

Embedded and Unilateral Journalists: How their Access to Sources Affected their Framing During the 2003 Iraq War

Gil Rutledge

Background for Media Involvement in War

The government took a completely different type of approach for how media would be permitted to show the 2003 Iraq War when it introduced its program to “embed” journalists in military units. The Department of Defense allowed over 600 journalists to embed with military units to “live, work and travel as part of the units with which they are embedded to facilitate maximum, in- depth coverage of U.S forces in combat and related operations.”¹ The Department of Defense defined embedded reporters as “a media representative remaining with a unit on an extended basis.”² On the other hand, unilateral reporters were any war correspondent that was not associated with a military unit. They remained behind the lines of fighting or stayed in one main city. In the case of the Iraq War, many unilateral journalists remained in Baghdad. The Iraq War provides an opportunity to examine writings from two groups of U.S journalist that were in completely different situations for their positioning during the war. Although their reporting covered the same time period, and sometimes the same events, differences in writing emerged from the two groups. Due to the Iraq War being the first time the United States used the embed program, it is important and necessary to examine how embedded journalists’ writings were framed. Many critics argued that embedded journalists would become biased due to their involvement with their units and that would affect the way they framed their articles. Throughout the course of this essay, it will become apparent that embedded journalists were definitely biased towards

their military units. The research of this study will show that how embedded and unilateral journalists framed their articles based more on the access they had to sources during a certain period of the war and less on their personal bias.

Right away, the embed program had arguments from supporters and critics. Supporters argued that the program “offered a first-hand, up close view of combat missions that was unavailable to unilateral (unembedded) or pool reporters.”³ In this sense, reporters would have the opportunity to report war in a way journalists had never been able to previously. Reasons for the Department of Defense to initiate the program still remain unclear, but Bryan Whitman, deputy assistant secretary of defense for media operations, claimed that the embedded program would allow the truth of what was happening in the fighting overseas to stand at the forefront and was completely necessary “‘because Saddam Hussein was a practiced liar, a master of deception’ and the only way to defend against that is through ‘objective third-party accounts from professional observers.’”⁴ Critics argued that the Pentagon’s “decision to facilitate journalists’ access to combat operations may have been motivated by a conscious attempt to slant news coverage” towards support for the war.⁵ Additionally, although the program would provide journalists with an unprecedented opportunity to see military operations up close, critics also claimed journalists would be unable to remain objective in their writings. Overwhelmingly, critics became concerned that journalists would become too biased to keep any kind

of objectivity due to the close relationship journalists formed with soldiers during life and death situations as the units traveled through Iraq. However, journalists' access to sources affected how they framed their articles more than bias did.

What Is Framing?

Framing of an event is a powerful tool journalists possess because "facts remain neutral until framed; thus how the press frames an issue or event will affect public understanding of that issue or event."⁶ As a whole, framing includes the selection and interpretation of "some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text" so that text then promotes "a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described"⁷ Personal bias from embedded journalists would influence how they constructed their stories, but if journalists only had access to certain sources in the first place, then it is reasonable to see how journalists' articles became slanted based upon their location during the course of the war.

Journalistic Norms in an Ever Changing World

In order to understand the importance and the extent for which sources come to shape how journalists frame their stories, it is necessary to provide some background on journalistic norms and expectations. Althaus et al. found that the news production process, objectivity norm, timeliness norm, and source power all play a part in how a story comes to be framed.⁸ The news production process refers to what areas a newspaper sends journalists to gather information. The objectivity norm "requires that journalists present 'both' sides of a story."⁹ The timeliness norm refers to journalists' constant need to present the most recent information. Lastly, source power entails how much attention journalists pay to a certain type of source and how prominent they make that source in their story.¹⁰ For the purposes of this essay, I will mainly focus on source power and sourcing

Journalists have a tendency to rely on sources that are "legitimate" or "official."¹¹ This tendency ties into Lance Bennett's theory about journalists "indexing" their sources. Bennett's indexing theory claims journalists will include voices in their stories that tend to stick to the ideas in a debate that reflect

the mainstream viewpoints of the government.¹² However, presenting "official" voices during a time of war becomes more difficult because journalists may not have access to those official voices. Instead, the embedded journalists had access to the higher-ranking generals of their units, whereas unilateral journalists had access to Iraqi government officials. Yet, each group of journalists would be forced to deviate away from "official" voices and rely on normal citizens or soldiers to provide enough substance for their stories.

