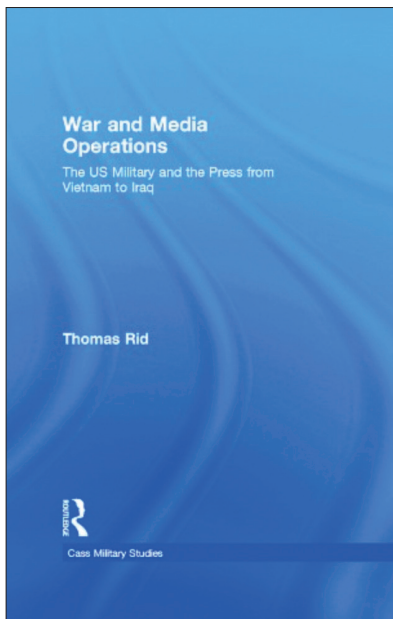


War And Media Operations: The US Military And The Press From Vietnam To Iraq

It's Your Ship: Management Techniques For The Best Damn Ship In The Navy

The Case Against Israel's Enemies: Exposing Jimmy Carter And Others Who Stand In The Way Of Peace

by Naveen Sharma



BOOK REVIEW OF THOMAS RID, *WAR AND MEDIA OPERATIONS: THE US MILITARY AND THE PRESS FROM VIETNAM TO IRAQ*, ROUTLEDGE, 2007, PP. 240

Reminded of Tony Hayward's infamous media gaffs, I was quite tickled when I came across *War and Media Operations*. I was looking forward to having a good read about the relationship, or the lack thereof, between the media and the military. How fitting that as I checked out the book, I came across an article in an Egyptian newspaper with a photo digitally altered to make appear that Egyptian president Hossni Mubarak was the individual leading the Middle East peace talks.

The most immediate impression when reading the book is that it does not focus entirely on the media and military. The book dedicates a couple of chapters to understanding the military and military policy on strategic innovation. It substantiates its

examples with cleverly created tables and mind maps which really help the reader understand the author's points. The only problem is that, given the depth of content within the first few chapters, the book is not a light read. However, as you get into the core of the subject matter, the author provides you with excellent time lines and descriptions of events leading up to each conflict the USA has been involved in and the place the media had in them.

The author neatly shows us the evolution of the military mindset towards the media over the generations and from conflict to conflict. He also provides easy-to-remember tag-lines to group the various operations the United States took part in and the media's involvement in them. This helps the reader remember the lessons learned

from each operation. The book does not explicitly show the reader the lessons learned from the military-media relationship, but it is easy enough for the reader to draw his or her own conclusions from reading the simple and accurate descriptions provided by the author.

What made the book worth the read were the case studies the author discusses. He examines past experiences of the US military and compares them to current policies in Iraq. The book goes into depth describing offensive and defensive media operations, which helps the reader understand the aims of journalists and how the military has factored them into its information strategy. Although this portion is peppered with military jargon, parallels can be drawn with the civilian world and multi-

national corporations. Many of the situations described can be adapted to civilian applications and from reading those chapters one can understand exactly where Tony Hayward and his team went wrong with the media during the recent Mexican Gulf oil crisis.

The book is brilliantly written with the author being completely neutral, allowing us to make our own conclusions and evaluations. It provides us with, for lack of a better phrase, food for thought. It is no wonder the Singapore Armed Forces and the US military both have this book on their professional reading programmes. It is a book that the reader can learn from and is recommended for individuals who are interested in using the media and making its policies work for him or her. 🌐
