

## **Transcript of lecture**

23 January 2003

## **History and War Reporting**

Bagehot Lecture by BBC War Correspondent Robert Fox

The History Department of Queen Mary, University of London, hosted the first Bagehot Lecture by BBC war correspondent Robert Fox. This lecture was one of a pair established to coincide with the graduation of the first cohort of students on Queen Mary and City University's innovative Journalism and Contemporary History degree programme. The lecture was sponsored by The Economist.

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## History, Memory, Reporting Conflict

1. "Down the track we could see the two chimneys and outer walls of the schoolhouse, which was still smouldering. Heavy rain had turned to hail, which came lashing across the bright green grasslands of Lafonia. To our right, we could see the wrecked Pucara aircraft on the airstrip, one with its tail cocked into the air as if it had taken a nose-dive before taking off. Along the cart track we found oddments of fighting equipment left by the retreating Argentinians. Chris Keeble threw two bayonets in their scabbards at me and said: "Stick these in your trouser pockets. They may come in useful one day." We decided to take a short cut to the airstrip across the grass, and then someone shouted, 'Mines!' In the distance there was a bang and a puff of black smoke above it. Nearly half the herd of cows at Goose Green had been killed already on the minefields; the bodies of the animals looking huge and bloated where they had been left for a week or more. None of the minefields were marked, so we decided to take the long way round to the airstrip. As we approached, we could not see anybody at the meeting point. Then at a corrugated hut by the maintenance sheds we saw a white flag. A group of men came out to meet us, shake hands and then move inside the hut to begin the talking." ("Eyewitness Falklands pp192-193 Methuen, 1982)
2. An eyewitness account of the beginnings of the negotiations for surrender at Goose Green on the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> May 1982.  
Raises several questions:
  - NOT LEAST what value is this eyewitness: how accurate is this account, written three months after the event ?
  - The style – why the we ? a figure of speech, the collective 'we' or event the royal we. In fact it was two reporters, myself and Dave Norris of the Mail, and a party of five – three officers, a signaller and the RSM.
  - How much did this colour the overall appreciation of what happened – a version of this was broadcast throughout Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> May and appeared on the front page of the Guardian a day later.
  - Taking a longer view, helping the historians – how valuable, how accurate is my account, looking back nearly 21 years. What are the problems of suggestibility? How much was my view coloured, and distorted by subsequent events. The whole issue of suggestibility and the Saville Inquiry into the Events of Bloody Sunday Jan 30<sup>th</sup> 1972.
3. The value of eyewitness in reporting, particularly in reporting conflict and action, is the subject of this talk : it will look at the role of eyewitness reporter, the place of despatches from the field. It will look at some of the advantages and disadvantages of getting close, too close even, to the action. Then we will look at how it informs a collective memory and the record of history; and how history informs the context and judgment of the reporter. But then term 'the media' itself almost escapes definition – and for classicists eludes grammatical correctness (*singular or plural*). We'll move to some thoughts on the changing nature and role of media in the recent past – very different from

what is was 15 years ago, let alone 50 years ago and the era of the Second World War.

