

A STUDY OF NEWS MANAGEMENT BY THE MASS MEDIA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. FORMS OF NEWS MANAGEMENT	3
A. Staging	6
B. Emphasis	8
C. Distortion and Embellishment	10
D. Quarantines	11
E. Secrecy	13
F. Cook's Tours	14
G. Replacement	15
H. Slanting and Bias	16
I. News Policy	17
J. Gatekeeping	20
K. Voluntary Suppression	23
II. NEWS MANAGEMENT BY <u>TIME</u> MAGAZINE	
A. The Saigon Press Corps, 1961-1966	25
B. Mohr-Perry Dispute	26
III. INTERNATIONAL NEWS	
A. The Flow of International News	36
B. Vietnam Correspondents and the Flow of International News	40
C. Problems of Reporting	44
IV. DISCUSSION	47
V. CONCLUSION	52
APPENDIXES	
A. "South Viet Nam: Report on the War"	53
B. "Foreign Correspondents: The View from Saigon"	59
C. "Foreign Correspondents: The Saigon Story"	63
BACKNOTES	68
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	74

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of news management by the mass media. In Chapter One, the meaning of the term is discussed. The various forms and techniques used to shape the news are identified and examples are cited. These forms of news management are: staging, emphasis, distortion and embellishment, quarantines, secrecy, Cook's tours, replacement, slanting and bias, news policy, gate-keeping and voluntary suppression.

An in-depth analysis of a specific case of news management is provided in Chapter Two. The case involved Time magazine and two Time correspondents covering the Vietnam war, Charles Mohr and Mert Perry. A 1963 Vietnam story written by these two staffers was contradictory to news released by government sources. Time rejected their story and substituted another story dictated in the home office. A discussion of the Saigon Press Corps is included as relevant background information to the Mohr-Perry incident.

The case of news management by the mass media discussed in Chapter Two is set in the area of international news. It is in this area that news management is highly likely to occur. Chapter Three is included in the study to explain the flow of international news, the way in which editors and publishers view foreign news, and how Vietnam correspondents viewed the handling of their stories by the home office.

Final chapters are given to a discussion of news manage-

ment with reference to the Mohr-Perry incident and the author's conclusions. Appendixes provide complete texts of the published stories related to the incident.

Limitations to the Study

This report is a qualitative study that is only concerned with news management of the print media. Specific examples cited in the study are limited to the years 1961 through 1966, the most troublesome years between correspondents and their home offices.

Some of the critics and sources cited in this study have been closely associated with the "left" or liberal political philosophy. Often when a controversial issue involves the establishment, liberals have a tendency to be highly critical. In relying on the most vocal critics of alleged news management, this study has not attempted to establish an equal balance between liberal and conservative viewpoints concerning the news management issues. One should expect in a review of the literature that articles about managed news of the "establishment" press will be critical and written by liberal authors who sympathize with what became a growing opposition to U.S. policy in Southeast Asia.

FORMS OF NEWS MANAGEMENT

It was James Reston, then Washington correspondent for the New York Times, who coined the phrase "news management" at a hearing before a House Subcommittee on Government Operations, November 7, 1955. The hearing dealt with "Availability of Information From Federal Departments and Agencies." Reston said,

Most of my colleagues here have been talking primarily about the suppression of news.

I would like to direct the committee, if I may, to an equally important aspect of this problem which I think is the growing tendency to manage the news. Let me see if I can illustrate what I mean.

I think there was a conscious effort to give to the news at the Geneva Conference an optimistic flavor. I think there was a conscious effort there, decided upon even perhaps ahead of time for spokesmen to emphasize all the optimistic facts coming out of that conference and to minimize all of the quarrels at that conference with the results which we have all seen.

There was, after the Geneva Conference, a decision taken in the Government that perhaps this was having a bad effect, that the people in the Western countries were letting down their guard, and therefore a decision was made, primarily upon the appeal of Chancellor Adenauer of Germany, that the Government should strike another note. So that after the Geneva smiling, the new word went out that it might be a good idea now to frown a little bit, so the President made a speech at Philadelphia, taking quite a different light about the Geneva Conference. This is what I mean by managing the news. And I would urge your committee to look into that a bit, because, while it is bad to suppress a bit of information, it would seem to me to be even worse, if all of the news making powers of the Federal Government were to blanket the newspaper situation with the theme which perhaps they did not believe was quite true, but might be an instrument of their thought. This is my first point, which is a tendency that has happened many times in the past. It is not a political point, but I think there is a growing tendency for the diplomat to use the press as an instrument of his diplomacy, and perhaps in the process, it is misleading the American people.¹

Since the hearing the term news management has been used in various contexts with different meanings.

This report defines news management by the media as a conscious effort to shape the news. Although Reston originally said news management was the result of government intervention, the term has been used to indicate internal decision making and editorial policy by news media which have the effect of withholding or suppressing news. It is this form of news management by the media which is the concern of this study.

News management by the mass media appears in different form. Examples of eleven forms or techniques, identified below, are discussed with examples on the following pages.

The first technique discussed is Staging which is news creation--fake or rigged news. Staging occurs frequently with photojournalism and TV and results from the media trying to "make news" when there is a lack of it. Emphasis plays a role in managed news when a publication may underplay the importance of a story by "burying" the article in an inside page or by giving it a smaller headline than the story may warrant. Stories should be emphasized according to how newsworthy they are and placed in proper perspective. Distortion and Embellishment result when the media gives misrepresentations of the news. Distance, or how close to the scene a story is written, and the number of gatekeepers involved in editing may affect the amount of distortion an article will have. Quarantines, or the exclusion of subjects from the news because they may produce harmful effects, may take effect by not printing news of an event or by omitting parts of the news considered useful to a group. Secrecy, or the deliberate

temporary withholding of news which will be published at a later time, is a form of managed news that may be associated with matters of national security. The media may decide that it is in the national interest to manage the news by withholding information from the public until a time they feel will not interfere with the national security. Cook's Tours involve the sending of well-known journalists on short visits to foreign countries to evaluate situations and report them according to the views of their superiors. The editors make certain these journalists know ahead of time how they want the stories written. Replacement is simply the substitution of a story for one that has appeared in a previous edition of the paper. To determine whether news is being managed, one should question why a story, which is newsworthy in one edition, is not used for publication in later editions. Slanting and Bias involve unfair news reporting that shows partiality. When news is managed by this technique it may be geared to coincide with prejudices of private interest groups. News Policy results in the homogeneous orientation of a paper's editorial and news columns. News executives set the news policy which they expect their staff to follow. Gatekeeping can be used to manage the news by controlling the fate of the news. Gatekeepers have the power to determine whether a news item will continue along the communications channels or whether it will cease. And finally, Voluntary Suppression, or self-imposed censorship by the news executives, is the elimination of a newsworthy story. The next chapter gives examples of each of these forms.

Staging

During World War II, Joe Rosenthal photographed a group of GIs raising the American flag at Iwo Jima. The photo appears to be a candid picture taken under fire, but, in actuality, the photo was staged.

Staging is news creation--fake or rigged news. When a CBS owned station, WBBM Chicago, filmed a documentary "Pot Party at a University," the event was staged because it was not in progress or spontaneous. The newsmen asked some Northwestern University students to have the party and let them film the activities.² Similarly when a television camera man asked a crowd at a disturbance in Los Angeles during the Watts riot "why don't you throw a brick or something?," he was attempting to stage the event.³ Although many examples of staging occur with photo-journalism and TV, the print media also have been known to do some staging of their own. One extreme form of staging used by the print media is the hoax.

On July 27, 1971, the National Review ran a cover story "The Missing Memoranda 1962-1966--The Secret Papers They Didn't Publish, The Makers of the Indochina War: Strategy and counter-strategy from highly classified documents not published by the New York Times and the Washington Post, leaked to National Review." The authenticity of the alleged documents was hardly questioned by the papers or by the government. The fourteen page story was picked up by the wire services, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and all three national television networks broadcasted the "leaks" via nightly newscasts. Two days later William F.

Buckley, Jr., editor of the National Review, said the entire article was a "deliberate and calculated hoax" contrived "ex nihilo"--out of nothing.⁴

The documents were attributed to such high ranking officials as former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, retired Admiral Arthur Radford, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Buckley said the most "arduous challenge" of the hoax, which "sprung full-blown in my mind like Venus from the Cypriot seas . . .," was to "emulate bureaucratic prose."⁵ He added that the purpose of the fabrication was to show that "forged documents would be widely accepted as genuine, provided their content was inherently plausible," and "that the Pentagon and the CIA are not composed of incompetents."⁶

The hoax was revealed by Buckley after several persons quoted as sources and authors of the phony documents could not recall writing them. Only David J. Boorstin, director of Washington's National Museum of History and Technology, flatly denied writing what was attributed to him.⁷ Buckley said the idea came out of an editorial meeting two weeks before the article was published. He said they were discussing the Pentagon Papers as released and the fact they were "ideologically tendentious."⁸ Buckley, who admitted they proceeded in something of an "ethical vacuum," added, "I, in fact, initiated the idea." He said, "Hey, team, what do you think about this--?"⁹ He was referring to the fact that Maxwell Taylor said the papers were fragmentary. He said, "We reasoned that others at that time saw what was actually happening and gave appropriate advice to the government. We then

created them. That step was easy for National Review editors," he said.¹⁰

Buckley said he helped write the phony documents but declined to say who on the magazine's staff wrote what.

When Buckley was asked whether or not the Review planned any "future capers," he replied, "Maybe we should reveal the deliberations of the Central Committee on the People's Republic of China after the meeting with Kissinger."¹¹

As a result of the hoax, at least fourteen newspapers, including the Denver Post and the Houston Chronicle, dropped Buckley's column "On the Right." Buckley seemed to have taken it lightly; "Well, I'm down to 348 papers. I am sure that after Orson Well's imaginative ventures* he too lost the Kool-Aid account."¹²

Emphasis

During the Bay of Pigs episode in 1961, the New York Times managed the news by de-emphasizing a story originally scheduled to lead the paper with a four column headline. The article, which had security implications, was given a one column headline and appeared below the center half of the front page.

