CHAPTER 8

AN EXPLORATORY MODEL OF MEDIA-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL CRISES: U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN BOSNIA 1992–1995

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A. INTRODUCTION

Several studies have looked into the relationship between media and government, but there is no consensus as to the nature of such a relationship (Robinson, 2000; Wood & Peake, 1998; Bennett, 1997; Mowlana, 1996; Reese, 1991; Entman, 1991; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). However, even those who argue that the media do not have overwhelming influence, still agree that it is not insignificant. The issue has become even more salient in the contemporary period with the advent of advanced mass communication technologies along with major changes in the arena of international relations.

Unfortunately, regarding the connection between foreign policymaking and the mass media, a large lacuna exists. More research has been undertaken dealing specifically with war and the mass media, but less is available regarding the role of the mass media in foreign policy decision making during *peacetime*. Even more specifically, almost nothing exists on the topic of foreign policy *crisis management* and the media—despite the large number of such IR phenomena in the contemporary era (Malek, 1996).

Thus, the present study is a pioneering work that will offer a comprehensive model connecting the media's role and government foreign policy in an IR crisis.* It will apply a familiar theory from the field of IR (division of crisis phases) to the developing discipline of mass communication research, in order to achieve a better understanding of the media's different ways of functioning in a time of international crisis. The model is applied to an international crisis in which we found significant links between crisis phase and press positions/arguments, as

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well as types of argument put forth by the government. The study concludes with a discussion of the results and suggestions for future research.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE MODEL'S COMPONENTS

1. Media—Functions and Roles

Over the years, the question of media roles has elicited an outpouring of research (Lasswell, 1948; Siebert *et al.*, 1956; Lee, 1977; Wright, 1985; McQuail, 1992; Hindell, 1995). There are several specific questions related to the overall issue of general journalistic coverage (Wolfsfeld, 1993) that one can apply to the foreign policy domain. First, in which circumstances and conditions do the media act independently in covering political conflict? Second, is there a tendency on the media's part to take a stand or is balanced neutrality the norm (Wolfsfeld, 1997)? Third, if the media do take sides, *which arguments* -economic, security/world-order, domestic politics, or humanitarian- -tend to be put forward by the columnists?

This leads to the question of *framing*, whereby the journalists "package" the information in such a way as to present a specific reality that can influence public opinion (Wolfsfeld, 1997; Entman, 1991; Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Gamson & Herzog, 1999; Gitlin, 1977; Tuchman, 1978). Such packaging usually involves a broad range of subjects, all of whom are presented from the same *weltanschauung*, thereby limiting the full panoply of public discourse. As a result of such framing, not only is the issue presented in a "pre-set" fashion, familiar to the public and therefore "understandable" (Eliders & Luter, 2000; Gamson & Herzog, 1999; Durham, 1998; Norris, 1997), but the very *meaning* of the news is changed (Schefele, 1999; Kuypers, 1997; Putnam *et al.*, 1996; Neuman, *et al.*, 1992; Entman, 1991). Fourth and finally, how do the media "create" (through selection) and produce the news (Wolfsfeld, 1993)? Does drama take precedence over substance, thereby perhaps focusing more on easily reportable stories rather than complex ones, exciting items instead of more mundane issues?

These questions lead ineluctably to the complex issue of media influence on the political actors. Here one can discern three broad functions.

(1) Independence/Major Influence: Several analysts believe that the media are a major factor in the foreign policy decision-making process. This approach is supported by the journalists involved and is found mostly among media scholars with a "practical" bent, i.e., those focusing on the mass media and less on IR and political science (Malek & Wiegand, 1996). To be sure, one must distinguish between two aspects here: media independence and media influence (Wolfsfeld, 1997). The two do not necessarily go together, so that showing journalistic independence still demands proof of significant influence on the behavior of the actors or the conflict's evolution (Wolfsfeld,

1993). A possible lesser (albeit still "strong") type of direct influence is the media's ability to determine the public agenda (Mowlana, 1996). By playing up—or down —events, the media can influence the amount of pressure that policy makers feel to respond to foreign threats.

(2) Indirect (Passive) Influence: Other scholars view the media as pawns in the political process, manipulated by the political leadership for its own purposes. Malek and Wiegand (1996) use the term "passive" to describe this media function; by so doing they do not mean to suggest that the media have influence but rather that such influence is not a product of the media's own initiative but rather as a powerful tool in the hands of others (Mowlana, 1996).

(3) Lack of Influence/Neutrality: This approach takes a middle position, albeit with a wide range of views among the scholars. The central argument here is that neither the politicians nor the media are manipulative of each other or public opinion (Malek & Wiegand, 1996)—in short, the media's coverage of foreign policy crises does not influence the decision makers nor public opinion (Wolfsfeld, 1993).