4. Then we'll look at the convulsive impact of recent events, symbolised by September 11<sup>th</sup> (2001). And the agenda ahead for the journalist interested information, and reporting the real world as much as entertainment. Then a cardinal feature of the media in present and future conflicts, not clearly identified and understood by those in it and involved in its impact management – those in the business of telling it how it is, and those that against it.
5. In his last book – he was shot by a Nazi firing squad in the summer of 1944 before he could finish it – Marc Bloch tried to identify the skills, or craft, of the historian and the value of that craft. In its sheer, driven common sense “The Historian’s Craft” is a jewel – a guide to anyone in the history or reporting business and peculiarly valuable today. “Misunderstanding the present is an inevitable consequence of ignorance of the past,” he says. History is ‘the science of men in time which joins the dead with the living.’
6. In his opening chapters he depicts history as a record of ‘momentary convulsion’ and ‘lasting development’ (the essence of the Annales School approach). It’s part of the historians job to sort out which is which. AND if that is so, it is even more the journalist’s task – which he or she seem less capable of doing between the *longeurs* of self-advertisement.
7. In this process of discovery and analysis, Marc Bloch emphasises the vital role of the eyewitness, the true role of the reporter in action. Movingly he describes his own experience as a professional soldier in moments of triumph, defeat and disaster – which he experienced twice, as a young officer close to the ‘mutinies’ of Nivelle’s armies on the Chemin des Dames in 1917, and with the French surrender in the summer of 1940. (Marc Bloch: “The Historian’s Craft, Manchester University Press Edition 1954, see especially p 48).
8. I will just speak of my brief, limited experiences in reporting actions, where I observed events at ground level. First the Falklands – the actions of 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion the Parachute Regiment.
  - The chaos of the landing – delays, maps, Aermacchi and Pucarac being diverted.
  - Being close to commanders *knowing what they had in mind* Moore, Thompson, and Jones. H Jones always intended more than a ‘raid’ on Goose Green. “I am going to take the place and then we’ll move on to Stanley. We’re not coming back here.”
  - The disorganisation of the battle – why the delay in A Coy’s advance (crucial with daylight coming up and lack of smoke and other covering fire).
  - The comportment of the Argentines – the strange mixture of their forces, the professional, the political, the few nasties complicity in the ‘dirty war.’
  - Unjoined up in terms of command – the UK sea and land components being more than geographical distance apart – perpetually bound by versions of ‘fog at sea.’
9. The Gulf 1990-91 Operation Desert Shield/Storm/Sabre.

- Value of being accredited UK – US forces – also US & in France. Very restricted and a long wait.
- Free runners got to Kuwait behind the Egyptian – Arab forces.
- What value ? The Plan: the mission, centre of gravity. Liberate Kuwait & Destroy the Republican Guard.
- Why did it stop ? 24 – 48 hours more to fulfil the mission.
- Complexity of the A-10 Blue on Blue with the 3 RRFBattle Group. Nine killed and 11 injured.
- Moments : “One thing I’m certain – you’re going to be gassed!” (Major General Rupert Smith pre-battle visit to 14<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Battlegroup.
- Complexity of the orchestration. Six week plan – Phase Line Collins forward base. Could they have gone to Baghdad, and how could they.
- The Mutla Ridge – firepower of FGA – A-10 and Cobra gunship. The strike on the retreating truck – just bits, firepower – paltry arrangements for NBC warfare.

10. Being an eyewitness and being present : we must be careful about labelling the difference. George Steer appears on the scene after the bombing of Guernica 26<sup>th</sup> April 1937 and witnesses the aftermath. He deliberately diminishes his own role and his own personality, though has the crucial evidence of a mass incendiary attack on civilians.

(See the forthcoming “Telegram from Guernica – The Extraordinary Life of Geoge Steer, War Correspondent,” Nicholas Rankin, Faber – Maddeningly the Faber Book of Reportage (Ed John Casey) uses the description by Steer’s companion Noel Monks of the Daily Express – a very emotional first person account).

Many claimed crucially that they were witnesses to the attack on Halabjah in northern Iraq in March 1988. Western journalists arrived some time after – hence the difficulty in establishing numbers – much was dependent on good interpreters. (See Jonathan C Randal ‘After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness ?’ FSG, New York 1997)

Philip Knightley considers whether Steer’s account of Guernica was exaggerated. Knightley is a demanding critic, sometimes an over-demanding critic – for it is impossible to be an eyewitness close to the action, *and* moral and judicial referee with a 20-20 capacity for hindsight. In “The First Casualty – the War Correspondent as hero and Myth-Maker” he examines Steer’s methods of description of the scene, and the claims that was a new kind of warfare in which civilians were targeted deliberately. “Steer’s story tallied substantially with those of his colleagues,” writes Knightley (First Casualty revised edition p222), but his interpretation and his accusations of anew kind of warfare were the most precise, the most thoroughly argued, and the most extreme.” Holme of Reuters wrote a 43 line poem after filing his despatch, and thought Steer’s the better account.

11. This raises the issues of Eyewitness, Interpretation and Interpolation. These issue shave been particularly marked in the conflicts in the Balkans from 1989/91 to the present day. If ever the demands of history and reporting had to be weighed, matched, and contrasted it has been in the coverage in the wars of the break up of Yugoslavia, Albania and their neighbourhood. But they weren’t. Polemic has masqueraded as journalism, as history, as ethical and legalistic judgment. In this mixed wash of journalistic laundry much has been exaggerated and distorted and crucial aspects lost altogether from public view – for this is the era of mass information, 24 hour satellite radio tv, and the instant archive of the internet. But something happened to reporting

and media information in the decade of Bosnia and Kosovo, Rwanda, Chechnya and East Timor.