Ted Szulc, a Times correspondent, filed a story explaining about the CIA's recruitment in Florida of Cuban refugees and the plans of an imminent invasion. Turner Catledge, managing editor of the Times, asked James Reston, Chief of the Washington Bureau, for advice. Reston said, "Don't print it--the Times will bear the

*With the 1938 radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds" which alarmed the nation with a hoax about an invasion force from Mars.

burden for dead invaders--or the expedition will be cancelled outright."¹³

Clifton Daniel, the Times' assistant managing editor, explained to the Times' executives that Szulc's story was reliable. He said when Szulc was returning from Rio de Janeiro for reassignment he discovered in Florida details about the invasion force and rushed a story to the Times. The article was scheduled for a multiple-column play on page one, April 7. But Orvil Dryfoos, publisher of the Times, told Catledge that he was worried about the security implications of the article. "Don't run the stuff about the imminent invasion," Reston said. "But since everyone knows about the recruitment in Florida, that stuff is all right." Daniel said a "few words" in Szulc's article were cut but Szulc said the story was "drastically censored."¹⁴

A change was made with regard to the placement and emphasis of the story from a four column headline leading the paper to a one column story below the center half of the front page. Lewis Jordon, news editor, and Theodore Bernstein, assistant managing editor, bitterly complained about the de-emphasis of the story.¹⁵

Bernstein said the Dryfoos' intervention was the only instance he could recall of any importance when the publisher of the Times interfered with the presentation and display of the news.¹⁶

President John F. Kennedy realized the New York Times was the most influential paper in America and had supposedly set "a standard for journalistic responsibility and ethics. Kennedy

was not concerned very much about the story of the training of anti-Castro troops in Guatemala which appeared in the Nation." He said it wasn't news until the Times printed it.¹⁷

Distortion and Embellishment

During the Gulf of Tonkin affair in which the U.S. ships Maddox and C. Turner Joy were attacked on August 4, 1964, Time and Newsweek distorted the news by giving an over-dramatized version of what the magazines' editors portrayed as fact. Since crewmen were not available for interviews, the stories were written in New York.

Ben Bagdikian of the Washington Post wrote in Columbia Journalism Review,

It is almost a mathematical rule the larger the number of intermediaries between news event and print, the greater the distortion. There is also a geographical rule. The nearer to the scene that the final version is written, the more the story will focus on the news event; the farther away, the more it will have its eye on the customer.¹⁸

During the Tonkin affair, Time magazine constructed a "dramatic scenario" which made for fast moving, exciting reading, but was a distortion of what actually had happened.

The night glowed eerily with the nightmarish glare of air-dropped flares and boats' searchlights. For three and a half hours the small boats attacked in pass after pass. Ten enemy torpedoes sizzled through the water. Each time the skippers, tracking the fish by radar, maneuvered to evade them. Gunfire and gun smells and shouts stung the air. Two of the boats went down. Then, at 1:30 a.m., the remaining PTs ended the fight, roared off through the black night to the north.¹⁹

Joseph Goulden, one of the few writers to interview crew members after they returned to port weeks after the incident, talked to a crewman who had read the Time magazine account.

I couldn't believe it, he said, the way they blew that story out of proportion. It was like something out of Male magazine, the way they described that battle. All we needed were naked women running up and down the deck. We were disgusted, because it just wasn't true. It didn't happen that way . . .²⁰

Newsweek similarly reported an "overzealous dramatization" of the same Tonkin incident,

The U.S. ships blazed out salvo after salvo of shells. Torpedoes whipped by, some only 100 feet from the destroyers' beams. A PT boat burst into flames and sank. More U.S. jets swooped in . . . Another PT boat exploded and sank, and then the others scurried off into the darkness nursing their wounds. The battle was won. Now it was time for American might to strike back.²¹

As a result of the Tonkin incident, the New York Times magazine, in its August 16 issue, had a picture spread of the Seventh Fleet. Planes were launched, missiles were firing and Marines were landing on beaches giving the impression of large scale conventional warfare.

Quarantines

Ben Bagdikian, in the Columbia Journalism Review, defines news quartines as the exclusion of subjects from news columns because they may produce harmful effects. Quarantines fall under the "editorial discretion" that is the right of every editor, which is "considered a sign of the enlightened developments in American journalism, the idea of social responsibility of the press."²² There is a difficulty Bagdikian observes in distinguishing between quartines and the "special treatment of sacred cows or suppression for the benefit of friends of the paper, . . . but even when quarantines are altruistically imposed they interfere with the democratic process and are demoralizing to the

discipline of news judgment."²³

The Washington Press Corps imposed what might be called a quasi quarantine on the activities of the American Nazi Party based in a nearby Virginia suburb in 1965. The three newspapers in Washington agreed that the Nazi Party qualified as news--at the most as a "gang promoting savagery and paranoia on the national scene, and at the least, as civic pests."²⁴ But the papers applied a "special test" for hard news about Nazi Party activities. Theirs was not an absolute quarantine. The three papers had given the Party coverage and printed background pieces about its activities, yet the group received "special handling, with a conscious objective of denying the Nazis publicity and minimizing their impact."²⁵ Papers in New York and the wire services printed stories about the Party that were not carried in the Washington papers. "The Washington editors tried to run news of the Nazis as little as possible and when they did, to minimize any advantage to the Nazis and to produce the most 'healthy' reaction among readers."²⁶

But Bagdikian claims that banning all quarantines can be risky. The publication of bad events can make a situation worse; giving coverage to demagogues gives them what they want.²⁷

Mark Arnold, in an article "The News Media--Besieged by Critics," made reference to news quarantines. He said that some members of the Copley newspaper chain would not make reference to reviews or advertising for X-rated films and that the Christian Science Monitor would never make reference to "death" in its news columns.

Secrecy

Secrecy, or the deliberate temporary suppression of news which will be published at a later date, is a form of news management that was used by the executives of the New York Times during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

President Kennedy was advised by the publisher of the Times about what action he should take concerning security information getting into print. One month prior to the missile crisis in October, Orvil Dryfoos told the President "when there is a danger of security information getting into print, the thing to do is call the publishers and explain matters to them." This was exactly what the President did during the missile crisis.²⁸

At a speech in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 1, 1966, Clifton Daniel said,

The President called me. He understood that I had been talking with Mac Bundy (McGeorge Bundy, Presidential assistant and the man closest to the President) and he knew from the line of the questioning that we knew the critical fact--that Russian missiles had been indeed emplaced in Cuba. The President told me that he was going on television on Monday evening to report to the American people. He said that if we published the news about the missiles Khrushchev could actually give him an ultimatum before he went on the air. Those were Kennedy's exact words. I told him I understood, but I also told him I could not do anything about it . . . I told the President I would report to my office in New York and if my advice were asked, I would recommend that we not publish. It was not my duty to decide. My job was the same as that of an ambassador--to report to my superiors. I recommended to the President that he call New York. He did so.²⁹

Daniel said that publisher Dryfoos left the decision to Reston and his staff. And so the news that Soviet missiles were in Cuba was withheld until the President went on the air the following evening.³⁰

Max Frankel wrote in the Times the reasons why the news was kept from the public. "The basic reason was the fear that the Soviet Union, if it knew the (blockade) plans in advance, would make some move to anticipate and undercut the President's course. For example, one such move might have been a resolution in the U.N."³¹

Other newspapers, following the Times example, refused to publish in order that the United States not be forced to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations and "not take unilateral action with impunity."³²

President Kennedy said, regarding the Bay of Pigs, "I am asking the members of the newspaper profession and the industry in this country to re-examine their own responsibilities--to consider the degree and nature of the present danger--and to heed the duty of self-restraint which that danger imposes upon all of us."³³

"Every newspaper," he continued, "now asks itself with respect to every story: 'Is it news?' All I suggest is you add this question: 'Is it in the national security?'"³⁴

Cook's Tours

The Nation reported a form of news management that involved the sending of big-name journalists on "Cook's Tours" to evaluate situations and report them according to the views of their editors and publishers, which, according to the Nation, were well known in advance. When the New York Herald Tribune sent Maggie Higgins to Vietnam in 1963, a U.S. military general's wife, it was a sure bet that what "emerged from her typewriter would please the Ngo's, General Harkins and the 'everything's-

gonna-be-all-right-people' in the Defense Department, the CIA and civilian warriors outside of government."³⁵

New York Post columnist James Wechsler, in the Overseas Press Bulletin, wrote that Higgins felt all was going well after her brief visit to Vietnam. "Reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they're right," she said.³⁶

Frank Conniff, Hearst editor, wrote a critique entitled "Viet Press Corps--A Young Problem" which he criticized the indignation he encountered with the "young" Saigon Press Corps. After Joe Alsop's visit, he concluded, "Halberstam and the other young men were promoting 'a political-moral crusade against the government of President Diem.'"³⁷

Replacement

During December, 1969, the Baltimore Sun printed an article for its Sunday "Perspective" (a detailed interpretive section of the paper) on the success of AFL-CIO Local 1199, Hospital and Nursing Home Employees, in organizing in Baltimore, New York and Charleston, S.C. The article said that the typical Baltimore hospital worker's starting salary is slightly above the federal poverty line; that negotiations had begun at Johns Hopkins Hospital to boost wages--which also meant an increase in hospital bills; and that the union had been recognized by five local hospitals and fourteen nursing homes. The story appeared in the first edition of "Perspective," December 7, 1969. Although "Perspective" is usually in all editions, early closing, standing section similar to the New York Times's "Week in Review," the story was replaced in later editions with an AP feature "Ques-

tions and Answers on How the New Draft Lottery Works."³⁸

Local 1199, wondering why the executives replaced the story, began investigating the ownership structure of the Sun. It found that the newspaper was owned by A.S. Abell Company which is affiliated with Mercantile-Safe Deposit & Trust Company. A member of Mercantile's Board, J. Crossan Cooper Jr., is also chairman of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Board. It became apparent that if Cooper had not ordered the story replaced, a top editor probably ran the AP story to avoid displeasing the owners.³⁹

Slanting and Bias

During the Indiana Democratic Primary in 1968, journalists claimed that the Indianapolis Star and News was guilty of bias and slanted coverage. Although Sen. Robert Kennedy appeared to have created more public interest, Sen. Eugene McCarthy and Indiana Gov. Roger Branigan, Kennedy's two primary opponents in that state, were receiving most of the "publicity." Sen. Kennedy found it difficult to make headlines in the Star and News, and when he did receive front-page coverage, the story was usually preceded with a pro-Branigan slogan or cartoon. The content of the stories usually omitted or grossly underestimated the size of the crowds which Kennedy attracted.⁴⁰

A few of the visiting newsmen criticized the lack of coverage given to Kennedy. Jules Witcover, who covered the primary for Newhouse News Service, wrote in the Columbia Journalism Review,

