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Military Media Relations During Kargil War

By Kumar

There have been media reports that the military has been talking out of turn, and counter views

have also been expressed on the topic by some supposed thinkers. It is not by individual perceptions that policies are made and the subject, in today's context needs to be debated with select examples of the world military media relations kept as a backdrop and the examples of using the various media tools as force multipliers.

Military has opened up to the media only recently. Kargil operation was the first televised war, which brought the conflict to people's homes. It showed the war zone to the world and changed people's perception on the pattern of conflict in high altitude areas. It reduced the gap between the military and the civilians and connected people with the lives of soldiers, who carry out their duties even at the peril of their lives. It is in their prompt response at the borders that our countrymen can remain comfortable at their homes. It was a bonding established and a national fervour built which brought about unity in diversity. The up front reportage altered the world opinion in our favour and justified the conflict, making Pakistan the bad guy. All this happened only because the media by India was handled with an aim, a vision and the public, in many ways participated in the conflict. The negatives, to balance out, have also been true, with at times some media personnel being given preferential treatment by the military and the same media men, when rubbished on an occasion have been nasty in the reporting about the military. Such practices are reasonably common, despite the users in the game being quite aware, and such practices are bound to take place in a democratic system, yet it is important to analyse the reasons for the reporters adopting a sudden change in their outlook. It must be appreciated, after all, they are also individuals and bound to err and swing one way or the other to gauge the mood swing of the readers.

Just prior to Kargil, Kosovo happened, and just a little later the United Nations Force launched an operation in Sierra Leone. A brief mention of the two will facilitate in framing opinions on the media being used as a weapon system. While Kosovo was a 'War of Will' at least as projected by the western media, which gave only a one sided picture with Mr Reuben giving his daily briefings; the Sierra Leone intervention, despite the Indian contingent being actually responsible for the success of the mission, was over shadowed by the British media which highlighted the contributions made by the British troops in the success of the operations. However, damage control was carried out by the Indian

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Foreign Service at a later stage more as a reaction by sending the Indian media to cover the happenings, bringing to focus the Indian Army's actions which brought about peace in the Region. More recently, the American coalition war in Iraq was again a reminder that a war can be projected as a justifiable war, if the events are doctored well and projected selectively.

The above examples bring to focus one important aspect, and that is, media has to be intelligently applied and it must be situation oriented. It cannot adorn a template which has to be dittoed in all situations and the content also has to vary. An over or an under play will neither be good for the public nor for the military. The responses from the military have to be couched and well articulated. A total ban on interaction with the media will give rise to speculation and invariably result in misreporting. An over eager, inadequately thought of hurried response, is again likely to give a negative projection. The bait by the media will always be given with smiling faces approaching the military and wanting to be the first to report an incident and in the bargain getting access to an event. It may also be that the military, at times may feel that some other security agency may take the credit for the task accomplished and

therefore prematurely reveal some details to pre-empt the other stake holders, which at times may result in tendering apologies at a later stage. Such out of turn exposures to the media must be guarded against and that comes with fore thought and practice Hence, it is important that media education is imparted to the military as a professional subject. It should be taught in schools of instructions right from entry level and should be practiced over the years. The importance of the information warfare with media as a force multiplier has to be understood and it has to be correctly used as a weapon of decision making, a weapon of success.

Kumar writes about Military Media Relations. Get more articles about social political issues on India Pakistan Relations

How To Get The Media To Cover Your Story

By Ana Ventura

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There are two big misconceptions that a fair amount of business professionals hold about the media and their attitude towards those in the public relations field.

The first misconception is that the media despises anyone in public relations. Some people tend to think that journalists or other news writers prefer to dig up all their stories from scratch, and not get ideas from outside sources.

The second and opposite misconception about the media is that they are lazy, and simply print press releases sent out by PR groups word for word. It is thought sometimes that the media runs stories or news about a particular company in hopes of getting more advertising dollars in the future.

In actuality, the media recognizes public relations simply as a part of their field. Many times, public relations efforts bring about many interesting opportunities and stories for media folk, and the media does not avoid using nor actively seek out public relations material.

There are a few things that you can keep in mind when putting together material for release to the media. The number one most important thing is that the job of an editor is to find interesting and pertinent material for their audience.

Think about it this way: you write an ad and decide to place the ad in a few national newspapers and magazines. Your main interest is that the ad is catchy and convincing to the readers of those publications. You are not concerned that the magazine or newspaper editors will like the ad, because it's not up to them—you paid for the placement. But, when submitting material for public relations purposes you have to keep in mind that the material has to suit both the editor and the reader.

If the editor finds your work acceptable for both the publication and the intended audience, you are well on your way towards a great public relations relationship with the media.

So, the media are not much different from anyone else that you might find out and about in the working world—they are just

doing their job and trying to get material together. Keep their needs, the reader's needs, and your needs in mind, and your PR skills will be top notch.

Ana Ventura specializes in helping businesses, organizations, and individuals get media coverage. She is a PR expert at DrNunley's <http://FullServicePR.com>, a site specializing in affordable publicity services. Reach Ana at <mailto:ana@fullservicepr.com> or 801-328-9006.



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