12. The most obvious indication of this as the reporters became actors in their own drama. The ubiquity of television allowed them to do this. "Welcome to Sarajevo" (the film) wasn't all satire. How and why we get 'celeb news' I will come to in a minute. But first I want to look closely at the reporting and the manufacture of myth; and how the myth gets entered into the record of history.
13. The reporting of the Bosnian conflict highlighted by the public performance of journalists – it had a strange post modern *chic* about it – it was a story made for the 'Info – tainment' era – and this inexorably has become more 'tainment' than 'info'. It was extraordinary to have the rehearsal of the blockade of Sarajevo rehearsed almost daily before the world television audience – yet it took three years to get anything done about it. It links with Guernica because as George Steer identified at Guernica, the majority of victims were civilian.
14. It was extraordinary, too, to have such frequent reference to history, yet for so much of the coverage to be *outside* history. Shock and sensation were there aplenty; the massacres, the petty brutality of clan and criminal war-bands, whose dynamics were hard for an outsider to understand. It was a highly media – savvy world. Yugoslavia had the most advanced television in Communist Europe.  
It was also easy to opt for sensation, the sheer emotional impact of murder and destruction.  
I recall going to the village of Vucin in the Papuk hills on about 17th December 1991 during the Serb-Croatian conflict, the place was a wreck, the streets strewn with the carcasses of pigs – in the nearest clinics were bodies, burned and mutilated, their arrangement like the Apocalypse of the Gothic master Orcagna. The aftermath at Ahmici in April 1993 and the burial sites in Drenica in Kosovo were similar scenes. Outside the makeshift morgue at Padravka Slatina in December 1991 I met a well-dressed man in camel hair coat. He told me that he was clerk to the municipality, and that some of the dead were from his family. "The television cameras will go in there, and tomorrow these will be shown on television in Belgrade as Serb victims of Croat criminals." So it turned out – the pictures were shown on Serbian Tv as Serb victims. "Se non è vero è ben trovato," as they say in Italy.
15. Lets look at the transmission from witness in journalism, to false memory and history. One of the most shocking elements of the fighting in Bosnia in the summer of 1992 was the persistent tales of systematic rape by the Serbian military and paramilitary forces, and that it was ordained policy. Numbers appeared in the international of truly staggering dimensions. One of the first references I have found is in the Guardian of 17<sup>th</sup> December 1992, where the correspondent mentions "14,000 rapes" being committed against Bosnian Muslim women according to 'blue bulletins' put out by the presidency (ie the administration of Alija Izetbegovic's SDA) in Sarajevo. There are some dreadful first hand reports, and many anecdotes and reports at one remove. "They get sacked from their jobs," Mr Anders Levinsen of UNHCR is quoted as saying. "shooting starts at night in the streets, executions in the streets, houses are burnt out and then they rape the Muslim women. Rape is just part of that process" (Guardian 19.12.92 Page9 "Forgotten Women of Serb Rape Camps" So it stuck. In Where this figure of 14,000 Bosnian Muslim rape victims came from, precisely, I cannot discover. By March following it had

risen to 20,000: In a piece dated March 13<sup>th</sup> 1993, about the first prosecution by the Sarajevo authorities of a Serb militiaman accused of multiple rape. “Borislav Herak, self-confessed Serbian rapist, killer and ethnic cleanser,” runs the third paragraph in the story, “is the first Serb to stand trial for war crimes in Bosnia – where, according to international bodies, half the population have been driven from their homes, 120,000 people have been killed and 20,000 women had been systematically raped.” By the end of the conflict, however, the International Committee of the Red Cross authenticated under 250 cases of rape in three and a half years of the war. The figure of 237 was given by the ICRC spokesman during the war, Urs Boegli at a Reuters Conference held in Oxford in the autumn of 2000.