In general, it is also a journalist norm for reporters to attempt to remain objective by not using themselves as a source and relies on other people's viewpoints of an event instead.

The dependence of reporters on official sources is so great that ... 'even when the journalist is in a position to observe an event directly, he remains reluctant to offer interpretations of his own, preferring instead to rely on his news sources. For the reporter, in short, most news is not what has happened, but what someone says has happened.'¹³

Sources make up the backbone of every journalist's story, and "dependence on sources goes beyond the need to have someone to quote; it is one of the most ingrained features of modern journalism."¹⁴ Sources become the focal point that journalists shape the rest of their story around. Since sources become this focal point, sources become a more important factor in how a journalist will frame their article than personal bias would. Due to previous research, it becomes a conceived notion that war correspondents will be biased in their writings.

The Embedded "In Group"

As journalists joined their units, they were faced with a certain level of conformity. Journalists could not afford to ignore commands because they were forced into numerous life or death situations. As a result, the journalists became 'encultured.' Enculturation is the "process in which the members of an organization 'acquire the social knowledge and skills necessary to behave as component members.'"¹⁵ It became practically impossible for journalists to avoid some kind of bias as they survived combat situations with their units. More so, embedded journalists could not remain objective because they felt indebted to

soldiers for saving their lives. Therefore “it is the general force of social cohesion that pressures the reporter to not report negative things on the people he is living with and depending on for protection.”¹⁶ In essence, journalists embedded both in a military unit and its culture: the two are virtually inseparable. The process of enculturation in combat conditions ensures that, to some degree, embedded journalists will be affected by a military unit’s values, including: shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sense making.¹⁷ While the government itself was not censoring journalists’ writings, reporters began to engage in a type of self- censorship.¹⁸ In addition to being encultured, journalists also had to fight feelings of belonging to an “in group” in order to remain objective.

Journalists not only relied on soldiers for protect, but they also looked to them for interpersonal communication during their time together throughout the war. For this reason, it benefitted journalists to become a part of the “in group” in this social context. This group affiliation provided a sense of worth, social value, and belonging for individuals who join this “in-group.”¹⁹ As a result, journalists formed an intergroup bias. Intergroup bias “refers to the way in which members of competing groups tend to show favor toward their own group rather than favoring members of another group. This behavior can take place as either in-group favoritism or outgroup derogation.”

²⁰ The form of activity the group engages in also matters because “the more competitive the activity, the more likely intergroup bias is to persist, and the more likely members of the groups are to show in-group favoritism.”²¹ There is not a more competitive activity than war where winning equals surviving and losing equals death. Anyone who was not a part of the unit would be perceived as the “outgroup” and would never be able to completely understand decisions the soldiers made based upon past experiences or the emotions they were feeling in a specific situation. With this thinking in place, it certainly makes logical sense that journalists would not want to report negatively on the soldiers in their units.

Meet the Journalists

The research for this project was conducted from looking at four war correspondents: Anthony Shadid, Steven Lee Myers, John F. Burns, and Dexter

Filkins. Filkins and Myers were both embedded journalists. Filkins traveled with the First Marine Division and Myers traveled with the Third Infantry Division, while Shadid and Burns were unilateral reporters. Only their articles from the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* were chosen so differences in newspapers would not be a factor in researching the overall framing of the articles.

The time period examined for this study began March 20, 2003 and ended July 31, 2003. This four month time span was then broken down into four phases: the initial invasion (March 20–March 25), the battle of Baghdad (April 6th– April 11th), Bush’s claim of “Mission Accomplished” and the end of major combat operations (April 21th– May 3rd), and a continuation of fighting and the beginnings of insurgency (throughout all of June and July). The phases were broken down in this way to focus on major events occurring.