Within these disparate approaches one can delineate four different types of media roles connected to foreign policymaking as well as to public opinion formation. First, the media as observer standing apart from the conflict; second, as commentator, verbally/textually responding to the actor's moves; third, as actor, playing a more active role as one of the conflict's "players"; finally, as catalyst of change, i.e., playing a central and highly influential role. However, these roles have not been fleshed out in the research literature and there is a need for further theorizing and empirical testing (Rivenburgh, 1996) —especially regarding times of crisis. The reason for this is that heretofore the analysis of the media's role has been overly general, not taking into account the phases of foreign crises or the mutability of the media's role depending on circumstances in the field.

The need for more in-depth categorization and analysis of media/government relations has become especially pronounced over the past two decades with the huge expansion of the electronic media and the increased amounts of information flowing from the field. Another factor behind the increased importance of the mass media is related to the satiated and highly educated democratic public at large that no longer can be easily railroaded into supporting war. Thus, democratic governments are more dependent on public opinion (Mueller, 1994; Powlick, 1995), which itself is (at least) partly dependent on its major source of information—the mass media (Graber, 1984; Graber, 1996).

Consequently, several experts recommend pursuing different research strategies. The present study attempts to integrate most of the research questions into an exploratory model: examining foreign policy and newspaper framework; dealing with national interests in international event coverage; relating to the differ-

ent types of media functions; all of this in addition to the central goal of assessing the extent to which the press responds differently to government foreign policy decision-making and overseas crisis management.

The model is applied to an international crisis, for as noted earlier, very little work has been done on press-government relations during such a politically stressful period. It is precisely during such a period that the ability of the media to influence public opinion, highly dependent on it as a main source for information, is the greatest (Powlick & Kats, 1998; Paletz & Entman, 1991).

2. Media—Government Relations

Democratic regimes have a tendency to bask in the myth of a free press, but even in "open societies" the media serve the polity's control apparatus, consciously or not. On the one hand, most media organizations expect their representatives to cover government actions (Grossman & Kumar, 1981), in one way or another (see above). On the other hand, the universal temptation exists for governments to manipulate and control the media—especially true during crisis periods.

The amount and type of governmental supervision and control over the media depend in large part on the political/mass communications philosophy of each country at distinct points in time. Overall, the research literature has centered on five main, general, politico-philosophical approaches (Siebert *et al.*, 1956; McQuail, 1992). We shall focus here on the two that are relevant to the model:[1]

(A) In the *libertarian* philosophy of government/press relations, also called the Free Press theory (a normative approach), the mass media best serve the public as an aggressive, independent, adversarial "watchdog" on government actions. This approach assumes a high level of competition between the media themselves, tending to decrease editorial supervision of journalistic practice as well as leading to denial of "public education" as a prominent journalistic role (Serfaty, 1991).

(B) While the media might be formally and legally free, politico-cultural constraints can render its output highly supportive of the government. This approach can best be categorized as *mobilization* (an empirical approach), whereby the media view their task more in terms of supporting the authorities and reinforcing the national consensus. This is most widely found among developing nations (even democratic ones, e.g., Israel during its first few decades), but it is also not unusual to see such "self-mobilized journalism"

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[1] The three other approaches are: Social-Responsibility (located between the abovementioned two), Authoritarian and the Totalitarian. For elaboration, *see* Siebert *et al.* (1956), Hutchins (1947) and McQuail (1992).