. . . When the line between a newspaper's editorial point of view and its reportage becomes so blurred that the average reader no longer can be expected reasonably

to discern where fact ends and propaganda takes over, the community--and the integrity of the news business--are ill-served.⁴¹

In another example of slanting and bias, True magazine printed an article "to smoke or not to smoke--that is still the question" that refuted the connection between cancer and smoking. Among other things the article said, ". . . It looks like Americans will go on smoking more and more cigarettes each year," and "There is, in fact, a good deal of scientific doubt about the Surgeon General's conclusion that smoking causes cancer." The article was sponsored by Adman Rosser Reeves' Tiderock Corporation for the Tabacco Institute.⁴²

News Policy

Ideally, there should be no problem of having to conform to news policy or being controlled on a newspaper but in practice news executives do set news policy and it is generally followed closely by staff. According to sociologist Warren Breed, conformity does not follow automatically for three reasons: (1) The existence of ethical journalistic norms (2) staff generally hold more liberal attitudes, and therefore, perceptions, than the publisher which can create norms to justify anti-policy writing (3) the ethical taboo of the executives insisting that staff follow policy.⁴³ Policy is defined as a "consistent orientation" by a paper, not only in editorials, but news columns as well. "Slanting almost never means prevarication. Rather it involves omission, differential selection, and preference placement, such as featuring 'a pro-policy' item, or burying an anti-policy story in an inside page."⁴⁴ Policy is manifested in slanting,

and usually is applied in the principal areas of labor, business and politics.⁴⁵

Although policy is set by the editors and publishers, they cannot personally gather and write the news. These assignments must be given to the staff and it is at this point that the views of the staff often conflict with the executives.⁴⁶ "It (policy) often contravenes journalistic norms, that staffers often personally disagree with it, and the executives cannot legitimately command that it be followed."⁴⁷

How is policy established in the news staff? Breed based his answers to this question on his newspaper experience and from intensive interviews with about 120 newsmen.⁴⁸

Basically, the first step toward conformity to policy in newswriting develops with the "socialization of the staffer to the norms of his job."⁴⁹ When a reporter begins his work he is not told what policy to follow nor is he ever told. Breed said interview after interview confirmed this finding. The typical statement was "never in my ___ years on this paper, have I ever been told how to slant a story."⁵⁰ Yet Breed claims from the interviews that all but the newest reporters know what the paper's policy is. The new staffer learns to anticipate what his superiors expect of him. Generally all employees of a paper read their publication every day; some papers require this. It becomes easy for the staffer to analyze the paper's characteristics. Unless the reporter is very independent or naive, he generally writes his articles similar to the norms of others he reads in the editorial and news columns. Editorial decisions made by the

executives serve as important controlling guides. "If things are blue-pencilled consistently," one reporter said, "you learn he (the editor) has a prejudice in that regard."⁵¹ Similarly, an editor or publisher may occasionally reprimand a reporter for policy violation. Breed has found reprimands are "frequently oblique" due to the "covert nature" of policy but nevertheless learning occurs.⁵²

The executives do not "command," according to Breed. Their instruction is more subtle. The editors may show disapproval by "a nod of the head as if they were saying please don't rock the boat."⁵³

Editors can ignore stories which run counter to their paper's policy or they can assign important stories to "safe staffers." When an anti-policy story does reach the desk, which is a rare case according to Breed, the story can be rewritten or changed to conform to policy. Such reasons as availability of white space and the pressures of time can be given for the alterations.⁵⁴

One question may arise: "What happens when a staffer submits an anti-policy story?" Breed said the learning process of news policy is incorporated into a process of "social control" where deviations are gently punished by reprimand. This usually involves heavy editing of a reporter's story or the withholding of approving comments by the editor. Breed cites an example: It is punishment to a reporter when an editor waves a piece of copy in the news room and says "Joe, don't do that when you're writing about the mayor."⁵⁵ When an editor receives an anti-policy story,

he blue-pencils it, which is considered "a lesson" for the staffer. Seldom does a reporter persist in violating the paper's policy.⁵⁶

Breed lists five ways in which a reporter can by-pass policy:

- (1) The norms of policy are not always entirely clear . . .
- (2) Executives may be ignorant of particular facts and staffers who do the leg work to gather news can use their superior knowledge to subvert policy.
- (3) Planting a story in another publication or wire service through a friendly staffer and showing it to his editor by saying the story is too big to ignore.
- (4) Beat reporters, who can select stories to pursue and those to ignore, can by-pass stories that add fuel to policy and play-up controversial items that go counter to policy.
- (5) And finally, staffers who have star status can transgress policy more easily than cubs.⁵⁷

Breed concluded that executive policy, when clearly established, is usually followed. The reporter's source of rewards is not the readers who are in essence his clients, but his colleagues and superiors. "Any important change toward a more 'free and responsible press' must stem from various possible pressures on the publisher, who epitomizes the policy making and coordinating role."⁵⁸

Gatekeeping

It was Kurt Lewin, Gestalt psychologist, who coined the term "gatekeeper" to a concept that has been applied to mass communications. Lewin said that a news item that travels through various channels is dependent on the fact that certain areas within the channels function as gates. Lewin continued this analogy by saying that "gate sections" are governed by "impartial rulers" or "gatekeepers," and in the later case, an individual or group has the power to determine whether a news item will con-

tinue along the communications channels or whether it will cease.⁵⁹

Communications researcher Wilbur Schramm made a point central to fellow media researcher David Manning White's study "The Gatekeeper: A Case Study in the Selection of News," when he wrote "no aspect of communication is so impressive as to the enormous number of choices and discards which have to be made between the formation of the symbol in the mind of the communicator, and the appearance of a related symbol in the mind of the receiver."⁶⁰

Gatekeepers, in mass communications, are newsmen who, at various points along the communications channels, control the fate of the news. In order to understand how gatekeeping can be used to manage the news, White's study and a study by journalism professor Walter Gieber of sixteen telegraph editors will be used as a reference for discussion.

White's study, which was the first to apply Lewin's concept to mass communications, dealt with a wire editor on a non-metropolitan midwestern newspaper in a town of about 100,000. In many respects, White said, he is the most important gatekeeper of all. If a wire editor rejects a piece of copy, the work of all those who preceded him along the communications channels is negated.⁶¹

Determining what the wire editor selected from his incoming wire copy was no problem for White; it appeared on the front and jump pages of the newspaper. What White was more interested in finding out was the items that did not get published.⁶²

White believed that the results of his study are applica-

ble not only to the wire editor he studied but, with certain modifications, to all gatekeepers in the communication's process.⁶³

When White studied the reasons why the wire editor rejected nearly nine-tenths of the wire copy to select the one-tenth he printed, it became apparent how "highly subjective, how reliant upon value judgments based on the 'gatekeepers' own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations, the communication of news really is."⁶⁴

White instructed the wire editor to mark each piece of copy which he did not use by putting the reason for his rejection. He rejected one piece of copy with the notation "He's too Red." Another was marked "never use this;" it dealt with the Townsend Plan and since the editor felt the worthiness of this plan was dubious, the chance of it appearing in the paper was negligible. Eighteen items were marked "B.S.," sixteen were labeled "propaganda" and one said "don't care for suicides." White discovered that many of the reasons for rejection were "highly subjective value judgments."⁶⁵

It is a well known fact in individual psychology that people tend to perceive as true only those happenings which fit into their own beliefs concerning what is likely to happen. It begins to appear (if this editor is a fair representative of his class) that in his position as gatekeeper the newspaper editor sees to it (even though he may never be consciously aware of it) that the community shall hear as fact only those events which the newspaperman, as a representative of his culture, believes to be true.⁶⁶

Walter Gieber in "News is What Newspapermen Make It," discussed the findings of his study of sixteen telegraph editors on Wisconsin dailies during 1956. He made these generalizations concerning his research. News does not have an independent ex-

istence. It is a product of individuals who are members of a newsgathering bureaucracy. But the question raised in Gieber's study is "How subjective is the news?" Very much so in Gieber's opinion. "If one means expression of the individuality of the communicator, the answer is there is some subjectivity. It appears to me that the reporter's individuality is strongly tempered by extrapersonal factors."⁶⁷ Although newsmen cannot expect to have the freedom of the artist, the reporter often identifies with "craftsmen," who should possess the freedom to express himself freely. But Gieber said the news gathering bureaucracy controls craft freedom which should encourage critical evaluation of the news and role development. Gieber feels that the "splended isolation" (freedom from restrictive aspects of the news-gathering bureaucracy) simply does not exist for most reporters. "The news is controlled by the frame of reference created by the bureaucratic structure of which the communicator is a member."⁶⁸

Voluntary Suppression

Suppression, or self-imposed censorship by the news executives, is the elimination of a newsworthy story. In San Francisco both dailies imposed self regulation concerning an outbreak of sniping in a black area. Editors not only suppressed the news but exerted pressure on others to follow their example too. A wire service received calls saying that the issue was being handled in a "special way,"* and that if a wire service

*A possible example of a news quarantine also.

story was picked up by papers across the nation, it would interfere with their plans.⁶⁹

Some critics claim that this kind of censorship is not at all suppression of news but merely the exercise of "professional news judgment." But when an editor is in the position of saying that "routine crime in a white neighborhood is more newsworthy than the shooting death of a white man in a (black) ghetto," he is obviously not using the same criteria.⁷⁰

The next chapter concerns an example of the suppression of a news story written by Time magazine's representatives of the Saigon Press Corps.

NEWS MANAGEMENT BY TIME MAGAZINE

One noteworthy example of news management involved the Saigon Press Corps and Time magazine during 1963. To provide background for a discussion of this example, information on the Saigon Press Corps is given, beginning with its formation in 1961 and through 1966.