Phase I: Life in Baghdad- Burns and Shadid’s First Five Days of War

Both Burns and Shadid were stationed in Baghdad during the beginning course of the war. Burns and Shadid do not use any troops as sources during this time period because the American military soldiers have not yet reached Baghdad, but Baghdad is being bombed relentlessly in the first few days of the war by Allied forces. The unilateral journalists stationed in Baghdad focused on how the Iraqi government responded to American attacks. Due to these journalists’ location and their access to televisions, they reported on what the Iraqi government was putting on the air. On March 20th, when the United States’ invasion began, Hussein aired a television broadcast where he claimed “‘ God willing, we will take them to the limit where they lose their patience and any hope to achieve what they have planned and what the Zionist criminals have pushed them to do.’”²² However, after a U.S assassination attempt on Saddam, he appeared in another broadcast, yet was clearly more shaken this time. Burns observed that “the attacks appeared to have taken a toll on Mr. Hussein, whose somewhat disordered appearance on television shortly after the first raid left one Iraqi with the feeling that his leader had, as he put it, been exposed to a sudden, shocking blast of reality.”²³ Despite this more scattered showing from Hussein, the Iraqi government tended to only broadcast confident messages to convince the

Iraqi people to fight against the invading Americans. As American forces were slowed more than what initial U.S. officials had expected, Shadid reported “Hussein’s government emerged emboldened Sunday and claimed that its carefully laid plans to create a quagmire for U.S. forces were succeeding”²⁴ Burns also commented that “officials who had worried privately about a possible collapse of authority began talking as if the capture of the city could be held off for weeks or even months.”

²⁵ Iraqi officials were even welcoming the assault on Baghdad because they believed that the Americans would face a fierce battle within the city. “The Iraqi units, in holding out for days against British troops in at least some districts of [Umm Qasr], appears to make Baghdad’s leaders feel that the strategy could be the template for the fighting in Baghdad.”²⁶ Vice- President Taha Yassin Ramadan stated, “they are roaming in the desert, and in fact, we have allowed them to roam the desert. I tell you, we wish and beg that they come to Baghdad so that we will teach a lesson to this evil administration and all who cooperate with it.”²⁷ Even as Burns and Shadid reported the government’s confident claims that Baghdad would not fall without a bloody fight, they juxtaposed those claims with the tangible fears and doubts of Baghdad residents.

As the Iraq government attempt to espouse confidence despite airstrikes on the city, both Burns and Shadid observed the fear of the Iraqi people. As airstrikes hit the city, “a deep-rooted fear was palpable, a fear of being obliterated in an Armageddon deployed by the world’s greatest military power.”²⁸ Part of Iraqi’s fear was due to a lack of defensive preparations and “even in the heart of the government quarter...the most visible defenses have been the shoulder high, sandbagged bunkers that have sprung up at traffic intersections.”²⁹ The Iraqi government lacked the necessary weapons to stop U.S. missiles and protect Baghdad citizens. Even though the precision missiles usually hit their intended targets, not every missile was perfect. Missiles could hit civilian neighborhoods even if the neighborhood was not located near a military or government site. Such was the case with Adhimiya, a lower class neighborhood that was hit by a missile on the fifth day of the war.³⁰ At least three people died while an additional four people were wounded.³¹ Many Iraqis were infuriated by the

airstrikes but were also aware that they could not stop them or avoid them. One Iraqi citizen whose house had been hit by the missile said “he was resigned to his fate, a fate that could be decided by either the U.S. or his own government. ‘It’s not in our hands,’ he said, speaking in a vague vernacular so common here to speech in public. ‘We don’t have a choice.’”³² Despite Baghdad citizens’ realization that they could not affect the outcome of the war, Shadid and Burns found in interviews with Iraqi citizens that their Muslim identity, pride of Iraq, and distrust of the United States would lead them to oppose the U.S. invasion.

While many Iraqi citizens knew Hussein was a vicious dictator, that didn’t directly correlate to citizens being pleased with the American led invasion. During an interview conducted with a wealthy Baghdad citizen he acknowledged Iraq

Could never defeat the Americans and the British. It is a Third World country, and the U.S. is a superpower. But a U.S. victory would have to come as a cost- suicide perhaps, but with a sense of dignity. It was a sentiment, he said, that was rooted in his identity as an Iraqi and his faith as a Muslim. Not once did he mention President Saddam Hussein’s name.³³