during times of crisis among otherwise libertarian-minded media in a "rally-round-the-flag" mentality (however temporary). Indeed, previous studies have found that most domestic mass media support national foreign policy aims and goals, especially when the national interest is threatened, thereby acting as a source of "national integration" (Russet, 1990), i.e., a unifying force behind government decisions and actions (Holsti, 1996; Rivenburgh, 1996). One must note, however, that it is hard to find in the literature a clear definition of what we here call the "self-mobilized media." Moreover, it is not always clear *for whom* the media are mobilized: the constitutional regime, state, government, specific interest groups (even if this entails the majority against a minority, a la Japanese concentration camps on the West Coast during World War II)? It seems that the two main roles of the press within this approach are, on the one hand, "rally-round-the-flag," i.e., socio-national consensus-building, and on the other, "government support" for policies and decisions in the conduct of the crisis.
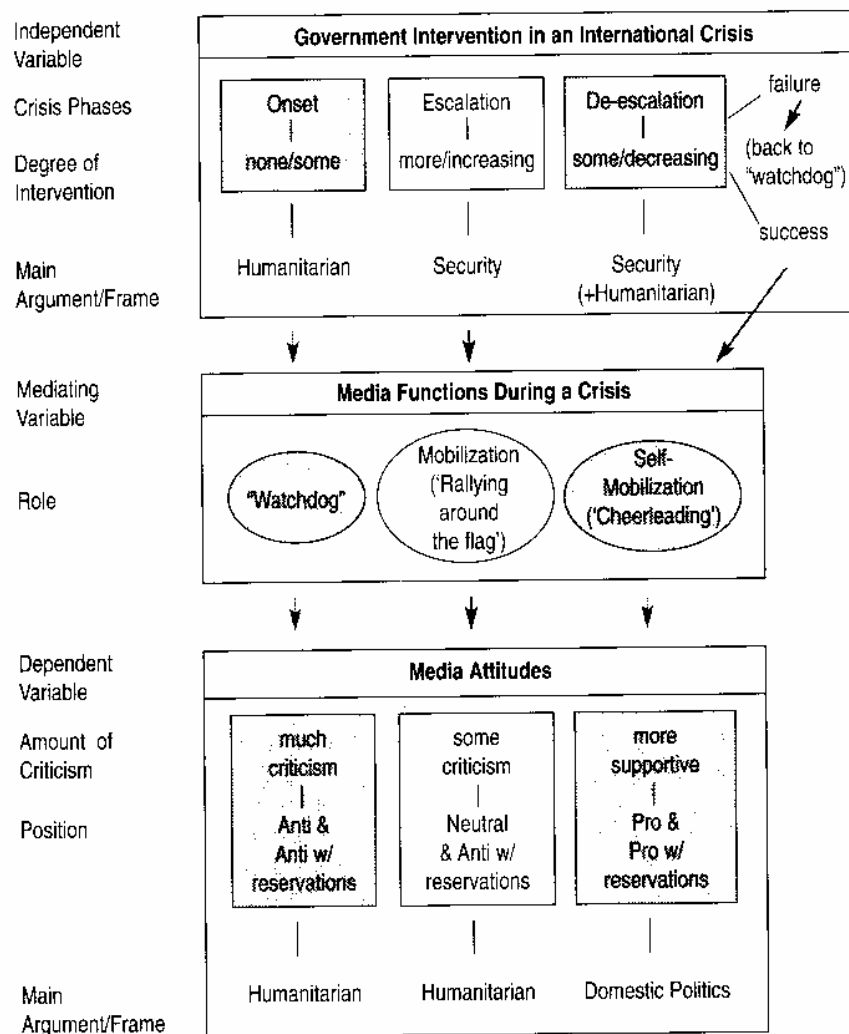
3. Government—International Crises

In the research literature, one can find definitions of "international crisis" at various levels: macro-objective and micro-subjective. In general, one can posit that from a (macro) systems perspective a crisis entails an event constituting a drastic change that influences and destabilizes the international system (Young, 1968). From a (micro) psychological perspective, we accept Brecher's definition of crisis as a situation perceived by policymakers as threatening their values and interests, leaving them little time to respond, and involving a high probability of violence (Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1989).

The present study also follows Brecher's (1993) categorization of four international crisis phases:

(1) *Onset*, the pre-crisis period typified by change in the intensity of disruption between two or more states and of threat perception by at least one of them;

(2) *Escalation*, in which perceptions of time pressure and heightened war likelihood are added to more acute threat perception. On the micro-level, increased time pressure adds to the feeling of maximal threat;

(3) *De-escalation*, characterized by reduction in hostile interactions leading to accommodation and crisis termination; and

(4) *Impact*, occurring in the post-crisis period, which includes the consequences of a crisis. We omitted this phase from the model because our study focuses on the roles of the media and government *during* a crisis and not afterwards.

C. EXPLORATORY MODEL OF MEDIA-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL CRISES

Independent Variable	**Government Intervention in an International Crisis**			
Crisis Phases	**Onset**	**Escalation**	**De-escalation**	failure
Degree of Intervention	none/some	more/increasing	some/decreasing	(back to "watchdog")
				success
Main Argument/Frame	Humanitarian	Security	Security (+Humanitarian)	

Mediating Variable	**Media Functions During a Crisis**		
Role	"Watchdog"	Mobilization ('Rallying around the flag')	Self-Mobilization ('Cheerleading')

Dependent Variable	**Media Attitudes**		
Amount of Criticism	much criticism	some criticism	more supportive
Position	Anti & Anti w/ reservations	Neutral & Anti w/ reservations	Pro & Pro w/ reservations
Main Argument/Frame	Humanitarian	Humanitarian	Domestic Politics

In the model, government interventionist foreign policy is the independent variable while media attitudes constitute the dependent variable, itself mediated by the media's conception of its functional role.

The model illustrates that each particular phase (marked in a different shade) has its own media function. In the Onset phase the media function primarily as a barking "watchdog," opposed to the government's natural inclination to do what is in its own best political (not necessarily *national*) interest. In the Escalation phase the media begin to play a "mobilization" role, rallying the public around the flag and in support of government policy. The third phase, De-escalation, that terminates the crisis, may end in failure or success. In the case of failure, the media return to their watchdog function. In the case of success or interpreted success, the media move toward a role that can best be described as "cheerleading." One can view this as a matter of "self-mobilization" to aid the authorities in garnering political support or as jumping on-board a successful campaign (one might even argue that the media are emotionally "swept away" by government success).