16. The rape story became a key ingredient of the process of demonisation of the Serbs in the media at the time. The 20,000 rapes are one of those great pieces of contemporary mythology like the 11 million land mines alleged to have been sown in Afghanistan. Individual terrible stories of rape of Muslim mothers were put out by the Bosnian Government Centre for War Crimes and Atrocities which had centres at Sarajevo and Bosnia. It became part of fashionable polemic – and this has been absorbed into historical studies such as Brendan Simms’ “Unfinest Hour” a polemic against British policy, and in particular British officers in the UN force UNPROFOR for not intervening against the Serbs earlier. Like the main flow of journalistic coverage, these accounts pay little attention to the overlapping, conflicting, but frequently cooperating networks of criminal gangs and clan networks at the heart of the militias of the main communities. (Unfinest Hour, Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia Brendan Simms Allen Lane Penguin. Simms book is fascinating because of its odd choice of sources, cuttings from the mainstream press, laced with interviews of some of the main diplomatic players, some of a notoriously biased view. What is so interesting about this account, is little space is given to how the different combatants were commanded and fought, and how they managed to sustain such a chaotic episodic war. Much of the better journalism gets left out – by such as John F Burns of the New York Times – though a Brit, Roy Gutman of the Enquirer, who first revealed the policy of the concentration camps in 1992, and John Pomfret and Jonathan Randal of the Washington Post and the late Kurt Schork of Reuters. Pomfret did more to uncover the criminal networks and the arms trading than any other. Though not among the glittering prizewinners of the day, the Guardian’s largely forgotten Yigal Chazan stands out for his first hand account of daily life with the Serb militias.
17. The transfer from journalism into history can contribute a false memory – 20,000 rapes 11 million land mines. I think this accounts for the huge muddle of perceptions about what the events leading up to the cold-blooded murder of thousands of Muslim males from the UN safe haven of Srebrenica in July 1995.
18. And this has continued in the coverage of events in Kosovo before during and after international intervention by international forces in 1999. In Kosovo, too, there were dreadful deeds – and the refugees’ travellers’ tales proved surprisingly precise. But in the aftermath there was the same mixture of eyewitness, and anecdotal report at one remove. Many of the media had taken sides, and naturally they were on the sides of the victims. Consequently little attention was given to the clan networks and criminal activities of many of the combatants on both sides. The aftermath has been poorly covered, the attention of many of the media has roamed elsewhere – rather like Lloyd

George's famous description of Lord Kitchener it is like the great revolving beam of a lighthouse, moments of illumination followed by "nothing but a blank darkness." Consequently the string of turf wars and clashes between different criminal interests which now radiate across Europe, and which lay behind some of the subsequent settling of scores in Kosovo itself, and its neighbourhood have been left largely unreported. Yet it is attached to a huge illicit commerce, in drugs, people, arms and exotic materials, which run from Afghanistan to the Atlantic -- and beyond.

19. This was striking in the recent documentary series "The Fall of Milosevic" by Brian Lapping and Norma Percy on BBC 2. It was a powerful narrative backed by some stunning actuality footage-- of Kosovars discovering their murdered relations, and the final attack by the bulldozer man from Cacak which brought the crowds into the Belgrade parliament and consequently the end of Milosevic's rule. Most arresting was the intercutting of interviews with leading players, the wisdom after the event of the Army Commander Nebojsa Pavkovic, the dysfunctional insouciance of Mira Markovic, Madame Milosevic -- enraged at the insult done to her Mafioso son Marko. This was but one, narrative, however, and not *the* narrative. Diplomatic events were viewed from the strong US State Department perspective of Madeleine Albright and Richard Holbrooke. KLA leaders were shown as heroes, though one in the film has just been convicted for war crimes -- several key events and personalities have been given radically different interpretation. It is a limitation of this genre of presentation that it has to rely on a single narrative track through a complex subject. There is no space for counter arguments, counter factials; television finds it hard to supply footnotes.
20. Even more so this is true of television today as a news reporting medium. It is the dominant medium, it sets the style and very often the agenda of what is deemed worthy of news and public attention. Ten years ago we talked of the CNN curve, when a surge of events caught the international television eye and so impacted on the workings of governments and nations . The obvious example was the flight of the Kurds in March 1991. In some ways radio and print have been trying flatter by imitation -- look how the style of writing and expression in both print and radio is affected by television. Paxman bellows at the minister on Newsnight; Humphrys bellows even louder on the Today programme.
21. The performance and the personality become essential ingredients of the television news business, down to the particular luminescence of the lip-gloss, bouffant hairstyles and casual mateyness. News has joined the television dream factory with its brand of info-tainment. With 'Have I Got News For You' regarded as one BBC1's main current affairs shows, it seems destined to be more tainment than info. Key to selling the performance is celebrity. Not that this is anything new in the business of war reporting, since it became a trade, a way of earning a wage : I blush to call it a profession. William Howard Russell inexorably became the hero of his own stories -- so unlike our own dear heroes of camera and pen. Look at the flood of TV memoirs, so often focused on mechanics of the news business itself and the individuals in it -- tales of telly and me.