The Saigon Press Corps, 1961-1966

Who were the American correspondents in Vietnam? Malcolm Browne was the first resident correspondent who came to Vietnam in November, 1961, for AP. Neil Sheehan, the second arrival, came in April, 1962, for UPI, and David Halberstam arrived in May, 1962, for the New York Times. Francois Sully, who covered the French defeat at Dienbienphu, reported for Newsweek until he was expelled by Diem as a result of his news coverage. Others who appeared in 1962 were Peter Arnett of AP, Homer Bigart of the New York Times, Charles Mohr of Time, and Beverly Deepe of Newsweek, who later joined the Christian Science Monitor.⁷¹

Vietnam "remained a backwater" even after the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin raids and the beginning of the bombing in February, 1965. In terms of permanently assigned newsmen, there were only about twenty in Saigon. During 1964, Jim Lucas of Scripps-Howard was the only correspondent regularly assigned to accompany combat troops in the field.⁷²

Prior to the 1965 troop buildup the consensus of the news executives was that Vietnam was a temporary assignment even

though it rated front page coverage and was the leading world dateline for the American press.⁷³

By the end of 1966, 468 correspondents representing 29 countries were accredited to report from Vietnam. One hundred and seventy three were U.S. correspondents.⁷⁴

For the truth was that the flow of the news from East to West was based primarily on war coverage by hordes of correspondents who came in by jet plane, and for the most part never stayed very long. . . . For the vast majority of the Western Press, the wire services continued to serve as the work horses.⁷⁵

Ninety one correspondents of American news organizations who seemed to meet the qualifications ~~of~~ being "permanently assigned" to Asia were the subjects in a survey reported by John Hohenberg during the summer of 1964.⁷⁶ About a dozen newsmen were home on leave. The survey covered a majority of the total number of correspondents assigned to Asia. Their average age was 38.5 years and had served in the area for an average of 20.34 months in the post they held at the time of the survey. Their average overseas assignments totaled 7.81 years and the group had been journalists for an average of 14.95 years.

Fifteen newspaper or newspaper groups were represented, three weekly news magazines, two business news organizations, two general circulation magazines, two wire services and three radio-TV networks.

Mohr-Perry Dispute

Prior to 1963, a dispute developed between the two Time correspondents in Vietnam and their editors in New York. This polarization was far more distinct than the usual one between

field and home office. Charles Mohr, Time's chief correspondent in Southeast Asia, discovered that his stories changed markedly to present a view more favorable to the Pentagon. These changes were being made by editors who were 10,000 miles from the scene of the articles. Mohr felt strongly that the magazine's viewpoint was too optimistic. When he returned to New York to confer with his editors, he argued for tougher coverage concerning Vietnam and complained bitterly about the rewriting of his stories in the home office. Mohr was told by his editors that he was "too close to the scene" and was unable to grasp "the big picture" presented to them at Pentagon briefings.⁷⁷

David Halberstam, who was then a member of the Saigon Press Corps for the New York Times, gave his opinion concerning the reason for the controversy in The Making of a Quagmire.

Part of the reason for this, I think, was because of the particular way in which Time's executives view the magazine: to a large degree they see it not just as a magazine of reporting, but as an instrument of policy making. Thus, what Time's editors want to happen is as important as what is happening. In Vietnam, where U.S. prestige was staked against a Communist enemy, and the government was Christian and anti-Communist, Time had a strong commitment to Diem.⁷⁸

Mohr had been assigned to Vietnam during most of 1963. A colleague who worked closely with him, Mert Perry, had been sent to Vietnam in late 1961 by UPI, and remained to accept a better paying job as a stringer for Time. Although he did not have staff privileges, he "was in every sense a Time reporter."⁷⁹

In April, 1963, Richard M. Clurman, Time's chief of correspondents, visited Saigon, met with members of the press corps, talked with their sources, and interviewed Nolting,

General Nhu and President Diem. After Clurman's visit, the situation improved in Mohr and Perry's estimation about what was being published in Time during most of the Buddhist crisis. But within a few weeks, the polarization widened once again between field and home office. In August, 1963, Mohr's cover story on Madame Nhu was over-edited in his opinion to underemphasize what he said was her destructive effect on the society. Following the cover story, Mohr wrote a long and detailed story about the Saigon Press Corps analyzing the root of the controversy and praising the reporting of the correspondents. The story was killed.⁸⁰

Mohr was then asked to compile, along with Perry, a roundup story about the progress of the war. Within three days they had completed 25 pages of copy which Halberstam considered the "toughest written to that date by a resident correspondent."⁸¹

The article which never appeared in print but is documented by Halberstam in his book mentioned above, began with the lead: "The war in Viet Nam is being lost." It continued, "Not everyone in Viet Nam would be willing to go so far at this point. But those men who know Viet Nam best have given the best of their energies and a portion of their souls to this program are suddenly becoming passionate on this subject." The unpublished article pointed out that Washington had requested that all Saigon officials submit detailed reports on what was happening, and it had given these officials an opportunity "to bare their souls." "I am laying it on the line," said one. "Now is the time for the truth. There are no qualifications in what I write." Another said, "I am going on the record in black and white. The war will

be lost in a year, but I gave myself some leeway and said three years." Another said his program in the countryside is "dead." One source said American military reporting in the country "has been wrong and false--lies really. We are now paying the price."⁸²

Mohr's article as described by Halberstam also reported that much of what was written by the officials in Saigon would be diluted by the time it would reach Washington. The officials knew Mohr contended that they were in the middle of a first class major foreign policy crisis and that history would be a harsh judge.

But the story submitted by Mohr and Perry was never published. It was set aside and a contributing editor, Gregory Dunne, was instructed to rewrite an optimistic piece. Dunne, who had previously rewritten optimistic pieces about Vietnam, refused to file the story and told his superiors he would not rewrite any more of the correspondents copy that involved total alteration of content. But eventually one of the editors wrote a story in New York, "South Viet Nam: Report on the War," which bore no resemblance to Mohr and Perry's article.⁸³

Instead of "The war in Viet Nam is being lost," the lead filed by the correspondents, what appeared was " . . . government soldiers are fighting better than ever" The article, which was not based on any story filed by a correspondent in Vietnam, opened,⁸⁴

Overshadowed by the political and diplomatic turmoil in Saigon, the all but forgotten war against the Viet Cong continues on its ugly, bloody and wearisome course. The drive against the Communists has not diminished in recent weeks: in fact, it has intensified. Fears that the Buddhist controversy might

damage morale among Vietnamese troops have so far been groundless. If last week's battles were any criterion, the government soldiers are fighting better than ever against a Communist foe that is exacting a hideous price in blood in the flooded paddies of the South.

The article concluded,

What next in U.S. policy? It was a time of frantic pondering and frantic discussion in Washington. Some of the suggestions were ludicrous: Cut off all aid to Diem (which would effectively hand the country to the Communists): run the Seventh Fleet up to the coast and force Diem out of power (also senseless, since no suitable successor was visible). No one seemed to be discussing perhaps the most sensible solution of all: stop all the halfway hints of encouragement to promoters of a coup d'etat and get on with the difficult and unpalatable task of working with Ngo Dinh Diem and his family.

Faced with a profusion of proposals for action, President Kennedy was keeping his mind open. At his press conference, he refused all efforts to draw him into a discussion of personalities and said simply: 'What helps the war we support: what interferes with the war we oppose. We are not there to see a war lost. That is our policy.'

As if to quiet U.S. nervousness, Diem at week's end announced that martial law which has been in effect for almost a month, will end this week, forshadowing a possible return to normalcy to South Viet Nam.⁸⁵

The content of Time magazine's article did not coincide with reports being filed by other major sources, namely the AP, the UPI, Newsweek, CBS and NBC.⁸⁶ Otto Fuerbringer, managing editor of Time who was later promoted to editorship, decided that an explanation was needed. Stanley Karnow, who preceeded Mohr as Time chief in Southeast Asia and had resigned his position because of similar circumstances which confronted Mohr and Perry, told how Fuerbringer proceeded to "set the record crooked."⁸⁷ Karnow explained that Fuerbringer called a writer into his office and with "nothing more than his own preconceptions to guide him,"

dictated an article for the magazine's press section which appeared September 20.⁸⁸

The Time press section piece, "Foreign Correspondents: The View from Saigon," opened with a reference to the New York Times and its frustration with Vietnam news.

For all the light it shed, the news that U.S. newspaper readers got from Saigon might just as well have been printed in Vietnamese Only last month, the New York Times threw up its hands helplessly and, beneath an editorial apology, printed two widely divergent accounts of events: one presented the picture as viewed from Washington, the other as viewed from Saigon.*

But the reference to the New York Times was only the prelude to an indictment of the Vietnam Press Corps for creating confusion.

Uncertainty out of Washington is not exactly news but one of the more curious aspects of the South Viet Nam story is that the Press Corps on the scene is helping to compound the very confusion that it should be untangling for its readers at home.

The article attributed the confusion to solidarity of the Press Corps, describing a kind of wolf-pack behavior in covering news.

*The article mentioned above appeared in the New York Times on August 23, under the headline "Two Versions of the Crisis in Vietnam: One Lays Plot to Nhu, Other to Army: Sources in Saigon say Military Did Not Order Attacks--Washington's Reports Indicate Diem Yielded to Officers." The editorial apology said,

The confused situation in South Vietnam was reflected yesterday in conflicting versions of the role played by the Army high command in the Saigon regime's attacks this week against the Buddhists.

A dispatch from Saigon quoted reliable sources there as having said that the drive had been planned and executed in its initial stage without the knowledge of the army. But information received in Washington pictured South Vietnam's army commanders as having put pressure on President Ngo Dinh Diem to persuade him to act.

Much of its failure can be traced to its solidarity. Foreign correspondents, wherever they are stationed, are tempted to band together into an unofficial club; they are their own closest connection with home. When they have finished covering a story, when they have examined it from every angle, they find it pleasant to relax in each other's company. In Saigon, however, more than mere solidarity brings the U.S. correspondents together.

Such uncommon pressures unite the newsmen to an uncommon degree. They work hard and go their separate assignments. But when they meet and unwind--in the field, in their homes or in the camaraderie of the Hotel Caravelle's eighth floor bar--they pool their convictions, information, misinformation and grievances. But the balm of such companionship has not been conducive to independent thought. The reporters have tended to reach unanimous agreement on almost everything they have seen. But such agreement is suspect because it is so obviously inbred. The newsmen have themselves become a part of South Viet Nam's confusion; if their own conclusions offered all the necessary illumination.

Drawing the conclusion, Time attributed bias and distortion in news to the newsmen themselves.