However, it is not enough just to match a function with a crisis phase; we also need to know what are the basic media attitudes (in each phase) regarding each function. To do that, we have distinguished among five types of argumentation (frames), and also compared them with governmental arguments for each crisis phase. As can be seen at the bottom of the model's first square, in the first crisis phase the media and the government both employ humanitarian arguments, but the media criticize the government's line of reasoning (in favor of self-restraint). In the second phase, the media are still using primarily humanitarian arguments, but the specific positions are more neutral. The government, however, prefers security justifications. In the third phase, the media become more supportive of governmental policy and therefore the media's arguments deal mostly with domestic political ramifications. In this phase, the government uses a combination of security and humanitarian arguments.

After presenting the various parts of this integrative model, the results are applied to the Bosnian case (1992–1995). The Bosnian crisis was a product of the ongoing Yugoslavian conflict that turned into a crisis and then escalated into outright war (Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1997). This crisis was chosen because it was one of the first *extended* and *complex* crises that American foreign policy makers had to deal with since the demise of the Soviet Union (Woodward, 1995). As the world's sole superpower since the breakup of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s, the United States has had difficulty defining its international interests and central role in the new international (dis)order (Hass, 1999). The Bosnian case study can serve as an exemplar for understanding foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. One should note that the Bosnian crisis was largely ethnic in character—precisely the type of conflict on the increase in the post-Cold War era— with direct influence on the degree of superpower intervention as well as on media coverage.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

The period under study was June 1991 until November 1995. We first mapped all the significant events of the crisis (Reuters, 1995; Keesing's 1992–1994)—105 specific dates. Then we selected only those in which the United States was mentioned (initiating or reacting)—23 main events that formed the core sample of the study. In order to examine the positions and compare the arguments of the media and the government, we performed a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of commentary and editorial articles published in

two elite newspapers: the *New York Times* (hereafter, *NYT*) and the *Washington Post* (*WP*). The press was chosen because it constituted one of the most influential institutions in society (Vincent, 2000), which most of the public still depends on as a main source of information (Taylor, 2000). These specific newspapers were selected because they are incontestably the main elite press sources for America's foreign policy decision makers (Denham, 1997; Malek, 1996; Merrill, 1995). Both have extensive resources for overseas information gathering and analysis, and are noted for their independence and critical stands on the issues (Van Belle, 2000; Denham, 1997; Grosswiler, 1996; Negrine, 1989; Karetzky, 1986; Ferre, 1980; Weiss, 1974). Editorial and commentary articles were chosen because they present to the public the newspaper's opinion in overt fashion (Mermin, 1999; Denham, 1997; Peh & Melkote, 1991), thus constituting the readership's main source of foreign policymaking information (Mowlana, 1996). Moreover, the decision makers tend to view issues dealt with on these pages as being important and so at least necessitating an official response (Grosswiller, 1996).

The same type of analysis was carried out for all Presidential Documents (hereafter PD) and State Department press releases (hereafter SD), together providing a uniform documented source of official foreign policy statements by the President and other decision makers (Malek, 1996). All the publications (press and government) were examined during the 23 specific periods under scrutiny—an entire week before and after each main event, in order to ensure that all relevant material would be included.[2] Thirty-nine (39) such items were identified in *NYT* and 60 in *WP*, in addition to 61 SD releases and 37 PD—overall 197 items: 99 of the press and 98 of the government.

The study included several scales and categories, of which two are directly relevant to the model: (1) the main position taken in the article (pro, pro with reservations, neutral, anti with reservations, anti); and (2) the type of argument/frame (security and world order, economic, humanitarian, domestic politics, or combination of these).[3] These scales were designed to enable intra-government comparison (between PD and SD), intra-press comparison (*NYT and WP*), and government/press comparisons as a whole. They were further divided into the first three central crises phases as delineated earlier (Brecher, 1993). The "Onset" phase included four dates, from April 6, 1992, to February 1, 1993, during which the U.S. did not offer to intervene diplomatically or militarily. The "Escalation" phase included 16 dates from February 10, 1993 (when the U.S. offered to lend its diplomatic services for finding a peaceful solution to the Bosnian crisis) until
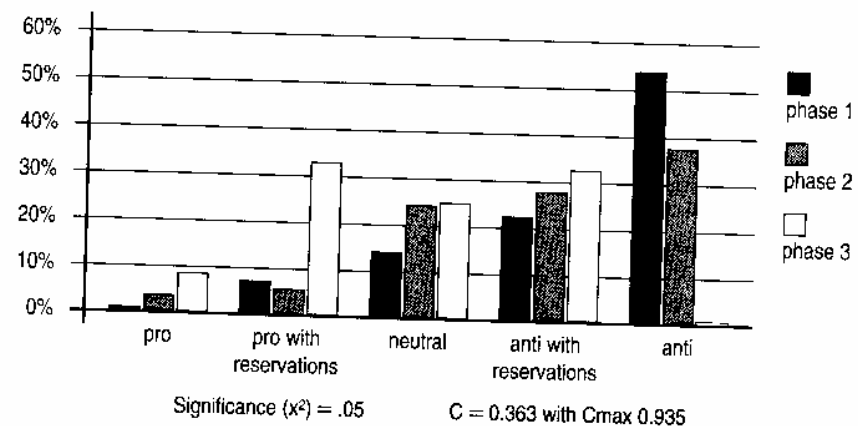
June 1994. The third phase ("De-escalation") included three dates running from October 5, 1995, until Nov. 21, 1995 (Dayton Agreement).