Fame always invites rivalry : "Once Cimabue held the field in painting, now Giotto has the cry, so his fame is obscured," wrote Dante in that great Gothic OK Magazine, the Divine Comedy. Then the notion was that Individual was worthy of fame by actions -- achievements; in the

Enlightenment the individual was worthy of rights—but today fame is in danger of melting into the corrosive narcissism of celebrity.

22. The problem with celebrity driven journalism is that allows little or no space for setting the context of great and significant events, the momentary convulsions and lasting developments of Marc Bloch. The print reporting of combat, albeit in the Gonzo style of Michael Herr or Antony Lloyd, should be a narrative – a narrative that will inform history, as much as in return history should help the way the reporter fashions his story, however individually. History is always there: there is no such thing as a year zero, no more than there is a free lunch.
23. TO SUM UP AT THIS POINT : Eyewitness is key to reporting .  
Reporting must have an idea of its context, in time and place – history provides the DNA of the story, whether momentary convulsion or lasting development. Reporting lays down its own narrative. But this idea of the story can often be distorted by fashion and the dictates of the media. A form of collective false memory can be created – 20,000 rapes, 11 million land mines and rumour and conjecture become facts on the page. Personality driven reporting, the cult of celebrity, leads to preaching and prophecy. With this comes what Martin Bell calls the journalism of attachment – you take sides and stick to it. Journalists begin to say what they think ought to have happened, rather than what did. Judgment takes over from the forensic investigation of interesting and very often unpleasant facts: I know, and I am right, because I care. Journalists become attorney, jury, judge and hangman: they testify to courts and tribunals and become even more celebrated.
24. Can the narrative be corrected once the false memory has been written into the record ? Yes, and there is some fine examples of exciting investigation and discovery. Take Alan Moorehead's fine reflections on what he had seen in years of war reporting from the Mediterranean through Italy and France to the surrender of Nazi Germany. In 'Eclipse' he faced the difficult truths of why the German 'New Order' so nearly succeeded, and why, for example, allied armies were unwelcome in some villages in Northern France. James Cameron's writings are more openly combative, and now are part of literature. Last year Ahmed Rashid's "Jihad" was a difficult hybrid of heavy duty journalism, and rough guide contemporary history. And with his examination of 'Jihadist' ideology across central Asia, had a story that speaks to us all. Then there is Con Coughlin's biography of Saddam Hussein, good journalism maturing into real history.
25. But as for correcting the narrative, demolishing the myths and false memory ? Two recent favourites – and they come from recent popular history. Just out TJ Styles, "Jesse James, Last Rebel of the Civil War." Yes, chairman, this is truly a story of conflict and it is a story about journalism. Far from being a folk hero 'primitive rebel' as Eric Hobsbawm puts it, Robin Hood with six guns, James is shown as an instrument of diehard confederates after the Civil War, whose myth was massaged and promoted by weasly newspaper owners and editors – so unlike our own dear bosses. It's a common theme, the extraordinary vanity of the bandit, the Kray brothers posing for the colour supplements, the Sicilian bandit Salvatore Giuliano posing for the cover of Life magazine. More interesting for our times is Stiles' claim that the gun culture in the US doesn't really belong to a mythical constitutional right to bear arms, but to the deluge of weaponry generally available at the end of the



American Civil War. Something similar happened in Albania six years ago, when some three quarters of a million small arms were looted in the anarchy in Albania following the collapse of the pyramid funds – which gave the Kosovars the arsenal they had been seeking desperately.