This citizen had no particular favor of Hussein, nor was he a radical Muslim. He only possessed a need to not allow his country to be taken over by foreign invaders. Another man commented, “you can’t surrender easily; we should fight... our religion says we should fight for our honor. We fear God. We’re more afraid of God than we’re afraid of the Americans.” This citizen wanted to ward off American advances due to Westerners’ different way of life that many Muslims saw as “unholy.” In a different interview with a family where a government official wasn’t present and the family’s identity was kept anonymous, the family discussed how Iraqis are ready for change because they want more freedoms.³⁴ Despite the desire for new freedoms, “family members criticized anger at the U.S. government, which has promised to liberate them. They criticized Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his dictatorial rule, but insisted that pride and patriotism prevent them from putting their destiny in the hands of a foreign power.”³⁵ The father continued the theme of pride for Iraq when he stated “When

somebody comes to attack Iraq, we stand up for Iraq. That doesn't mean we love Saddam Hussein, but there are priorities... There are rumblings of dissent, but these rumblings don't mean: Come America, we'll throw flowers at you.'" ³⁶ Shadid and Burns captured a lot of Iraqis' acknowledgement that change needed to come to the country, but they also caught many citizens' anger at being invaded by the United States. While the reporters stationed in Baghdad saw citizens' unhappiness with the war America was creating, Filkins and Meyers saw Iraqi citizens greeting the U.S. soldiers with more enthusiasm.

Phase I: The race to Baghdad-Filkins and Meyers make moves

As American troops moved through the desert and began to take over villages, soldiers encountered jubilant responses from Iraqi villages. On the second day of the invasion, as Safwan became the first Iraqi village to fall, "happiness and dread rose together... where some of the first Iraqis to encounter American and British troops found the joy of their deliverance muted by the fear that it was too good to last." ³⁷ Many of Safwan's citizens ran up to the troops and told them how happy they were that Saddam would soon be gone. While Filkins could have been biased and only reported on the cheering Iraqis, he also includes a quote from an angered villager at the troops' destruction of Hussein's shrines. "How would you like it if I were to cut up a poster of President Bush?" ³⁸ Yet, while Filkins includes this quote, he qualifies it in the next sentence when he states, "but his remarks were quickly drowned out by catcalls." ³⁹ The inclusion of the quote from the angered Iraqi man shows Filkins' attempt to be as objective as possible and capture both sides. The differences in reporting for Iraqi citizens' reactions to the U.S. could also be a result of location. Safwan was "the heartache of a town that has felt some of the hardest edges of Saddam Hussein's rule." ⁴⁰ In Baghdad, many people wanted change from Hussein's oppression, but they had not experienced having family members murdered by Hussein's regime like some of the villagers in Safwan had. Another effect on the villager's reactions could be the presence of troops. The villagers may have wanted to seem more excited in front of the new foreign power. The troops also did not destroy the village, where in Baghdad innocent civilians were being killed by the airstrikes. This article about

Safwan is reflexive of many similar encounters that Filkins and Myers had as the invasion moved towards Baghdad.

Another theme in Myers and Filkins' articles in the first few days of the invasion was the lack of Iraqi resistance the invasion force faced. In his article, "Armored Units Sweep Unchallenged Across Iraqi Desert," Myers reported that his unit was ahead of schedule. ⁴¹ The Colonel of the unit described "Iraqi forces as 'relatively disorganized and sporadic.'" ⁴² U.S. commanders didn't expect the Iraqi units in the desert to be as tough as they believed that the fighting would be in Baghdad where they were anticipating "fiercer resistance from Republican Guard divisions considered more loyal to President Saddam Hussein than regular army units." ⁴³ Not only did American troops see a lack of resistance, they encountered many Iraqi troops who were surrendering to them. "Around Basra, where hundreds of Iraqi soldiers surrendered Friday, the Americans and British have constructed what appears to be a low- intensity siege." ⁴⁴ To avoid being slowed down on the way to Baghdad, the units weren't even taking all of the surrendered soldiers as prisoners of war. One Iraqi soldier said: "the Americans just said to us, 'Give us your guns and go home.'" ⁴⁵ This early lack of heavy resistance made many U.S. commanders hopeful for how the rest of the trip to Baghdad would go. Filkins and Myers had a relatively positive view on the first few days of the invasion because Iraqi resistance didn't give them much of a reason to report on the United States' movements in a negative manner. When skirmishes occurred the reporters mentioned them, but heavy fighting was lacking overall in the first few days of the invasion.