E. FINDINGS

While the study was based on two newspapers and two government institutions, we found (unsurprisingly) that a high Pearson correlation exists (p = 0.043; r = 42.5 percent) between the two newspapers' coverage, and an even higher correlation was found between the SD and PD (p = 0.007; r = 54.7 percent). In other words, as the *NYT* reports increased/decreased so did those of the *WP*; the same held true for the White House and the State Department's press releases. As a result, when making comparisons, we will henceforth refer to them as two 'groups' and not as individual actors.

As we see from Graph #1, we found a high (0.363) and significant (p = .05) association between the press's position and the crises phases, as illustrated in the model. From Graph #1, we can see that during the "Onset" phase, the percentage of completely negative columns was very high (54 percent) with another 23 percent largely negative (77 percent altogether). During this phase not one single column was unequivocally supportive of government policy regarding the Bosnian crisis. During the "Escalation" phase we still found a large number of critical columns (37.8 percent) but much lower in comparison to the first period. Neutral positions increased (to 24 percent) but still did not overtake policy criticism. For the first time a few totally supportive opinions were voiced (3 percent). Overall, the press's critique of government policy declined significantly—especially as this phase of the conflict evolved, i.e., the later the date in the phase, the less critical and more neutral/supportive the press's position became regarding Administration policy. During the "De-escalation" phase leading up to the 1995 Dayton

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[3]   As the research has a qualitative component, we tested for inter-coder reliability regarding the scoring of the study's items (*WP*, *NYT*, SD and PD). For the variable "Position" the correlation between the primary and backup coding is .934 (p = .006), and for the variable "Argument" the cross-tabulation between them is $x^2 = .001$. It is usually preferable to check correlation, but on a categorical variable we need to perform cross-tabulation.

Graph #1—*Position of the Press by Crisis Phase*

Significance (x^2) = .05   C = 0.363 with Cmax 0.935

Agreement, ending the crisis, the press is quite supportive of the government's handling of the situation. No unequivocally critical opinions whatsoever were voiced in the two papers during this period! On the other hand, the completely supportive columns rose by 300 percent; so did partly supportive opinions (33.3 percent). Overall, during this period the number of positive opinions expressed (39.6 percent) was greater than the negative ones (33.3 percent).

Graph #2—*Type of Argument of the Press by Crisis Phase*

Significance (x^2) = .005   C = 0.368 with Cmax 0.935
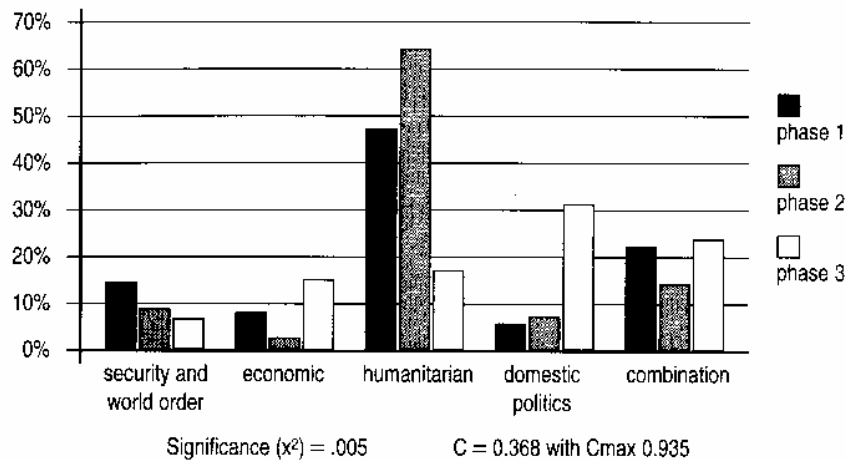
As is obvious from Graphs #2 and #3, a high (0.368) and significant (p = .05) association was found between the press's type of argument and the crisis phase. From Graph #2, we can see that there was a marked relative increase (of 40 percent) in humanitarian arguments found in the press from phase 1 (46.2 percent) to phase 2 (64.9 percent). The "De-escalation" phase was marked by a significant relative increase (of more than 300 percent) in domestic-political arguments (33.3 percent of the total) compared to the previous crisis phase, mostly at the expense of humanitarian arguments (16.7 percent). Economic (16.7 percent) arguments also increased somewhat.

A very high (0.415) and significant (p = .009) association was found between the government's types of argument and the crisis phase. We can see clearly from Graph #3, that during phase 1, PD and SD arguments were heavily humanitarian (57.1 percent) and military (28.6 percent) oriented. During the Escalation phase, security and world-order arguments dominated all others (66.2 percent), while the humanitarian argument plummeted to only 13.5 percent of the total. Regarding the "De-escalation" phase, security arguments by the government dropped by about half (30 percent) and the humanitarian arguments increased to 20 percent with another 40 percent being a combination of the two.