26. On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain, Richard Overy produced a short book, "The Battle." Like Bloch's 'Historian's Craft,' it is primarily about history – but it has something powerful for any journalist writing about the complexities of battle and combat – and of trying to set convulsive developments in some form of context. "Most battles have a clear shape to them." He writes on page 61 (of the new edition: "The Battle" Richard Overy Penguin). They are fought on a particular day, they are fought on a geographically defined ground, they end at a recognizable moment, usually with the defeat of one protagonist or the other. None of these things can be said of the Battle of Britain. There is little agreement about when it started; its geographical range constantly shifted; it ended as untidily as it began. Neither air force was defeated in any absolute sense."

So how do we write about the battles and skirmishes, the campaigns and conflicts beginning or about to begin, or intermittently rekindling now – on this day Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003 ?

27. More to the point, how do we look at conflict following the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. How much was this a turning point ? Was this really a new development in conflict and terror ?

- First it is very rare that a turning point, or 'tipping point' in new media-speak, is recognised at the time – the momentary convulsion that marks a lasting development. How much was it realised that the murder of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28<sup>th</sup> 1914 would lead to total war for four years ? The Kaiser went on holiday shortly after. Rarely does the eyewitness have the prescience of Goethe observing the defeat of the Prussians and Emigres by the French revolutionary conscript army at the cannonade of Valmy on 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1792: "Here and now begins a new era in the history of humanity," foreseeing that something like the coming of total war.
- There had been huge killings, massacres even, of civilian populations, the Blitz, Dresden, the massacres at babi Yar. Pol Pot's pogroms in Cambodia, the Rwanda massacres.
- What was the unique combination ?
  1. It was an incomprehensible act to the victims, physical and psychological, their family, community and culture.
  2. It was on American soil, which had been relatively immune from international terrorism (think of Waco and the FBI Building in Oklahoma)
  3. It happened on television – and most of it was live : the collapse of the two towers, the falling bodies, the frustrations of the rescuers.

28. The Impact of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

- It has proved highly disorientating – as has the nature of al Qaeda – what is it ? Wher is it rooted geographically, politically, historically ? Is it a coherent movement, with a coherent programme and spiritual vision of a new polity ? OR is it a franchise of extreme Jihadist terrorism ?
- The public media debate has struggled to find the context, the historical hinterland to this ?

- Therefore the reaction is aggrieved and angry – take the classical view of attachment and loss – or bereavement anxiety -- depicted by behaviourists such as John Bowlby : In the process of bereavement – especially from a violent bereavement, there are the well established phases, of shock, denial, rage, and reconciliation.
- Quite clearly there is a reaction of rage abroad in public media and public debate – take the rhetoric of George W Bush or Donald Rumsfeld, and even Condoleezza Rice. It's 'smoke 'em out,' 'the bad B movie' and 'kick ass' time. AND is it my imagination but is there now a higher factor of rage and personal affront in television and radio studio interviewing styles?

29. So we can say that September was a momentary, indeed momentous, convulsion and part of a lasting development. It has already had a major impact on the information media and the language of how we report conflict. It points to some of the huge changes and shifts in the story of humanity which the media is struggling to grasp.

30. The French historian Fernand Braudel, one of the luminaries of the Annales school of Marc Bloch and Georges Febvre spoke of the *longue durée* (the long endurance) – a central element of his masterpiece 'The Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II.' This was a book conceived in a concentration camp – and its footnotes say as much the age it was written in as much as the era studied. The *longue durée* meant the rhythm of lasting development – the change in patterns of trade and dwelling, family and social structure, farming, fishing and navigation, the impact of landscape, climate and weather.

31. We are now in a period of huge shift in human history and human geography, which will affect hugely the nature of conflict and the way reporters and media work in its shadow. If Braudel was looking at this now, he would undoubtedly focus on environmental change, and climate shift and their impact on the tensions of human communities. This is a given, and there is much technical debate about the rate of change in the physical environment, on which I am not qualified to judge. But I would like to put down a marker on six features which will provide huge challenge to journalism and reporting in the two or three decades to come.