Phase II: A Shift in Sourcing

As the United States military units moved their way into Baghdad, intense fighting ensued. On the first day U.S. troops were there, over 1,000 Iraqi soldiers died as well as hundreds of civilians who got caught in the crossfire. ⁴⁶ At this point in the war, the embedded journalists have been with their military units for several weeks and have gained the trust of many of the soldiers in their units. As a result, the embedded reporters begin to show more of the soldiers' emotions in their articles. One soldier who commented on the close combat necessary to fight in Baghdad said, "it was hard to shoot, because you don't want to shoot the

civilians. It was hard to pick out the threat.”⁴⁷ Another soldier, upon seeing a family that had died in a car crash as they tried to avoid the fighting said, “being a dad myself, that’s the hardest part...I’ve got six kids at home, and I can’t imagine it. I’d just as soon die than see that happen to my kids.”⁴⁸ They make it very clear that many troops feel sadness and guilt as innocent civilians lose their lives. “‘It’s a little sobering,’ said Capt. Sal Aguilar, standing in a field with dead Iraqis all around him. ‘When you’re training for this, you joke about it, you can’t wait for the real thing. Then when you see it, when you see the real thing, you never want to see it again.’”⁴⁹ In another instance where U.S. troops fired on a family of ten, six of which were killed, “one marine, according to witness there, began to cry.”⁵⁰ The embedded reporters also see some of the trepidation the U.S. soldiers are feeling as they move into Baghdad. During a lull in the fighting, one Marine took time to phone home and “in a call to his parents, he only alluded to the dangers he had faced. ‘I’ll have some stories when I get home,’ Corpsman Smith said, ‘I love you, too, ma.’”⁵¹ As Marine units prepared to siege the city, a medic stated: “the guys are really tense.”⁵² In contrast, the unilateral reporters come to lack this kind of emotional response as they gained quotes from soldiers.

As United States military units arrive in Baghdad, this provided an opportunity for unilateral reporters to interview them. Unlike the embedded reporters who include more of an emotional side in some of their quotes from the American soldiers, the unilateral reporters tended to only focus on the strategic or rational information the soldiers can provide. One of the first quotes by a soldier to appear in an article by Shadid was about the United States’ plan for taking control of Baghdad.⁵³ Other quotes from U.S. soldiers discussed the increase in Iraqi resistance they had faced in Baghdad, the falling of Hussein’s government, and weapon seizures. Even civilian deaths contained more of a distant tone when soldiers talked about them. When a U.S. army vehicle fired at a car that had evaded a roadblock, it killed three out of the four family members. A major who was commenting on the incident said, “our soldiers have to make a split second decision on what to do when a car is rushing at them.”⁵⁴ This quote certainly presents a different side for how soldiers were represented after a family of civilians was killed by American troops than

what the embedded reporters were showing. While embedded reporters could be considered to be biased because of their presentation of soldiers’ emotions, they could also be seen as having access to a kind of source that the unilateral reporters do not. Even though both the unilateral and embedded journalists can interview troops during this time period because of the American troops’ location, embedded journalists have earned a relational kind of access to troops from traveling with them that unilateral journalists lack.

Phase II: The Toppling of a Statue

By April 9th, 2003, much of the Iraq government had fallen or fled Baghdad. Nothing captured the sentiments of the fall of Hussein’s rule more than the toppling of a large Saddam Hussein statue in Firdaus Square. Iraqi civilians stated the process of bring down the statue by tying a rope around the statue’s neck and by using a sledgehammer at the statue’s base.⁵⁵ Yet, the civilians could not get the statue to fall and they eventually enlisted the help of a U.S. tank, which ultimately brought the statue down. Every major American television news station covered this “historic moment” and both Shadid and Burns were able to attend the falling of the statue due to their ability to freely travel in Baghdad. Shadid described the scene as “what is likely to become the lasting image of the U.S. entry into Baghdad.”⁵⁶ Shadid depicted a jubilant crowd, who, when the statue finally fell, “converged, kicking it, pummeling it with a chain, rocks and a sledgehammer, and slapping it with shoes- a great insult in the Arab world.”⁵⁷ While the unilateral journalists were able to capture this moment, the embedded journalists hardly even commented on it in their writings. Myers makes only a passing comment about the fall of the statue in his writing. “The events in downtown Baghdad on Wednesday- the waving, happy crowds of Iraqis in the streets happened only a mile or two away, but they remained distant news to the Third Infantry Division’s engineers as they meticulously cleared hundreds of mines from the roadway this morning.”⁵⁸ If the overarching expectations is that embedded journalists would simply be biased and only show the United States in the strongest and most positive light, then how the two groups of journalists framed this event stands in direct contrast to that. Here, it is the unilateral journalists who are taking on an extremely positive outlook and

are looking for the Iraq conflict to draw to a close soon with the symbolic falling of the Hussein statue. On the other hand, the embedded journalists are showing that fighting is still going on across the city of Baghdad. While the embedded journalists did not report on the toppling of the statue in length because of their inability to be at the event due to their forced travel with their units, this instance demonstrates a clear event where the unilateral journalists take on a much more American bias tone than the embedded journalists.