Graph #3—*Type of Argument of the Government by Crisis Phase*

Significance (x^2) = .009   C = 0.415 with Cmax 0.935
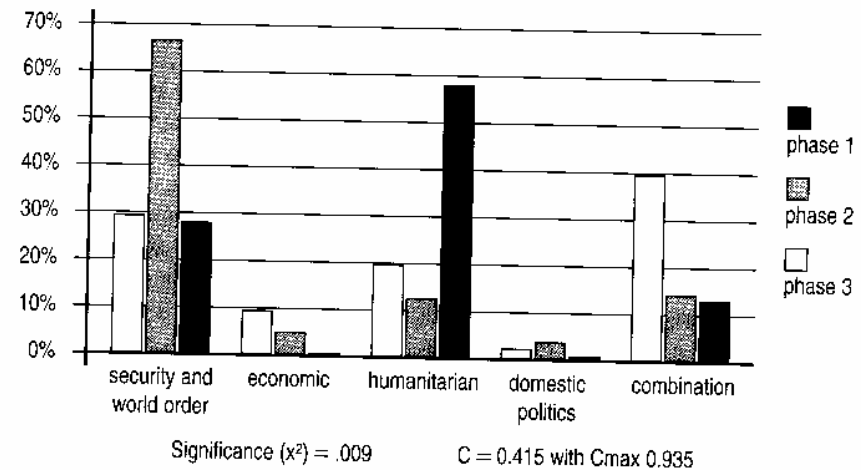
F. FINDINGS: APPLYING THE MODEL

After presenting the data in light of the press's positions as well as government/press arguments, it is time to illustrate our model for a more inclusive exposition of the inter-relationship between the two actors during each phase of the crisis.

Phase 1: This "Onset" Phase was marked by lack of government intervention, based on the Administration's assessment that the civil war was an internal Yugoslavian problem with little impact on Europe as a whole. This marginalization of the conflict was also based on American public opinion—while sympathetic to the victimized Bosnians, was not ready to commit troops to a complex overseas affair. The language of the Administration (when it deigned to mention the conflict altogether) was couched in humanitarian terms—partly as a reflection of public opinion and perhaps as well as preparation for later intervention.

One main factor behind the Administration's heavily humanitarian argumentation is America's self-perceived role as torchbearer of liberal democracy and human rights around the world. With hundreds of thousands of people being killed, raped and banished from their homes in the heart of Europe, the U.S. could not easily ignore the victims' plight. We might even assume that towards the end of this early period, the Clinton foreign policy makers were obviously priming the public in a way similar to the elite press. Along somewhat the same lines one can understand the not insignificant use of security arguments as well. As the world's "policeman," the U.S. could not allow havoc to occur within Europe without such inaction having far-reaching effects on its ability to threaten military intervention elsewhere around the world. For if not in the Balkans (the trigger for World War I), then where else would military intervention be justified? The Bosnian crisis

soon became defined as a symbol of U.S. foreign policy (Daalder, 2000; Banks & Strussman, 1999; Danner, 1997, p. 58) and, as such, the declared policy had to back up its morality with a big security stick as well.

One can note here possible press influence on the foreign policymakers. Those in charge of foreign policy within any American Administration are known to assiduously read the elite press—whether in organized synopsis form (the President's daily packet) or in normal fashion. In our present case, the emphasis and continuing use of humanitarian arguments by the elite press probably had an effect on those in charge of explaining U.S. foreign policy. This of course does not necessarily mean that those decision makers had already internalized the depth of the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Bosnia (or the need to actively do something about it), but at least on an exhortative level they were mouthing the same line emanating from the press.

Although also using humanitarian arguments, the press was highly critical of such isolationism. In such an ongoing terrible conflict and public opinion vacuum, the press has little reason to support government policy of non-involvement. This is in line with Malek's findings (1996) regarding the Iran-Iraq War that was not perceived by the American public as being something critical to the national interest. His study did not divide the war into periods as we do here, but it is instructive to note that overall almost two-thirds of the *NYT*'s editorials were critical of Administration policy during that earlier war.