Such reporting is prone to distortions. The complicated greys of a complicated country fade into oversimplified blacks and whites

The Saigon based press corps is so confident of its own convictions that any other version of the Viet Nam story is equally dismissed as the fancy of a bemused observer. Many of the correspondents seem reluctant to give splash treatment to anything that smacks of military victory in the ugly war against the Communists, since this would take the sheen off the theory that the infection of the Buddhist troubles in Saigon is demoralizing the government troops, and weakens the argument that defeat is inevitable so long as Diem is in power. . . . 89

Richard Clurman tried to get in touch with publisher Henry Luce to block publication of the press section piece but was unable to contact him. Clurman suspected Mohr and Perry would resign so he arranged a meeting in Paris to discuss the matter. Mohr told Clurman he would quit if he was not given a by-lined article of equal space to refute the Fuerbringer account. The publisher of Time was distraught about the idea of losing a fav-

orite correspondent but was unwilling to shun a senior editor. "A refutation of the piece would humiliate his strongest editor, Fuerbringer, a man considered by many of his colleagues to be the architect of Time's dazzling finished product; on the other hand, by doing nothing he would lose a justifiably angry and talented reporter."⁹⁰

As a result of the September 20 press section article, Mohr and Perry resigned. Mohr, a well known reporter, received offers from Newsweek, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. He accepted the Times job while Perry accepted an offer with the Chicago Daily News.⁹¹

Publisher Luce sent Clurman to Vietnam to get a firsthand account of the controversy and told him to write a second piece for the Time press section which appeared October 11. David Halberstam in The Making of a Quagmire, described how the second story was written.

After spending many hours with all of us going over our copy, Clurman became convinced that the 'Press' story had been outrageous--but he also realized that a second piece was pointless. Nevertheless, orders were handed down that it be written. Once again there was a struggle between Clurman and Fuerbringer over the tone of the article; at one point Fuerbringer apparently led, then Clurman staged a come back, but the final version was heavily 'Fuerbringerized.' Though the piece came as close as Time ever ventures in admitting that a mistake had been made, it still claimed that the war was going better than the press corps reported, and it was still an attack on our judgment.⁹²

The second press section piece was published under the title "Foreign Correspondents: The Saigon Story." The text of the article was conciliatory towards correspondents, but raised questions of their credibility.

Personally, the correspondents are serious, somewhat on the young side, energetic, ambitious, convivial, in love with their work. So in love, in fact, that they talk about little else. They have a strong sense of mission.

Sometimes, however, the correspondents' sense of mission gets them into a different sort of trouble. It raises the question: Have they given their readers an unduly pessimistic view of the progress of the war and the quality of the Diem government?

It is not an idle question, for Washington policy-makers, receiving considerable conflicting information of their own, having relied a good deal on what they have read in the public prints. One White House adviser says that for him, the Times Halberstam is a more trustworthy source of battle information than all the official cables available in Washington. Hearst editor Frank Conniff wrote the New York Times reporting on Viet Nam had misled the president; it was, he said, 'a political time bomb. . . .'

The story began some months ago, even before the Buddhist uprising brought additional correspondents to the scene. Both wire services' correspondents, the AP's Malcolm Browne and UPI's Neil Sheehan, got into heated arguments with their home offices over their coverage. Recently the AP told Browne to take a month off to quiet down. There was tension in many a newspaper office--and plenty in Saigon.

Worried by their correspondents' insistent anti-Diem anti-Nhu, pro Buddhist, we're-losing-the-war attitude, editors began sending other hands to Saigon for a 'fresh look.' One of the first such visitors was the New York Herald Tribune's Maggie Higgins, who complained: 'Reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they're right.' She went out into the field in an effort to get 'the seldom told other side of the story,' she insisted, that contrasts violently with the tragic headlines and anti-Diem ferment in the big cities.⁹³

The October 11 press section piece went on to say that when the New York Times queried their man in Saigon for his opinions about Maggie Higgins' dispatches, Halberstam replied, "any more questions about that woman's copy and I resign, repeat, resign."⁹⁴

Time said the correspondents in Saigon were working hard under difficult circumstances but also found them to be such a tightly knit group that their articles had a tendency to support their own judgments which were critical of about everything.⁹⁵

Is this discussion typical or representative of foreign news reporting? Do most foreign correspondents submit their copy directly to their editors for publication, as was the case with Mohr and Perry, or are there usually gatekeepers along the communications channels? Do most editors have well developed attitudes about the significance of foreign news? These and other possible questions are answered in the following chapter which puts the Time magazine example in perspective with foreign news reporting.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

International news may appear to be superficially simple when it can be transmitted around the globe in a matter of minutes. But often news does not travel this fast. An article written by a foreign correspondent usually must filter through an obstacle course of "reportorial error or bias, editorial selection and processing, translation, transmission difficulties, and possible suppression or censorship."⁹⁶

The Flow of International News

Between the foreign correspondent covering a news story and the reader at home there is an "international chain of intermediaries" who rewrite, edit or suppress the news. In his study of "Intermediary Communicators in the International Flow of News," John T. McNelly explains how complicated the flow of international news can be.

McNelly gave the step-by-step flow of an international news story through a series of gatekeepers, or intermediary communicators.

A newsworthy event comes to the attention of a foreign correspondent who writes a story about it. The story goes to a regional bureau where an editor or rewriter may cut the story down for transmission to the news agency's central bureau. There a deskman may combine it with a related story from another country. The resulting story goes to a national or state bureau where another deskman prunes it down and relays it to the telegraph editor of a newspaper. . . . He slashes it still further and passes it on to the reader.⁹⁷

The process of newsgathering and reporting can be visual-

ized as being funnel shaped. Each stage narrows the dimensions of the news that the next gatekeeper has to work with. In the newsroom the final choices have to be made as to what news will appear in print. To say that the earlier stages of gatekeeping are less important than the later stages should be resisted. The reporter is responsible for the news gathering stages which has the importance of defining the outer boundaries of choice. Editorial decisions are important because the amount of available white space is small in proportion to available news and thus they are responsible for the selection of what gets printed. The New York Times only prints about 15 per cent of the approximate one million words that enter its newsroom each day.⁹⁸

Since there is a severe limitation of space that is available to foreign news each day, it gives what few stories that appear major importance. These articles are the main source which Americans must use to formulate in their minds what U.S. foreign policy is.⁹⁹

There is general agreement among news executives that foreign news is not a "staple in the reading diet" of the general public. In most newspapers, executives agree not to run many foreign news items and to avoid extended analysis of complicated foreign policy issues. The gatekeeping criteria affect primarily the character and amount of coverage or long term policies rather than influencing decisions on a day-to-day basis concerning each foreign news article. The amount and diversity of foreign news fluctuates from time-to-time depending upon the appeal or interest of new, exciting and unusual happenings, rather than decisions made about the policy significance.¹⁰⁰

The policy preference of publishers and editors and the "substantive theories they have that invest specific developments with policy significance," adds to their basis for the selection of foreign news. This means that news decisions in some papers are affected heavily, though not entirely, by the preferences of the news executives. Other papers appear to be influenced less on these matters.¹⁰¹

Not many newspapers are run by men who have a "consistent and well-developed conception of the international environment," who use their own judgment in producing a paper noted for its foreign news coverage. Most papers are run by individuals whose knowledge, experience, and interest, focus on regional, state and local news. Their primary interest and specialty are usually not foreign affairs and they often lack the knowledge that tells them the significance they should attach to particular articles.¹⁰²

When editors feel their knowledge is lacking about the significance of foreign news, they rely on the judgments of others whom they have confidence. These judgments about foreign news come from two primary sources. The most important source is the wire service news budget which is a summary of what its editors feel are the most important stories of the day. The lists, which include one from each organization the paper subscribes, are available when the editor must select from the vast number of stories, the ones he thinks will be the important issues of the day. These news budgets give the editor a comforting reassurance that if he accepts the news judgments of the editors of the budgets, he will be choosing, along with hundreds of other

editors, the wire service news editors' predictions of what the news will be for any given day. To diverge from the news budgets, especially items that appear in more than one agency's summary, would be to omit articles that the editor knows will be the news of many papers across the nation. The news budgets also help put international news "into a context of domestic news from a variety of arenas, so that the editor can know not only the top foreign policy stories but also the relative importance assigned to these stories in the larger field of news."¹⁰³

Another source editors use, as a kind of independent check on the news budget, is to borrow the news judgments of other papers. Many newspapers rely on the New York Times while other larger papers serve as a guide to the smaller ones in their area.¹⁰⁴

Correspondents for the wire services and the larger publications that maintain their own foreign affairs coverage follow a policy of reporting that is more narrow at the beginning than the reporting of other smaller publications. The larger organizations proceed within the framework of what they know their editors and publishers want with regard to amount and variety, and because their organizations are more subject to "collegial definition of what the news is at any given moment."

There is an extraordinary significance of the editorial choices, the judgments of importance, made by comparatively few people, especially in the news agencies and in what are sometimes called the 'quality' media. Their decisions constitute a powerful thrust toward the standardization of news, national as well as international, in a country that has no truly national paper to do the job.¹⁰⁵

Vietnam Correspondents and the Flow of International News

What was the input of Vietnam correspondents to international news? A quantitative answer is provided in the findings of a survey cited earlier in Chapter Two. According to this survey thirty nine correspondents who estimated the average length of their dispatches (not all filed stories daily) said their stories came to 600 to 690 words. Malcolm Browne reported that he was required to file 700 words daily for the AP. Ten news weekly correspondents, who estimated the average length of their copy, said it came to 1,120 to 1,540 words in a normal week. A cover story's length could include as many as 10,000 words or more.

It was difficult for correspondents to estimate their travels precisely for a twelve-month period. Their best recollections were as follows: eight correspondents had six to ten months' travel away from their home bases which ranged from 75,000 to 100,000 miles or more; eighteen correspondents had three to six months' travel away which covered about 25,000 miles; ten traveled in the country they were based while ten others reported no travel.

Forty three of ninety one newsmen said they relied upon "spot news" as their primary focus; thirty three specialized in news analysis; five in features and ten in general news. The ninety one newsmen said politics, Red China and the Vietnamese war were the three top interest stories. They agreed that it was difficult to "sell their editors on any other aspect of news from Asia"

How did Vietnam correspondents view the way in which their stories were handled? Many of the correspondents in the survey cited above were satisfied with the way their stories were edited and the use made of their material, although magazine correspondents were "not particularly pleased" with the average 20 to 25 percent use of their copy. One correspondent said that the magazine he worked for had not used any of his copy for an entire year. It was a "rare case." Thirty six newsmen had no suggestions as to the improvement or the use made of their copy. Others said editors should allocate more space to foreign news in general and Asian news in particular; there should be a greater emphasis on news analysis; and less rewriting of dispatches. Four "hard-shelled" correspondents suggested that better informed editors would help.¹⁰⁶

Insights into attitudes of Vietnam newsmen toward the home office were evident in a NET television interview between moderator Paul Niven and four correspondents. The interview is reported here in detail because it is relevant to the Time case.¹⁰⁷

Niven asked: "Gentlemen, between all of you and your readers and viewers in the states, or editors, do you--of course anybody in any overseas bureau has problems with his home office--but do you feel on the whole that your material is intelligently edited by people who understand what's going on here.?"