32. **Demography** : We are now going through the biggest change in the shape as well as size of the human population. We are in the two most dramatic decades of population growth (From 2030 the curve begins to level out – slightly ) The UN Population Division recorded the world population passing the 6 billion milestone in October 1999. By 2050 this expected to reach at a minimum (forecasting is difficult) 9.3 billion. Accompanying this is the rapid ageing of most European populations (with dramatic collapse in parts of Italy, Spain, the Balkans and East Europe). This affects everything from work patterns, to pensions and the structures of family. The contrast between Western Europe and the US was pointed out by the cover article in the Economist of 24 th August 2002, "Half a billion Americans ?" It pointed out that the US population might be around half a billion in 2050, whereas that of the present EU 15 would be much less, 350 million or below.... Though I disagree with the view that this would enhance US strategic and military strength. (We can come on to that).

33. **Migration** This will have a dramatic effect on migration – it will be a tremendous driver for movement – particularly in and around Europe and the Mediterranean. Much of the movement will be short-term and unrecorded. Commuter migration was described in prescient articles in the Economist of March 29<sup>th</sup> 2001, “Let the Huddled Masses In,” and May 4<sup>th</sup> 2000 “Go for It.” Europe needs migrants – but on what terms ? Today there are more than one million Albanians in Greece, at least 900,000 illegal, ie unregistered, male workers – that’s nearly a tenth of the registered Greek population of 10.5 million.
34. **The Future of the State and the Nation State.** This is bound to affect the nature of the state and the community in any country with a stake in the state, at best indifferent to public institutions and secular civic governance, at worst hostile. This is a huge debate, now being aired – again – in the Economist and Prospect Magazine by luminaries such as Bobbitt, Robert Cooper, Anatol Lieven, John Gray and Roger Scruton. I won’t go into this now – but the marginalised and excluded are , even statistically, a growing feature of our politics. It’s thought there are roughly 2.5 million in this country who just don’t exist in any official sense. Across Europe look at the fastest growing nation, which has no or little interest in western post-Enlightenment notions of polity – namely the Roma or Gypsies. They are the fastest growing resident minority in Europe – at least 12 million, roughly the populations of Norway and Sweden combined.
35. **Parallel Power** – communities and networks that exist outside and beyond the civic state and administration. The crime economies, black and grey, of mafias and international syndicates are now a marked feature of the world economy, and the European neighbourhood. The role of parallel and criminal economies was poorly reported in the coverage of southern Europe, especially the Balkans, in the past ten years. It took a long time for journalists to recognise how heavily dependent the government and economy of Montenegro was/is on the illegal Mafia-managed tobacco trade. We have the new Albanian criminal presence – and its links with south west Asian and the Latin American cartels. People trafficking is now a volume business and it has its peculiar local effects – Italy now faces tiny groups of Chinese mafias, hard to identify, track and interpret. The term ‘organised crime’ is so broad and loose as to be almost meaningless; and at times like the term US Secret Service it is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. Habitually it has been glamorised by its own myth business, and this has become big business with Tv series like ‘The Sopranos.’ Movies like Coppola’s ‘Godfather’ series and ‘Prizzi’s Honour’ – and it is part of a power game.. But real reporting of this phenomenon is time-consuming , demanding and quite dull – going through hundreds of individual judicial investigations and prosecutions. Usually the best reporting is by journalists with a strong regional base and strong local knowledge.
36. **Dialogue with Militant Faith Based Minorities.** This question has been posed in Samuel Huntington’s thesis “The Clash of Civilisations,” – reinforced by the fall-out from September 11<sup>th</sup> . I don’t subscribe completely to the historical arguments in Huntington’s thesis – historically it’s pretty crass. But now there really is a huge dilemma about how, or perhaps even if in some cases, secular societies and polities can live peacefully with communities and movements who define themselves by life denying violence and hatred, in belief that this ensures salvation and the sureness of in a hereafter. Politics based on a system of faith or mystical revelation are not confined to the

branches of Islam. Faith based and messianic Christian sects and movements are a growing phenomenon on the political landscape of Europe as well as the United States. Hindu nationalism burns bright in India, and Sharon's politics in Israel speaks strongly, though not exclusively to a form of Judaic religious right. Can secular societies find a rational basis for dialogue – on societies which subordinate reason to belief, rejection and rage? There is something of paradox, however, as we see with the hijackers of September 11<sup>th</sup> – because they use, and need to use, the very tools and products of the civilisation their ideologues and leaders affect to despise and excoriate, banking, transport, the internet and western fashioned media.