Our case study is a clear example of the fact that *type* of argument does not correlate with the *position* taken on the issue.[4] One of the reasons for this lack of symmetry is that journalists do not have the same political constraints that normally bind politicians (i.e., republican party neo-isolationism, generally apathetic public opinion, etc.). Add to this the elite press's general libertarian, barking "watchdog" function as opposed to any government's natural inclination to do what is in its own best political (not necessarily *national*) interest, and it is not hard to understand the disparity between the two sides on either argument or position. As we saw earlier, the professional literature does not relate to the types of arguments put forward by the press over the course of the crisis's phases. Thus, our explanations are a first attempt to deal with the question, although Malek's study (1996) suggests at least one explanation. America is a multi-cultural country of immigrants that can only keep its social order intact through an ethos of ethno-cultural tolerance. As such, it has a particular sensitivity to ethnic strife. Moreover, the elite press in the United States (certainly the *NYT* and the *WP*) has a liberal orientation. In addition, American foreign policy for most of the country's history has been highly "moralistic" in tone (if not in fact), as a way of "excusing" the occasional forays into interventionism much against the nation's

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[4] Statistical tests (chi squre, contingency coefficient) of "type of argument" and "position taken" showed that any correlation between the two were not significant.

deeply ingrained isolationist tradition, existing as far back as Washington's Farewell Address—in contrast to the more "Realpolitik" tradition of Continental Europe (France, Germany). Thus, it is not surprising that if the elite press calls for an interventionist policy in any foreign crisis, it does so with the only type of argument that could move public opinion away from its reflexive isolationist stance. And the closer such foreign policy comes to interventionism, the more numerous the press's humanitarian arguments will tend to be. One might even view the increase from phase 1 to phase 2 as a move from "priming the public" (raising issues) to "influencing the public" (mobilizing public opinion to pressure/support government interventionism).

Phase 2: At this point in the crisis ("Escalation"), the Administration began to get involved in the Bosnian crisis, using primarily security/world-order arguments.

A few possible explanations could account for this. First, Bosnia was not the first nor was it the only civil war in the contemporary era where ethnic-humanitarian considerations were palpable. Somalia, Rwanda, Congo, Eritrea, Sudan, and a host of others were no less bloody than Bosnia; the humanitarian argument by itself could not justify interventionism in Bosnia when it did not lead to American "policing" elsewhere. From a geo-political standpoint, though, Bosnia was a clearer case for the American public and the strategic security argument (and world-order) could be more easily made—especially when America's closest allies (the European Union) were in need of help. After all, the "limited" Bosnian civil war could very easily turn into an "unlimited" conflict undermining 50 years of European efforts to solidify national borders—not to mention offering a precedent for insurgencies elsewhere around the world to remake national borders, as President Clinton himself noted during his visit to Bosnia.

Second, the nature of the "audience" differs between the government and the press. Whereas the latter address themselves mostly to the domestic public and the government, once getting officially involved in the conflict the Administration had a wider audience (world public opinion), extending to overseas allied governments, the "other side," and other organizations involved in the crisis (e.g., the UN's Security Council which must approve American military intervention overseas). The latter are swayed far more by Realpolitik argumentation than by humanitarian concerns, especially coming from the one superpower whose military weight can make a difference in almost any civil war crisis.

The elite press, in counterpoint, placed its emphasis on humanitarian needs, albeit with reduced criticism of Administration policy, once it became clear that the latter was tending toward the desired interventionism. Thus the press mobilized itself, and actually played more of a "national integration" role than a traditional "watchdog" function, rallying the public around the flag and in support of Administration policy. This function probably lies in the fact of diplomatic/military interventionism itself. Once the country becomes directly involved in a for-

eign policy crisis, the papers' official position becomes supportive of the official line (Grosswiler, 1996). We believe that this is due to public opinion which "awakens" to the issue but is not yet fully aware of the nuances (or potential complications) of interventionism, so that the dominant reflexive response is "rally-round-the-flag" which even the elite press are somewhat loath to completely counter. As a result, the media's role becomes more one of "national integration" and the watchdog begins to take a long nap.

Phase 3: The "De-escalation" period was marked by the increasing perception (and fact) of Administration foreign policy success in bringing the combatants to the negotiating table after three and a half years of combat. At this juncture the government brought forth security/world-order as well as humanitarian arguments in a sort of platform for the future.

This reflects the government's attempt to ensure that its underlying foreign policy message would be clearly understood: with the rise of ethnic conflict in the post-Soviet period, the U.S. will not hesitate to use its diplomatic and military power to ensure that humanitarian travesties do not occur. In this third phase, the Administration actually moved away from arguments to *convince* the public (domestic and foreign), focusing instead on reiterations as to what its policy was designed to do during the Bosnian crisis in particular and elsewhere in the future in general.

The press, for its part, became even more supportive—it too tended to move over to *ex post facto* commentary, and for the first time devoted more space to *retrospective* analysis of domestic ramifications than in *prospective* pontificating about what the Administration should do from here on out. This can be described as a further move away from its "watchdog" function toward a self-mobilization (cheerleading) role —either to aid the authorities in garnering political support and/or to jump on board a successful campaign.

Why? First, the Administration's foreign policy was obviously succeeding. Second, the prestige of the United States was on the line here—and not just that of the Clinton Administration—so that the public's "rally-round-the-flag" mentality continued apace, albeit with less of a military slant and more of a feeling of national pride and status in the eyes of the world. As a result, the elite press "self-mobilized" to support a policy that by now had become relatively bi-partisan and thus "American" in the widest sense of the word. Thus, we do not consider it an exaggeration to call this the "cheerleading" role of the press—either consciously (rationally supporting real success) or subconsciously (emotionally identifying with the prestige of one's country).