Phase III: Shadid Shows Iraqi Distrust

At this point in the conflict, the U.S. considered the war to be over. Due to this perception, it is important to note that Burns and Myers do not produce any articles from this point on because they have been pulled out of Iraq. Despite the claims that the war is over because Hussein's rule has fallen, that does not mean that the United States had control of Baghdad, instead reality was quite the opposite. Shadid focuses most on Iraqi citizens as his main source during this time period. Many Iraqis' trust in the American forces is quickly fading due to the lawlessness and looting that has begun in the city. When asked about the looting of the National Museum of Antiquities, which held ancient artifacts from the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, "many blamed U.S. forces for not intervening to stop the demolition—deepening their skepticism of the American presence."⁵⁹ An owner of an art gallery commented on the American failings at preventing the looting. "When I see an occupier, am I happy? Looting the museum, burning the National Library, robbing the Saddam Center for Arts? The great America is not able to exert control over a gang of thieves?"⁶⁰ Shadid captures Iraqi's growing distrust in the American forces and presents their cynicism that the U.S. is only there to liberate them from a dictator. Interestingly, the group of artists feared that religious groups would ultimately take power in the upcoming years, and they feared what censorship that would bring.⁶¹ One artist commented, "religious extremism is the biggest threat...it will come to the surface."⁶² This growing distrust also continues as the United States fails to repair the utilities of Baghdad. In contrast, Shadid also presents the viewpoint of religious Iraqis.

During this time, Shadid presents Iraqi citizens' feelings on religion in terms of the American

occupation. From the time the American invasion began, many citizens had commented that their fate was not in their hands, but instead they felt that the outcome of their lives was inevitable because only God knew what would happen. The majority of the Muslims in Iraq belong to the Shiite sect, yet Hussein had been a Sunni Muslim who had enforced a secular regime. In Karbala, which is considered to be one of the most holy cities in Iraq for Shiite Muslims, a mass pilgrimage began after the fall of Hussein's regime because the government had forbidden it before.⁶³ As Hussein's party fell, it also presented a vacuum of power. In Karbala, the Shiite clergy attempted to fill that void and "were out in force directing traffic, overseeing crowds and providing first aid to pilgrims who entered under the banners of mosques and neighborhoods of Baghdad and cities across southern Iraq." Karbala represents one of many cities in southern Iraq where Iraqi clergy was attempting to take the opportunity to step up and provide a religious based government for a group of people who had been repressed for decades. Yet, for as much as the Shiite majority despised Hussein, there also lies a deep distrust of American forces. Part of that "bitterness at the United States lingers over its perceived failure to support a Shiite uprising after the 1991 Persian Gulf War; it was bloodily crushed weeks later by the Republican Guard."⁶⁴ In addition to the distrust of the Americans, there lies an uncertainty in what the Americans' true intentions are for the country. One citizen commented, "we still don't know what [the United States] wants in return for the overthrowing for the regime," while another citizen's skepticism leaked through as he asked "they did it for nothing?"⁶⁵ More important than the strong distaste for the U.S. occupation, Shadid also shows a willingness of Iraqis to possibly take action against American forces. Shiite Muslims in Karbala stated, "the decision was not theirs but instead in the hand of the Hawza, or perhaps clergy who spoke on its behalf."⁶⁶ One resident commented, "If they say make resistance, we will obey them."⁶⁷ Here Shadid represents more than just a dislike of the American occupation. He shows a willingness on the part of Iraqi citizens to resist the nation who overthrew a man they despised only two weeks earlier. Overall, in interviews with Iraqi citizens, whether they from secular artists and intellectuals in Baghdad or the more

overtly religious group in Karbala, Shadid presents Iraqi citizens who hold a strong distrust of the American forces.