Jack Foisie of the Los Angeles Times said that his material is intelligently edited. He said he always thought his copy could be improved upon by his desk and he is delighted when he sees the paper and what they have done with his story. He

felt that he has had to write under some very trying circumstances and that his editors just smoothed it out, tightened it up and made certain points clearer.

Charles Mohr of the New York Times agreed that his paper has been magnificent in these situations. When reporters have constant pressures, the executives will not take sides with the establishment. David Halberstam once said the main quality a reporter needed to cover a difficult story was a tough publisher. Mohr added that the executives of the American press have, on the whole, supported their reporters.

Niven commented that Malcolm Browne had no organizational ties at the moment and was about to lead a ivory tower life. He asked him if he was as equally generous to editors.

Browne, who was formerly with the AP and the ABC, said,

I disagree a hundred per cent with my colleagues. I feel that, having worked for a number of news organizations--and I'm not going to enumerate them but they're good ones--I would say that editors and news directors and so forth at the desk level back in the states, are very little above the average level of information that the rest of the American public. That is to say, they know practically nothing about Vietnam. And this I base on a continuing series of lecture tours that I take before editorial groups--and have made over the last five years that I've been here--and it isn't that these people are not intelligent, it's just that they're viewing the Viet Nam war in the context of other wars that they know about--World War II and Korea and in some cases the Algerian War, this sort of thing. The experiences of these earlier wars are not applicable here. And the questions that they send out to their people reflect attitudes to the American public. They're questions that don't bear necessarily on reality. And if they don't get the answers they want they're dissatisfied. They come back again and again, with the same sort of thing. No, my feeling is that these preconceived notions that editorial staffs have of what things are here are distorting the picture. The editors obviously--all stories need to go through some kind of editorial

control, they've got to be cut and trimmed and polished up, and none of us write or produce or do anything perfectly--and so there's a real need for this. If I had my druthers, I'd bring all editorial staffers to Viet Nam and set them down here and post them for six months as reporters.¹⁰⁸

Niven asked Foisie if he felt a responsibility to keep in touch with the editorial writers of his paper and if he did. Also he wanted to know if the Los Angeles Times relied on his judgment to shape their editorial policy toward Vietnam.

Foisie replied that he is well known on his paper as a person who feels we are not really fighting the Vietnam war in the right manner. He believes his point of view gets across to his superiors who shape the editorial policy.¹⁰⁹

Niven asked Mohr if he kept in touch with the Times editorial board.

Mohr said that he doesn't directly but he thinks the stories written by the staffers influence their editorial decisions. Mohr feels that the day of the policy story has ceased for American journalism. Seldom does a story have to conform with a paper's editorials. Mohr said it was his responsibility to report about Vietnam and he must do it the way he sees it.¹¹⁰

Browne said that news from event to reader is a "two way street." It depends both on the news and the demands of the consumer. "Readers and editors . . . demand their news in the simplest capsule available, sometimes limiting their consumption to mere headlines."¹¹¹

Browne, who had been a newspaper deskman, said, "I have a keen appreciation for the exacting and difficult work of the headline writer. He must pack as much information as possible

into a very small space. Numbers are ideally suited to headline writing."

The number of home runs, the number of weekend traffic fatalities, and the number of delegates pledged to a given political candidate are all apt subjects for headlines. So are battle casualties in Viet Nam, or the number of Buddhists, or the number of square miles controlled by the Communists.

But unfortunately, Viet Nam does not lend itself well to numerical reporting, or even to the simple, narrative statement required of the average newspaper lead. There are too many shades of gray, too many dangers of applying English language cliches to a situation that cannot be described by cliches.¹¹²

Problems of Reporting

Neil Sheehan, who was appointed Saigon bureau chief for UPI in April, 1962, said he soon realized that the sources he was supposed to rely on, namely the U.S. Embassy, the government and the military mission, in his opinion, could not be relied upon. An estimated 80 per cent of his copy was based on private sources. Perry and Browne, who were completing their second year in Vietnam in late 1963, worked similarly.¹¹³

Halberstam, who arrived in Saigon in 1962, began spending about two weeks of every month in the field. He began to "depend to some extent on the UPI's bureau chief Sheehan;" they would cover for each other. Halberstam said he would not have been able to spend the time in the field if Sheehan wasn't backing him up in Saigon.¹¹⁴

Soon Halberstam and Sheehan had a complete network of people in the junior and middle levels of government, the U.S. Army, and various U.S. agencies.¹¹⁵

Newsmen sometimes had difficulty obtaining transporta-

tion to areas where news was breaking. During the first part of October, 1963, the Foreign Operations and Government Information subcommittee of the House revealed that in early 1962 Carl T. Rowan, then deputy assistant secretary of state for Public Affairs, issued a press guidance which included: (1) News stories which criticize the Diem government could not be forbidden, but they only increase the difficulties of the U.S. job; (2) Newsmen should be advised that trifling or thoughtless criticism of the Diem government would make it difficult to maintain proper cooperation between the United States and Diem; and (3) Newsmen should not be transported on military activities of the type that are likely to result in undesirable stories.¹¹⁶

Correspondents have a number of obstacles that inhibit their reporting in Vietnam: cross cultural communications problems; difficulty in traveling; near impossibility of reporting regularly from both sides of the line; and government secrecy. Two other problems that are often overlooked. One is the underdeveloped state of the local communications, which can be an asset to correspondents where they are developed. In Saigon there is no paper that reports local developments with any comparison to a paper like Le monde in Paris. Another difficulty is scarcity of good sources for "interpretive judgments" about current developments.¹¹⁷

An article in Journalism Quarterly the Summer of 1961 discusses the quality of foreign correspondents.

The primary barriers to good foreign news coverage are the scarcity of journalists trained by experience and language skills, and the high costs of maintaining correspondents abroad. . . . Journalists lack the

skills necessary to cover thoroughly, the news breaking abroad. Proper coverage of news in a foreign country requires fluency in the language of the area, . . . and a knowledge of the geography, the history and the policies of the country.

Getting no news, or news reported hurriedly and without an understanding of contending factions, without the appropriate language skills, and without perspective on the area's culture is risky indeed for a country which intends to continue a system in which the public shares in the decision making.¹¹⁸

In an article in the Nieman Reports, Browne gave some "tips to stringers" about Vietnam news coverage.

Avoid the crowd. Newsmen and newswomen come to Vietnam by the hundreds and there is a tendency to gather in bunches--in bars, in offices, on operations, and so forth. One of the best stringers we ever had never went to the Caravelle Bar, never went out on a story with another person. Blaze new trails, and do it alone. The fresh story, the new angle, the hitherto unreported--these are the things we want¹¹⁹

DISCUSSION

It is apparent that Time Magazine's executives used suppression as a form of news management to censor Mohr and Perry's story to enable them to print a different article written in New York. But other forms of news management had an influence also. The question of news policy must be raised and also the reference Clurman made in the press section piece concerning "Cook's Tours."

Most newspapermen were satisfied with the use made of their copy written in Asia, according to the survey discussed earlier. However, one should note that only about 20 to 25 per cent of all magazine copy is used from Asia. This means that a correspondent for a magazine should expect that one in every four or five stories he submits will get printed. At first glance one might say that Mohr and Perry's story that was written for publication September 20, could have easily fallen into the 75 to 80 per cent of copy that is discarded. But Mohr's previous story praising the press corps was killed and the reprimands that Time printed in their two press section pieces shed light into the executives' motives.

Halberstam claimed the article filed by the correspondents was the toughest written to that date by a resident correspondent(s). It should be noted that among the larger publications, staffers generally know what their editors want, according to Breed. He said, unless a staffer is very independent or naive, he generally writes his articles similar to the

norms of others he reads in the publication. In The Press and Foreign Policy, Cohen said that correspondents for the wire services and larger publications that maintain their own foreign affairs coverage follow a policy of reporting that is more narrow at the beginning than the reporting of other smaller publications. The larger publication proceeds within a framework of what they know their editors want. It appears that Mohr and Perry must have been very independent rather than naive as perhaps a cub reporter might be on a small publication.

Editors can ignore stories which run counter to the paper's policy or they can assign important stories to "safe staffers." When Mohr and Perry's copy reached the desk in New York, the editor probably realized that, as Halberstam put it, it was "the toughest written to that date." The story was set aside and reassigned to a "safe staffer" Gregory Dunne who had rewritten optimistic pieces before in New York, but he refused to write this one. It was eventually assigned to another editor. Breed said that when an anti-policy story does reach the desk it can always be changed to conform with policy.

Breed answered the question "what happens when a staffer submits an anti-policy story?" by saying that the learning process is incorporated into a process of social control where deviations are gently punished by reprimand. This usually involves heavy editing or the withholding of approving comments by the editor. Time magazine's editors used reprimand in the two press section pieces but it was not exactly gentle. It appeared that the press section pieces were open invitations for the correspondents to

resign. But perhaps their story was a precipitating factor of a predisposing staff-executive conflict that had existed long before their resignation.

Breed listed five ways a correspondent can by-pass policy. His second point dealt with executives being ignorant of particular facts and staffers, who do the leg work to gather news, can use their superior knowledge to subvert policy. One problem that exists with editors is how to check facts if their correspondents are 10,000 miles from the home offices. An editor must have a certain amount of faith and trust in his correspondent or problems may arise.

Breed also said "beat reporters," who can select their own stories and sources, can by-pass news that add fuel to policy and play up controversial items that go counter to news policy. Apparently Mohr and Perry selected sources, after the story was assigned to them, that were "controversial" and would give a different account of the progress of the war. After all, the reporter is one of the first gatekeepers involved in the communications channels.

One can see how easy it is for correspondents to be selective in obtaining sources in Vietnam when the New York Times printed two widely divergent accounts of events; one as viewed from Saigon, the other, Washington. Sheehan and Halberstam said that 80 per cent of their copy came from private sources. Perry and Browne said they worked similarly.

When editors, such as those on Time and others, went to the Pentagon for briefings, perhaps they assumed that their

reporters in Vietnam were interviewing the same type of sources, namely government officials. The polarization could have easily stemmed from the information obtained from these private sources.

The first press section piece September 20 said,

Much of the failure of the press can be traced to its solidarity. Foreign correspondents, wherever they are stationed, are tempted to band together into an unofficial club. But when they meet and unwind--in the field, in their homes or in the camaraderie of the Hotel Caravelle's eighth floor bar--they pool their convictions, information, misinformation and grievances.