37. **The Role of the Media.** Final Point. The role of the media is central to this. To use military jargon, the media is in the battle space – not a partial or impartial observer or arbiter to one side. This, I think, is the huge change since 1945. Political argument, decisions and courses of action are now mediated through television, and radio, and to a less extent the printed press. The media forum, in fact, takes precedence over parliament. Obvious?

Yes – but not a generally appreciated as you might think. The fascinating feature of Jeremy Paxman's latest literary offering "The Political Animal" (£4 off at any good Waterstone's) is that doesn't seem to realise that he is one himself – a political animal I mean. The politics of television, the global television cockpit, are discussed only episodically. I think the pathology of television and other media has to be considered more comprehensively on all sides. Take the military – which is after all part of the subject on the card for this talk. The approach of British military courses is to bring in a few rogue elephants from the editorial and reporting sector under a general subject heading of 'know your enemy,' which usually garnished with a few platitudes about the media and Vietnam. The dynamics of the media, how the CNN curve works – if there is such a thing--, how it is organised, furnished with information, and financed, are rarely discussed. Senior commanders need to have some understanding of this – and some do it by stealth with their own versions of home tuition. The same goes for the practitioners themselves. The boulevardiers and flaneurs of our news and current affairs chat business are stuck in their own media village, which has satellites and suburbs of village Westminster, New York, Washington. News rarely happens in the studio itself. The strategy or battle plan is decided outside by a Bin Laden or Pablo Escobar, the contemporary Jesse James and warlords, who can then use the studio and news arena as their battle space. The news presenters, the Emperor Penguins, of the info – tainment business are remote, and given the cult of celebrity, slaves to fashion. Their agenda seems stereotyped. It as if reporters of the future. Would find most conflicts will be conducted by disciplined armies, under command and wearing uniforms – which they won't. The link with reality, the wider world and battle space is the reporter, maintaining the narrative of events as they unfold as the wider audience they impact, involve or interest. In my end is my beginning.

38. At the end of this rather long rambling narrative let me summarise the points – particularly for those who have to write this up. (As the late great Frankie Howerd might say, "Poor Devils.")
- **The talk is about the relationship of history, and memory to reporting, especially the reporting of conflict, war in other words.**
  - **We looked at the importance of the eyewitness in reporting action, with remarks by the historian Marc Bloch.**

- We looked at how a war reporter accredited to a force works, the advantages and disadvantages – the commander’s friend, a unique witness to events, knowing the plans, insight as to why things happen, and why they don’t.
- The problems of witness at one remove, of handling sources from one particularly interest or party, the creation of ‘false memory’ which becomes part of the historical record. 20,000 rapes in Bosnia, 11 million land mines in Afghanistan. Organised crime and politics in Bosnia and Kosovo.
- Television documentary offering one narrative, not necessarily *the* narrative – problems of counter arguments and factuals, and footnotes.
- The cult of celebrity dominant in tv information and reporting – info-tainment tending more to tainment.
- Establishing the narrative, understanding the context, reporting informing history, history informing reporting.
- The impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> – in America, irrational, happened on TV. Dhock and rage effect on Tv reporting culture.
- The future agenda (*la longue durée*)
  1. Environment & Climate.
  2. Demography – Rise and Fall of Populations.
  3. Migration – Movement of Populations.
  4. The Future of State and the Government of Communities.
  5. Parallel Power.
  6. Dialogue between secular and militant faith based movements.
  7. The Media as part of the battle space, in the arena, not just spectators.

39. **Finally** ..... The heart of the business :

40. “In fact, there are very few horse players who will not listen to a tip if a story goes with it, for that is the way human nature is.” Damon Runyon “Runyon From First to Last, “A Story Goes With It.”

Journalism:

“All day long, Hollywood reporters lie in the sun, and when the sun goes down, they lie some more.” Frank Sinatra – but then there’s the old Fleet Street joke some in this city could make career or break career by lying in the Sun.

“The war correspondent will inevitably write things that will offend somebody. Somebody will say harsh things of you, and perhaps seek you out to destroy you. Never mind. Such is a part of the misery of correspondents.” No not John Simpson or Max Hastings – Charles Page, veteran of the American Civil War in “An Invalid’s Whim .... The Miseries of Correspondents,” 1898.

Which is about as it should be.

Ends