Phase III: Filkins Presents a Paralleled Distrust from the Perspective of American Troops

Interestingly, as of April 21st, Filkins begins all of his articles with the overarching title “Aftereffects.” However, thousands of U.S troops still remain in Iraq. Even these troops begin to express frustrations and uncertainty for what lies ahead of them. A mass search begins to locate Hussein and execute him. American soldiers began to accept anonymous tips from civilians to aid in locating him. While many tips were perceived as unhelpful, one assertion from a male citizen caught the attention of Maj. Doug Davids, an American Special Forces officer.⁶⁸ He put together a group of soldiers to make a move on the tip, but, as the unit was about to head out, senior military officials canceled the mission. Filkins described the American commanders as “bristling” at what they believed was a missed opportunity to capture Hussein.⁶⁹ While commanders acknowledged the mission might have been terminated due to the proposed location already being surveillance by another branch of the American military, “officers on the scene also suggested that the operation had been canceled because of excessive bureaucratic inefficiency. They complained that they had not even been given the chance to explore the possibility that Mr. Hussein was there.”⁷⁰ Here, Filkins is presenting a side where it is not only Iraq’s citizens who are frustrated with the Americans handling of their time in Baghdad. This side of the war, the soldier’s frustration, is a side that would never have been presented if it were not for the use of embedded journalists. Yet, instead of being bias and presenting only a positive side of what the troops are doing in Baghdad, Filkins uses his access to soldiers to show their own frustrations with what is occurring in the aftereffects following the fall of Hussein’s regime.

Even after the U.S has taken over Baghdad, they still do not have total control in the area, and despite the end of major combat operations, American troops are still killing Iraqis, as was the case when eighteen Anti-American protesters were shot.⁷¹ Filkins comments “the war in Iraq has officially ended, but the momentous task of recreating a new Iraqi nation seems hardly to have begun...American troops are straining to manage the forces this war has unleashed:

the anger, frustration and competing ambitions of a nation suppressed for three decades.”⁷² In this article, Filkins parallels what Shadid found with Iraqi citizens gaining a larger and larger distrust of American forces. Educated Iraqi’s who were “eager for the American led transformation of Iraq to work that the Americans may be losing the initiative, that the single-mindedness that won the war is slackening under the delicate task of transforming a military victory in to a political success.”⁷³ This growing sentiment of American inadequacy for setting up a new, stable government is repeated in several of Filkins following articles.

In addition to losing Iraqis’ trust because of the killing of civilians, many of Baghdad’s citizens experienced a waning trust in the American forces due to a lack of basic utilities in the city. Piles of garbage lined the streets, electricity and running were still down a majority of the time, and many storeowners were still too scared to reopen their shops.⁷⁴ While the lack of utilities represented the superficial issue at hand, Iraqi citizens were justified in questioning the United States’ dedication to rebuilding Iraq because of the small amount of troops there. In Baghdad, “only 12,000 American soldiers have been assigned” even though it is “a city of 5 million people. Only 150,000 American soldiers are being asked to maintain order across all of Iraq, population 25 million, and that number may be substantially reduced by the fall.”⁷⁵ The majority of Iraq citizens did not want U.S forces in Iraq, yet they would tolerate them for a while if the U.S could help rebuild and bring order to the nation. However, Filkins shows a side where U.S forces are in a state of limbo; they are present in Iraq, yet there wasn’t enough American planning to have the proper amount of troops to handle the tasks of rebuilding. Once again, despite being embedded, Filkins frames his articles in a way that is not completely positive for the Americans. Instead, Filkins represents the very real concerns of Iraq citizens that will ultimately lead to even more tensions between Iraq civilians and American forces.

Phase IV: If We Thought Iraq had Issues Before, This Takes It to a Whole New Level

Throughout the months of June and July, U.S forces see a rise in American casualties as pockets of Iraqi resistance emerge. In an article by Filkins headlined “After the War: New Attack” an American soldier was killed in a bombing. Filkins’ headline