Malcolm Browne, in his "tips to stringers," must have agreed with these accusations when he said, "Avoid the crowd. Newsmen come to Vietnam by the hundreds and there is a tendency to gather in bunches, in bars, offices or on operations." The Time article added that the "balm of such companionship has not been conducive to independent thought." Browne said, "One of the best stringers we ever had never went to the Caravelle Bar, never went on a story with another person."

The press section piece made reference to "pooling their convictions." The Esquire article discussed earlier, said the Saigon Press Corps tended to "reinforce each other's opinions," which has never really been denied and is obviously true to some extent, but this happens in many remote areas of the world, particularly when there are only a few correspondents facing hostile forces.

In Time magazine's second press section piece October 11, Clurman wrote that both wire services' correspondents were getting into heated arguments with their home offices concerning their reporting. The only sources of information for American news-

papers that did not have correspondents in Asia were the wire services, but it was apparent that, to some extent, their field reports and private sources of information were not reaching the public.

Clurman also said in the second press section article that editors began sending "other hands to Saigon for a fresh look. The question should be raised whether editors would have sent their hand-picked correspondents on "Cook's Tours" to gain a fresh look if the Saigon Press Corp's implied stale look was more optimistic. Probably not. The polarization between the Press Corps in Saigon and their editors was probably the reason for the "fresh look" technique of news management.

One problem facing correspondents is the pressure of filing stories each day. Browne said he was required to file 700 words daily for the AP. When a correspondent is faced with a daily quota, he could easily be tempted to file a "staged" story, or a news fake, if he could not find material or sources to write a valid one each day. It would be much easier to dream up a story over a cocktail in the Caravelle Bar than to tramp through the mud in the Mekong Delta to get a first-hand report. But in Vietnam this was probably not the case. Reporters could attend the evening war briefing by the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, commonly known by the Saigon Press Corps as the "five o'clock follies." Information was always available, whether the correspondents thought it was accurate or not, to file stories daily.

CONCLUSION

Publications, since they are privately owned and are protected by the first amendment, have the right to set their own editorial policy which may be biased, slanted, or one-sided in favor of issues they believe in. But if a publication's news policy consistently parallels its editorial policy, then the publication is not acting in the public's interest. A story written as "news" should have an equal chance of getting into print whether it coincides with editorial policy or not. However, most publications generally do not print stories that radically depart from their basic policy. One should not expect to find a very liberal article in National Review or a "right wing" story in Ramparts.

Whether Mohr and Perry quit for personal or ethical reasons, the journalism profession and Time magazine's reputation with newsmen must have suffered.

David Halberstam wrote in The Making of a Quagmire,

For all the uproar generated by this teapot tempest, remarkably little light was shed on the roots of the journalistic problems in Vietnam. The traditional right of American journalists to report what they see was at stake here, even though the situation was a particularly sensitive one: ambiguous involvement in a wretched war was a ruthless enemy. Because the news was bad, there were many people who for varying reasons did not want it exposed. Yet an American reporter must believe, if he believes nothing else, that the United States has never survived in times of crisis by playing ostrich. Too much policy and too deep a commitment had already been made in Vietnam on the basis of too little information.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

"South Viet Nam: Report on the War," Time, September 20, 1963, pp. 32-33.

Overshadowed by the political and diplomatic turmoil in Saigon, the all but forgotten war against the Viet Cong continues on its ugly, bloody and wearisome course. The drive against the Communists has not diminished in recent weeks: in fact, it has intensified. Fears that the Buddhist controversy might damage morale among Vietnamese troops have so far been groundless. If last week's battles were any criterion, the government soldiers are fighting better than ever against a Communist foe that is exacting a hideous price in blood in the flooded paddies of the South.

The biggest government victory in months came last week near the town of Gocong, 45 miles south of Saigon in the dead of night. 500 Viet Cong regulars swooped down on a strategic hamlet under a screen of supporting fire from heavy machine guns and recoilless rifles. Desperately calling for help over their radio, the defenders fought back doggedly, but were barely holding out when a government infantry relief column arrived at dawn with 15 armored personnel carriers. Ambushed by the Reds, the government reinforcements did not panic, nosed their personnel carriers off the road and into the paddies, heading directly for the dug in Reds.

From a graveyard at the fringe of the battlefield, a Viet-Cong heavy machine gun knocked out an APC. But supported by

government air force planes, which were over the Red positions in screaming, shallow dives firing rockets and dropping napalm, the reinforcements rolled straight onto the Reds smashing scores of the Communist troops into the stinking paddy mud with their huge steel treads. At last the Reds broke and ran, leaving behind 83 dead.

Mutilated Bodies. The episode made no sizeable dent in the Viet Cong army. But it was heartening to U.S. military observers, who on many past occasions, had watched the government's troops refuse to press their attack. This time the relief column had stood its ground under the Viet Cong pounding and then moved in on the Reds in brutal combat.

Two days later, the Reds evened the score. This time they hit the rice-rich Camau Peninsula, traditionally Communist-controlled territory where government enclaves are only islands in a sea of Viet Cong. The plan was a clever two-pronged attack against the two government-held cities of Cai Nuoc and Damdoi, which lie 15 miles apart on the southernmost tip of Viet Nam. To confuse government reinforcement and to hamper their speedy arrival, the Viet Cong first feinted at three neighboring outposts, sowed mines on a major road over which government troops had to travel, and poured harassing mortar fire on a U.S. helicopter airstrip in the area.

Shortly after midnight, the Reds hit Cai Nuoc directly. Pouring mortar shells and recoilless rifle fire in the perimeter system of defensive bunkers, the Viet Cong breached the front gate of the city's major outpost, ran from bunker to bunker lob-

bing in grenades and shooting the defenders in the back. The fight lasted for only 15 minutes, but the Reds occupied the town for the next 17 hours. It was a bloodbath. When reinforcements finally appeared, they found a heap of 50 mutilated bodies, including women and children, which the Reds had set afire. Of the 100-man defending force, only 25 survived.

Experts Differ. Soon thereafter, the Reds overran the neighboring town of Damdoi. But this time the Communists made the mistake of staying too long. Seven hours after the Viet Cong occupied the town, government marines, airlifted to the scene in U.S. helicopters, counterattacked. Half of the marines blocked the Reds' escape route and attacked their sandbagged positions. Armed helicopters unloaded some 80 rockets into the Communist defenses, and fighter planes zoomed in at treetop level with guns blazing. When the Reds finally disappeared into the paddies after an all-day fight, they left behind 60 dead. The government's marines were also badly battered: 48 were killed by the time the shooting stopped.

On the basis of bodies, this might be called a government victory. Not so insist some American military men who argue that such defensive responses--whatever the penalty in lives to the Communist enemy--are wasting the strength of the Vietnamese forces as well as the \$1,500,000 a day the U.S. is pumping into the country. These experts will not be happy until the government can organize regular "search and hold" operations in the southern rice country, Communism's stronghold.

It is an incredibly difficult task. Though the Viet Cong are losing more men (currently about 500 a week) all the time, there are more to be killed: officials in Saigon now estimate that hard-core Communist strength has gone up from 23,000 to 31,000 over the past few months. But government strikes are at least more and more frequent. In the first week of September, 55 separate offensive ground actions of battalion strength or larger were under way close to an alltime record. Conversely, Red attacks also increased from 300 to 400 in the same period. As this week's operations illustrate, however, many government troops have learned to stand and fight.

The military front seemed a million miles from Saigon last week. Four weeks after the crackdown on South Viet Nam's Buddhist opposition, an atmosphere of watchful waiting hung over the city. Still fearful of a coup, the government stationed secret police outside the homes of suspect officials: top military officers were ordered to sleep at military headquarters so that a check could be kept on their whereabouts. With the Buddhist opposition lulled for the moment, Saigon student population feebly tried to raise protests against the government. Pelted with chairs and desks thrown from classroom windows, government troops closed many of Saigon's schools, threw nearly 1,000 students into jail to cool off. It seemed likely that Viet Cong agents inspired much of the demonstrating.

This made it all the more important for the U.S. and President Ngo Dinh Diem to settle their differences. The latest episodes offered little assurance of that. Couching his words in

the most careful diplomatic terms, U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge last week suggested to Diem that his brother and fiery sister-in-law, Ngo Dinh Nhu and Mme. Nhu, leave their country until the current crisis was over and a fresh rapprochement between the government and the population established. Lodge hinted delicately that the continued presence of the bitterly controversial Nhus in South Viet Nam not only hampered the war effort against the Communist Viet Cong but could also "endanger" U.S. congressional appropriations to Diem's government. Diem expressed surprise and shock at Lodge's suggestion, coldly turned it down: he might have wondered how John F. Kennedy would feel if Viet Nam had asked the exile of Bobby and Ethel.

What next in U.S. policy? It was a time of frantic pondering and frantic discussion in Washington. Some of the suggestions were ludicrous: cut off all aid to Diem (which would effectively hand the country to the Communists): run the Seventh Fleet up to the coast and force Diem out of power (also senseless since no suitable successor was visible). No one seemed to be discussing perhaps the most sensible solution of all: stop all the halfway hints of encouragement to promoters of a coup d'etat, and get on with the difficult and unpalatable task of working with Ngo Dinh Diem and his family.

Faced with a profusion of proposals for action, President Kennedy was keeping his mind open. At his press conference, he refused all efforts to draw him into a discussion of personalities and said simply: "What helps the war we support: what interferes with the war effort we oppose. We are not there to see a war lost. That is our policy."

As if to quiet U.S. nervousness, Diem at week's end announced that martial law, which has been in effect for almost a month, will end this week, foreshadowing a possible return to normality in South Viet Nam.

APPENDIX B

"Foreign Correspondents: The View from Saigon," Time, September 20, 1963, p. 62.

For all the light it shed, the news that U.S. newspaper readers got from Saigon might just as well have been printed in Vietnamese. Was the war being won or lost? Was the Buddhist uprising religiously inspired or Communist-inspired? Would the government fall? Only last month, the New York Times threw up its hands helplessly and, beneath an editorial apology, printed two widely divergent accounts of events: one presented the picture as viewed from Washington, the other as viewed from Saigon.

Uncertainty out of Washington is not exactly news, but one of the more curious aspects of the South Viet Nam story is that the press corps on the scene is helping to compound the very confusion it should be untangling for its readers at home.