What accounts for this overall change? Several explanations are possible, none mutually exclusive. At the point where the humanitarian problems were lessening in Bosnia and the sides were ready to sit together on the negotiation table, there was little objective reason to continue emphasizing the issue. Moreover, by

the third phase the Administration's policy was obviously progressing successfully so that the elite press no longer saw its function as being "advisory" (offering suggestions what to do) but rather "evaluatory" (commenting on the implications of such policy). In this regard, of course, there was little to evaluate in terms of "saving lives" but much to say regarding the domestic political ramifications of the Administrations' crisis management as a whole. This explains the increase in economic and security/world-order editorials/columns as well. As a result of the fact that this phase took place close to the start of the 1996 Presidential election campaign, it was only natural for the press pundits to shift gears into a mode of discourse relevant to the political reality at hand.

Of course, this journalistic approach is probably only relevant in the case of foreign policy *success*, for had the result been failure it is highly likely that the press would have reverted in this third phase to its more traditional critical watchdog role, as the model shows. In any case, given the dearth of research dealing with the "theory" of journalistic "self-mobilization," we wish to posit here two different types. The first emphasizes the need for socio-political cohesion while the crisis continues. This is more a "national" goal than a "political" one, playing on patriotic themes. For example, Stephen Rosenfeld wrote in an op-ed piece in the *WP* (Nov. 24, 1995) after the signing of the Dayton Agreement: "To hear the gifted advocate, Vice President Al Gore, struggling to win support for the Administration's Bosnia venture is to realize this debate is less about foreign policy 'interests' than about the very definition of being American." The second type of "self-mobilization" is more specifically political—support for the Administration's policies. In the case of Bosnia, the first occurred in phase 2 to some extent, while the second was found in phase 3.

G. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study offered a comprehensive look at the inter-relationship between the press and the government during an international crisis. A distinction must be made between the two types of phenomena that were under scrutiny. First, the *positions* of the press regarding administration policy. Here we are on firmer ground in arguing that the press almost always reacts to government (in)action, so that the relationship is mostly uni-directional. "Mostly," because the policy makers do read the elite press and may be swayed at times in two ways: either they worry that public opinion is being influenced by the press's position or the arguments offered by the press may in and of themselves be persuasive. The second element that we scrutinized was the *type of argument/framing* used by both sides. In this case, the inter-relationship is probably more of a two-way street, i.e., the arguments/types of framing proffered by the press (e.g., humanitarian, military, etc.) could just as easily influence the policy makers as the latter's declarations may influence the journalists.

The contribution of this research is both theoretical and practical.

Theoretically, we have presented an original, integrated model combining theories from different fields (IR and mass communications), in order to explain the relationship between the media and the government during an international crisis. In so doing, we hope to have made clearer the functioning of the press in foreign policy making—especially during a crisis period, where virtually very little research has been undertaken heretofore. The model was applied to a case study, and the findings support our contention that the media react to the government's foreign policy in a way that changes the "politico-philosophical" role of the press over the crisis's various phases.

On the practical side, we offered several explanations for the press's functioning during the crisis phases, in the hope that journalism practitioners and students will more clearly understand the important role that the media can play in foreign policy in order to improve the media's coverage and analysis of international crises—not to mention enabling foreign policy makers to better handle public opinion and improve their dealings with the press, especially regarding ethnic conflicts which seem to dominate the international arena at the turn of the millenium.

Regarding the case study itself, since the time of the Vietnam War the U.S. has had strong reservations about military intervention abroad, because it feared negative reaction in the media and public opinion. This had been even more constraining regarding humanitarian military intervention, which was difficult to justify in terms of clear national interest. One of the most interesting conclusions emerging from the present case study is that the elite-press actually helped to articulate a rationale for humanitarian, military intervention. The government, however, was not sufficiently aware of this; had it been, the leading policy makers might have taken more decisive action and much sooner.

Nevertheless, the comprehensive model presented here was examined regarding one case study, so that its validation requires future research. Future studies might look into other case studies with other elements: *different* types of *democratic* regimes; *totalitarian* or *authoritarian* regimes; *short-term* crisis; *small state*'s foreign policy; a similar case which resulted in *foreign policy failure* (with emphasis on the role of the press in phase 3); *other media*, e.g., popular press, electronic media; or even *correlating* the model to *actual public opinion*; etc.

The present study is an attempt to create an exploratory model that can explain (and after further refinement, perhaps predict) the inter-relations between media and government during international crises. Although the central focus was on the impact of foreign policy on press attitudes, our model and concomitant analysis also included the various philosophies of the press's role in a democracy, the differences between types of argument in the administration and the press at various phases of the crisis, and several thoughts regarding the nature and direction of mutual influence between these two central actors in the foreign

policymaking drama. Much work is yet to be done. We believe, however, that the present study is an important first step along the road to a better understanding of what has become a critical subject in both mass media and international relations studies.

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