perfectly captures the tone of the time period because even though an end to the war had declared on the U.S side fighting was still going on. The bombing “resembled the many that have preceded it, and which have made the summer such a trying one for American forces. The attackers hit, ran and got away. No one was detained, and the Americans had no chance to return fire.”⁷⁶ Filkins interviewed a soldier who stated “‘I’m not supposed to talk to you, but it’s terrible,’ said a colleague of the victims, a soldier in the First Armored Division.”⁷⁷ Even though the soldier was not supposed to speak with Filkins about the incident, Filkins’ position as an embedded journalist privileged him to get this quote. This bombing marked the fiftieth death of an American soldier since Bush’s declaration for the end of combat operation on May 1st, and it was the fifteenth death in the past eight days.⁷⁸ Filkins did not attempt to provide a number for how many Iraqis had been killed during that same time period. Filkins was also able to provide additional information on the attack due to his position as an embedded reporter. He stated, “today’s death illustrated the relative sophistication of the attacks against the Americans. The metal shards left behind suggest that the bomb was larger than a grenade and the aim and timing of the detonation suggests no small competence on the part of the assailants.”⁷⁹ Once again, Filkins did not attempt to sugar coat or hide the growing issues U.S forces were facing. Instead, Filkins uses his access as an embedded reporter to gain more information on the situation.

Shadid focuses more on citizen’s responses during this time period as American troops begin to conduct more and more raids on civilian homes in the search for Saddam Hussein. In the small village of Thuluya in northwestern Iraq, Americans arrested more than 400 residents for being members to the Baath Party or a part of Hussein’s government.⁸⁰ One elderly resident angrily commented, “they carried out the raid here because we’re Sunni and Saddam was Sunni... after this operation, we think 100 Saddams is better than the Americans.”⁸¹ These raids created a growing animosity on the part of the Iraqis. They also show a shift in who the American officials see as criminals. Before, the Americans largely bypassed civilians and were concerned about the number civilian casualties. There was a clear line between the Iraqi soldiers and the regular citizens. By mid-June though,

the raids make it clear that almost any Iraqi civilian could be a threat to the Americans, and the raids show a lack of consideration for Iraq citizens’ right to privacy. Shadid travels to Baghdad and Samarra where similar raids are also happening. He finds similar sentiments from Iraq citizens in each city. Shadid’s position as a unilateral journalist allows him to travel between cities as long as he has hired an Iraqi translator and, possibly, a bodyguard. Since Shadid is not committed to one area of Iraq, he is able to gain quotes from Iraqi citizens in multiple areas. His access to residents from multiple cities allows him to frame multiple articles where civilians are angered by the American raids.

Concluding Thoughts

The Iraq War provides the first opportunity to view embedded and unilateral journalists’ writings to a large extent. While critics of the embedding program argued that bias would affect how embedded reporters wrote about the war, access to certain sources actually played a larger role in how journalists framed their stories. While it is true that in the first phase embedded journalists had a more positive outlook on the war, it was due to the lack of resistance American troops were facing at that time. During that phase, unilateral journalists had a more negative viewpoint on the war because of the devastation the American airstrikes were causing in Baghdad. In phase two, both the embedded and unilateral reporters have access to interview American soldiers, but embedded journalists present more of the soldiers’ emotions because they have gained their trust over the past few weeks. Despite expectations, some unilateral journalists have a more positive outlook on the United States’ takeover of Baghdad then some of the embedded journalists do. In phase three and four, Burns and Meyers have been pulled from Iraq, which indicates that U.S newspapers are allocating their sources to more “newsworthy” matters. In phase three, Filkins presents uncertainty on the American troops’ side for what lies ahead, as well as Iraq citizen’s growing distrust of the United States’ occupation. Shadid only focuses on Iraqi residents during this time period, and he indicates strong resentment from citizens whether they are religious or not. In phase four, many of the underlying emotions that were emerging in phase three completely come to the surface. Filkins shows more wariness on the part of U.S troops because of ambushes, and Shadid also

shows a more evident distrust that the Americans have formed for civilians with the increase in house raids. Shadid's ability to travel to multiple cities also allows him to capture the residents' feelings of resentment that grow because of the raids. Each phase of the war during the four-month time period examined allows the two different groups of journalists to have access to different sources, which affects how their articles are framed.

Overall, neither group of journalists is better than the other. Both groups become essential in presenting a full picture of the Iraq War. Embedded journalists were able to present a perspective of the war that had never been shown up-close before. Americans gained a better understanding of U.S military units as embedded journalists reported on their everyday tasks. However, embedded journalists could only provide a small slice of the war due to their forced travel with their units. On the other hand, unilateral journalists could remain in one area for an extended length of time to gain the information needed for their stories. As of now, it is unclear if the U.S Department of Defense will look to use the embed program in future foreign conflicts. Regardless, in terms of the Iraq War, both embedded and unilateral journalists were necessary to capture the whole story.

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