Much of its failure can be traced to its solidarity. Foreign correspondents, wherever they are stationed, are tempted to band together into an unofficial club: they are their own closest connection with home. When they have finished covering a story, when they have examined it from every angle, they find it pleasant to relax in each other's company. In Saigon, however, more than mere solidarity brings the U.S. correspondents together.

Aloof & Hostile. The country is completely alien to their experience. It lies in the middle of nowhere: 8,000 miles from the U.S., part of a uvular peninsula jutting into the South

China Sea. Everywhere they turn, the U.S. correspondents find obstacles standing in the way of dispassionate reporting. None of them speak the language with any fluency--and their Vietnamese contacts seldom speak English. When possible, they resort to the country's second language--French.

In all the land, there are only two stories to report: an extraordinary kind of war, and an extraordinary kind of government, in which the figure of the President is shadowed by his brother, who wields strong police power, and by his tiny sister-in-law--who holds no office at all. At the battlefront, both U.S. military observers and the Vietnamese brass blandly tell the newsmen stories that blatantly contradict evidence obvious to the journalists' eyes. In Saigon, the ruling family is reserved, aloof, and openly hostile; it does not trust the Western correspondents--and does not trouble to hide its feelings.

Caravelle Camaraderie. Such uncommon pressures unite the newsmen to an uncommon degree. They work hard and go their separate ways on separate assignments. But when they meet and unwind--in the field, in their homes or in the camaraderie of the Hotel Caravelle's eighth-floor bar--they pool their convictions, information, misinformation and grievances. But the balm of such companionship has not been conducive to independent thought. The reporters have tended to reach unanimous agreement on almost everything they have seen. But such agreement is suspect because it is so obviously inbred. The newsmen have themselves become a part of South Viet Nam's confusion: they have covered a complex situation from only one angle, as if their own conclusions

offered all the necessary illumination.

Such reporting is prone to distortions. The complicated greys of a complicated country fade into oversimplified blacks and whites. To Saigon's Western press corps, President Ngo Dinh Diem is stubborn and stupid, dominated by his brother and sister-in-law. As a result, the correspondents have taken sides against all three: they seldom miss a chance to overemphasize the ruling family's Roman Catholicism. The press corps' attitude automatically assigns justice and sympathy to the side of the Buddhists, who are well aware of their favored position. Before the first bonze set afire to himself, the leaders of the Buddhist uprising tipped off a Western reporter in advance. When a young Buddhist girl tried to chop off her hand in protest against government repressions, there were reports that the Buddhists delayed her trip to a hospital for 40 minutes until the last photographer had his pictures.

The Saigon-based press corps is so confident of its own convictions that any other version of the Viet Nam story is quickly dismissed as the fancy of a bemused observer. Many of the correspondents seem reluctant to give splash treatment to anything that smacks of military victory in the ugly war against the Communists, since this would take the sheen off the theory that the infection of the Buddhist troubles in Saigon is demoralizing the government troops, and weakens the argument that defeat is inevitable so long as Diem is in power. When there is a defeat, the color is rich and flowing; trend stories are quickly cranked up. Last week, after one battle, A.P. gave credit to government

troops for "the most significant victory over the Reds in months" then went on to say: "But the success was tempered by renewed civilian opposition to the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem," proceeding for nine paragraphs to talk about student demonstrations in Saigon.

A few weeks ago, a correspondent flew out from the U.S. to Saigon for a firsthand look and, ignoring the assessments of resident newsmen, reached independent conclusions. Club members were furious. The Buddhist rebellion, said the newcomer, was directed by monks who were also consummate politicians, who were less interested in redressing religious injustices than in overthrowing the Diem regime. This interpretation was greeted in the Caravelle bar by still-simmering indignation. It was the analysis of an outsider and therefore patently wrong.

APPENDIX C

"Foreign Correspondents: The Saigon Story," Time, October 11, 1963, pp. 55-56.

Some day there will be novels about that hardy band of U.S. correspondents covering the war in Viet Nam in 1963. Presumably being fiction, they will make everything clear and have everything come out right. But today, telling the truth about the Saigon press corps is a difficult job.

There is a story there, and it is currently the biggest intramural story in U.S. journalism--the most argued-about and debated press story since the hue and cry over "managed news" last year.

Personally, the correspondents are serious, somewhat on the young side, energetic, ambitious, convivial, in love with their work. So in love, in fact, that they talk about little else. They have a strong sense of mission.

Last week they turned out in response to a tip and covered the latest Buddhist suicide by fire. While the press corps tried to comply with the crowd's pleas--"Take pictures! Tell Mr. Kennedy!"--plainclothesmen moved in to confiscate their cameras. As they tried to protect their equipment, Grant Wolfkill and John Sharkey of NBC and David Halberstam of the New York Times were beaten: all three required hospitalization. Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge made a prompt protest to the Vietnamese government.

Time Bomb. Sometimes, however, the correspondents' sense of mission gets them into a different sort of trouble. It raises the question: Have they given their readers an unduly pessimistic view of the progress of the war and the quality of the Diem government?

It is not an idle question, for Washington policymakers, receiving considerable conflicting information of their own, have relied a good deal on what they have read in the public prints. One White House Adviser says that, for him, the Time's Halberstam is a more trustworthy source of battle information than all the official cables available in Washington. Hearst Editor Frank Conniff wrote that the New York Time's reporting on Viet Nam had misled the President; it was, he said, "a political time bomb," just as the Time's coverage of the Castro revolution in Cuba represented the Time's "loaded present to President Eisenhower."

These two views bracket an important part of the Saigon story--and indicate its emotional flavor.

Anti, Anti, Pro. The story began some months ago, even before the Buddhist uprising brought additional correspondents to the scene. Both wire services' correspondents, the A.P.'s Malcolm Browne and U.P.I.'s Neil Sheehan, got into heated arguments with their home offices over their coverage. Recently the A.P. told Browne to take a month off to quiet down. There was tension in many a newspaper office--and plenty in Saigon.

Worried by their correspondents' insistent anti-Diem, anti-Nhu, pro Buddhist, we're-losing-the-war attitude, editors began sending other hands to Saigon for a fresh look. One of the

first such visitors was the New York Herald Tribune's Maggie Higgins, who complained: "Reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they're right." She went out into the field in an effort to get "the seldom-told other side of the story," a story, she insisted, "that contrasts violently with the tragic headlines and anti-Diem ferment in the big cities."

When the Times queried their man in Saigon for his opinion about Maggie Higgins' views, Halberstam became exasperated. Any more questions about "that woman's copy," he cabled, "and I resign, repeat, resign."

Other papers sent reporters with fresh eyes. The Wall Street Journal dispatched Igor Organesoff and Norm Sklarewitz; John Cowles's Minneapolis Tribune sent Robert Hewett. Conniff and the rest of the Hearst task force set out for the Far East. So did Columnist Joe Alsop, a talented reporter and longtime Asian expert. Alsop characterized the Saigon correspondents as "young crusaders." He wasted no time reminding his readers that "it is easy enough to paint a dark, indignant picture without departing from the facts, if you ignore the majority of Americans who admire the Vietnamese as fighters and seek out the one U.S. officer in ten who inevitably thinks that all foreigners fight badly. The same method used to report the doings of the Diem government has naturally been even more effective, since a great many of these doings have been remarkably misguided."

Collective Judgment. The press in Saigon was obviously making news in itself, and in its Sept. 20 issues, Time assessed their work. By then, neither the correspondents' emotional in-

volvement nor their privately outspoken attitude toward the Diem government was seriously denied. Time found the Saigon reporters to be working hard under extremely difficult conditions, but also found them such a tightly knit group that their dispatches tended to reinforce their own collective judgment, which was severely critical of practically everything. What they reported about the course of the war was seriously questioned in Washington; what they wrote about the deterioration of the Diem government (not sufficiently emphasized in the Time story) was correct--and confirmed all around, even unintentionally by Mme. Ngo Dinh Nhu (Time cover, Aug. 9) as she made her noisy way around the world.

In emotion-taut Saigon, the Time story was resented. Charles Mohr, Time's Southeast Asia bureau chief, resigned. The Saigon reporters were not without their spirited defenders. The Time's Scotty Reston called his colleague Halberstam "brilliant," and Louis Lyons, 66, the retiring curator of Nieman Fellowships at Harvard, described him as "absolutely prophetic." Newly arrived Ambassador Lodge said: "The regular press here is appealing, brave, tremendously hard working."

No Apologies. As the argument about the reporting from Viet Nam continued, the Hotel Caravelle's eighth-floor bar, which serves as an unofficial Saigon Press club, began to fill up with unfamiliar faces. The visiting observers found resident newsmen in a fighting mood, quick to defend their every dispatch. U.S. officials have constantly lied to them, they said, and the U.S. embassy has shunned them for years. They play up gripes from junior officers in the field but consider General Paul Harkins,

Commander of the U.S. Forces in South Viet Nam, too evasive for his statements to be taken seriously. They seldom bother to see Diem government officials because, they say, the effort only gets them either more lies or runarounds. They have no apologies for their total dislike of the Diem government, but regardless of their personal feelings, they insist, their reporting has been as accurate as the confusing conditions permit.

The argument and emotions went on last week even as Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and General Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the J.C.S., came home to report even as President Kennedy made it clear that the U.S. is determined to dig in for a long and winning war, determined to find a way to deal with the bad political situation it must continue to live with in Viet Nam.

BACKNOTES

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A STUDY OF NEWS MANAGEMENT BY THE MASS MEDIA

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Usually when the term news management is used, it is in reference to government attempts to shape the news to give the U.S. a more favorable image. However, the mass media are also responsible for news management, which often results from internal decisions in the handling of news.

This is a qualitative study of news management by print media. The review of the literature indicates that while articles have been written about managed news, few offer a precise definition of the term. Several terms appear in the literature which are used synonymously with the phrase news management. They include: staging, emphasis, distortion and embellishment, quarantines, secrecy, Cook's tours, replacement, slanting and bias, news policy, gatekeeping and voluntary suppression. This study examines how the media executives use these forms or techniques to manage the news. An in-depth analysis of suppression is provided in a specific case involving Time magazine and two of its Vietnam correspondents, Charles Mohr and Mert Perry. An article they wrote during a critical time for the Saigon Press Corps in 1963 never appeared in print. As a result of this suppression, both correspondents resigned. This news management incident (in its extreme form of suppression) by the executives of Time has been considered a "most blatant example" by such press critics as James Arouson, David Halberstam and Stanley Karnow.

The study also includes relevant background material on the Saigon Press Corps from 1961-66 and the flow of international news.