach "journalism of attachment," and Vulliamy argued that "in the examples of Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and elsewhere, the neutrality adopted by diplomats and the media is both dangerous and reprehensible. By remaining neutral,

we reward the bullies of history… [and] create a mere intermission before the next round of atrocities. There are times when we as reporters have to cross the line…" (p. 604).

News organizations, editors, and reporters often ignore this approach because it may question the standard media claim for fair, balanced and objective coverage. The Bosnia coverage however, inspired a debate among journalists. David Binder of the *New York Times* called the anti-neutrality argument "a garbage argument" and insisted that "our job is to report from all sides, not to play favorites" (Ricchiardi, 1996, p. 27). Gowing added (2000, pp. 221-222) that the attitude of Amanpour and her colleagues was neatly exploited by Bosnian ministers who "usually enjoyed a free ride, their increasingly exaggerated claims accepted as fact by callow interviewers and anchors in distant studios who didn't have he knowledge or background briefings to know better." The outcome was a distorted and highly inaccurate coverage, including for example, the famous Sarajevo market massacre of February 5, 1994, which was later revealed as the result of a mortar fired by the Bosnian forces on their own people.

Contrary to popular views the global communication revolution has challenged not only political leaders but also all the participants in the policy process. The participants face difficult dilemmas, which are not always easily recognized, let alone dealt with. The effects of this change on journalists and editors haven't been discussed in professional circles as much as the effects on policymakers, yet such a discussion is vital for any understanding of the roles global television plays in foreign policymaking.

Conclusions

Policymaking in defense and foreign affairs is highly complex and difficult. This study shows that the rise and the expansion of global television news coverage have made it even more complex. While the most intriguing theory, the CNN effect theory, has not been sufficiently validated, global television is increasingly becoming a source of rapid real-time information for policymakers; has accelerated the pace of diplomatic communication; and focused world attention on crises in

places such as Bosnia, Somalia, and Kosovo. The fast speed of global television has applied pressure on policymakers and foreign policy experts to respond even faster to world events, while also allowing them to send significant messages that, in turn, have affected the outcomes of these events. The 24 hour all news channels and their fast broadcasting pace are also creating new challenging working conditions for journalists and reporters. Thus, the effects of global television on policymaking are much more complex and subtle than what is usually associated with the CNN effect.

The popularity of the CNN effect theory and the attention it has received in all circles, including the policymaking and the media communities, and its consequences for both policymaking and research, deserve a separate comprehensive study. It is here sufficient to suggest that this approach to the influence of global television represents an interesting case study in terminology and theory development. The concept was initially suggested by politicians and officials haunted by the Vietnam media myth, the confusion of the post Cold-War era, and the communication revolution. Despite evidence to the contrary, many leaders still believe that critical television coverage caused the American defeat in Vietnam. Since then, many have viewed the media as an adversary to government policies in several areas, including humanitarian intervention and international negotiation. This background helps to understand why global television has been perceived as having a power to determine foreign policy, primarily in severe crisis situations, and why policymakers feel they need to neutralize the media before they implement significant foreign policy decisions (Gilboa, 1998).

This study demonstrates that global television affects the nuts and bolts of policymaking, and has created challenges and dilemmas for all the participants in the policy process. Political leaders face the following challenges and dilemmas: (1) how to avoid an immediate policy response to an unfolding event without being exposed as a weak leader who is confused and doesn't know how to handle a situation. (2) When responding, how to refrain from making a commitment to policy that might have to be reversed or changed. (3) How to include different appeals to domestic and foreign audiences in a single message. (4) How to flow with video clip pace without creating too high expectations for too rapid results; and finally (5) how

to maintain policy that is at odds with prevailing television tone, without alienating reporters and audiences. The professional foreign affairs bureaucracy face these dilemmas: (1) How to write and provide solid and well founded information, evaluation, and recommendation for policy and still submit reports in time to be considered by leaders; and (2) how to effectively compete with video images that may be at odds with preferred policy.

Reporters face these challenges and dilemmas: (1) how to accurately report from any location and provide sufficient context and analysis under tremendous time pressure and limited knowledge on the events and processes covered. (2) How to report fairly on an international conflict when you believe one side is clearly the aggressor and the other is a victim; and (3) if reporters feel the need to take a side, how can they resist manipulations by the leaders of the party they support. Editors face these dilemmas: (1) How to avoid pressuring reporters sent overseas to file reports before they are ready, and still satisfy the everlasting hunger for real-time fresh and timely pictures. (2) How to select visuals from a large menu, including some from unknown sources, while still maintaining high professional standards; and (3) how to balance between one-sided reporting from journalists who believe they can't be neutral in severe cases of violence, with the requirements of objectivity and fairness. There aren't any easy solutions to all these dilemmas, but the first task is to acknowledge that they exist and have significant effects.

This study suggests that all the participants in the foreign policy process haven't yet sufficiently adapted to the new realities of global television coverage. Foreign policy experts, intelligence officers, and diplomats have lost several of their traditional functions to the journalists who are assuming some of these roles, and to spokespersons and communication experts, increasingly influential in inner governmental circles. Successful coping with the challenges of global communication and efficient utilization of new and innovative media technologies require two sets of reforms in policymaking: first, in the training of leaders, high level policymakers, and diplomats; second in the planning and implementation of policies. Leaders must be prepared to handle the rapid pace of global communication and to avoid serious policy mistakes deriving from global

television's demands for fast and effective responses, particularly in crisis situations. Thus, in addition to traditional and conventional strategic and diplomatic considerations, sophisticated policymaking in defense and foreign affairs today requires both sensitive understanding of the global media challenges and an efficient communication strategy for dealing with them. One of the most important principles of successful leadership and governance is the talent and ability to adjust to changing circumstances. Leaders and organizations are now more aware of the challenges of global television but need to address them more effectively.

This study also shows that in many international events reporters function as important participants and not only as observers. This places a heavier responsibility on journalists to report more accurately on what they see and hear. There isn't sufficient discussion of the global coverage effects within the media professional community. Writings by television journalists such as Nik Gowing and Dan Rather are still scarce. Reforms in the training and conduct of both reporters and editors are required as well as constant close monitoring of media performance. Due to the rapidly changing nature of both global communication and international relations, it is probable that the roles and effects of global television will increase as will their complexity and challenge. Policymakers and journalists will have to make a greater effort to adjust to the new trends.

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Notes

[1] This definition represents a revised version of a formulation suggested by Feist (2001, p. 713). For other similar definitions see Jakobsen (2000, p. 132), and Seib (2002, p. 27).

[2] Dan Rather continued the debate on this issue in writings (1994, pp. 229-250) and speeches (1995).