

**Benchmark:
Media Coverage of the Canadian Forces
1994 - 2000**

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Media Coverage of the Military

1. Introduction

Since September 11, 2001, we have been informed by various media personalities, "everything has changed." CBC radio "This Morning" host Sheila Rogers can often be heard talking about the "new normal." One of the changes that the terrorist attacks has brought is a new emphasis on the Canadian military. Even the Prime Minister, who has not heretofore shown much interest in military matters, has had to defend the levels of support his governments have afforded the Canadian military—and he has been roundly criticized for claiming Canada's defence expenditures were adequate and for claiming that Canada's defence forces were capable of carrying out the tasks they have been given. Indeed, the federal government has vowed that it will provide whatever is necessary to ensure that Canada's military are able to do what is asked of them.

However, what has also happened since September 11 is that an economic slowdown has turned in the direction of a recession. Canada's largest provincial economy, that of Ontario, has called for aid from the federal government in major expenditure portfolios such as health care. The federal government is being asked to implement some conventional Keynesian counter-cyclical economic stimulation, but seems to be constrained from undertaking such a policy because of limited resources. For example in a November 7, 2001 Globe and Mail report, Heath Scoffield noted, "A large stimulus package was definitely not on the table, despite growing political pressure to counteract the

slowdown, government sources said.”¹ In one sense, the Government of Canada is simply faced with an economic trade-off between guns and butter. The history of government spending in the recent past has heavily favoured butter. But if “everything has changed” to create the “new normalcy” it is certainly questionable whether serious military expenditures can be postponed any longer—notwithstanding the fact that there is bound to be considerable debate over the meaning of “serious military expenditures.”

Given the conflicting pressures for government spending on civilian stimulus packages and a pressing need to deal with terrorist actions, it is important for policy-makers and for policy-analysts to have a clear understanding of the extent to which Canadians support their military. In the short term, it is probably correct to assume that the public supports the war on terrorism—perhaps even to the extent of limiting their individual liberties at airports and at borders—it does not necessarily follow that they support the Canadian military in this fight over the longer term. One way to estimate Canadian support for the military is to examine the image of the Canadian Forces in the media.

Perception of any government organization evolves over time. It is difficult to gauge public support for the Canadian military with a simple snapshot of public opinion or a summary of short-term media coverage. Gallup polls have shown that public support for the military since 1995 has fluctuated from a low of 36 percent in 1996 to a high of 58 percent in 1999.² A fluctuation of over twenty percent in three years indicates considerable volatility in public opinion. A more

¹ Scoffield, Heather, “Martin’s rate signal stirs furor,” Globe and Mail November 7, 2001, A1.

stable indicator of support for an organization comes from the kind of understanding or “visualization” of its role, function, and duties that are projected in the media.³ In this respect television is particularly important because TV news provides a template by which issues are framed and indicates the rules by which issues are to be judged by audiences. More importantly, people use television news as a short-cut to form opinions on complex public policy issues. In short, television provides one significant indicator of the degree to which there is a broad public support for Canada’s military.

There is, moreover, an extensive and complex scholarly literature dealing with the effects of media coverage on public policies and public institutions. In our view, the best account has been provided by Shanto Iyengar, Thomas Nelson, and Donald Kinder who, in several publications, argue that the media both shapes public understanding of what issues are important and educates audiences on how to judge those issues.⁴ The term “priming” is used to describe the way a news item is emphasized at the expense of other issues or events. Nelson and Kinder later argued that the “framing” of issues moulded public understanding of the causes of problems and of the merits of alternative

² Josephine Mazzuca, “Armed Forces, Supreme Court and Public Schools Top Institutional List for Respect and Confidence,” *The Gallup Poll*, Vol 61, no. 30, May 28, 2001.

³ The term “visualization” is taken from Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B.L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organization*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1987), 4. See also Barry Cooper *Sins of Omission: Shaping the News at CBC*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994), ch. 1.

⁴ Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Public Opinion*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

solutions.⁵ The term “framing” describes the context in which an issue is placed and the image by which it is diffused.

Several studies have indicated that priming and framing have measurable impacts on how the public uses news reports to form opinions on issues, events and institutions. For example, in a series of experiments, Nelson and Kinder found that the way in which poverty policy, federal spending on AIDS, and affirmative action in employment were framed resulted in major differences in the way audiences identified with target groups.⁶ Nelson, Clawson and Oxley came to similar conclusions when they examined the media’s portrayal of “hate groups.”⁷ This type of analysis indicates clearly that the media can persuade audiences. There may be debate in detail and at the margins, but most media studies accept in principle the importance of television in shaping perceptions and thus persuading audience of criteria and direction of evaluation. Accordingly, we plan in this study to describe how Canadians have been primed to judge the Canadian military.

There are several ways for Canadians to judge the Canadian Forces (CF). From an economic perspective, one might examine the way the military allocates the budget given to them, examining purchases, undertaking a cost accounting of the notional \$4.00 Canadian-made bullets, or perhaps an analysis of how cost-effective Canadian participation in NORAD is. Another means by which the

⁵ Thomas Nelson and Donald Kinder, “Issue Frames and Group Centrism in American Public Opinion,” *The Journal of Politics* 58, no 4 (1996): 1055-78.

⁶ Thomas Nelson and Donald Kinder, “Issue Frames and Group Centrism in American Public Opinion,” *The Journal of Politics*, 58, no. 4 (1996): 1055-78

⁷ Thomas Nelson, Rosalee Clawson and Zoe Oxley, “Media Framing of a Civil Liberty Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance,” *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (1997): 567-583.

media could prime the “military story” would be to examine the success or failure of the various missions to which they have been tasked. The military story could also be put in the context of the kind of operations they do, from deployment in battle to aid to civilians and the civil power. Journalists might examine the routine that takes place prior to undertaking a mission, the difficulties of separation from family that come with overseas deployment, the kinds of tasks to which Canadian and other forces are assigned. These and many others are all possible news stories on the Canadian military. The task of this report is to determine what was actually reported and how what the media did report on the military may have affected public opinion in the past and how it might influence future support for the CF.

2. Methodology

Granted, then, that television is an important factor in shaping support of the Canadian public for the CF, the next question is to analyze the determinants of that support, namely the actual media output. Here we conducted a content analysis of all stories appearing in CBC National and CTV National News. Television was selected because it has a significant impact on both audiences and on how politicians determine public support for institutions. CBC National News and its Magazine, along with CTV News each reach roughly a million viewers each night. Politicians and other media outlets are also influenced by

the two networks' nightly news coverage. In fact, three quarters of Canadians watch the nightly news for their daily digest of current events.⁸

We conducted a text search on CBC and CTV news transcripts from January 1994 to December 2000. The result of this search was a database consisting of 1889 stories over a seven-year period. The stories were first identified by date, program, and theme. The primary stage of the analysis was to discern what types of stories were presented over the national television news outlets dealing with Canada's military. The unit of analysis for this phase of the content analysis was, therefore, the story. The general categories into which the stories sorted themselves were: Controversy and Scandal, International Peace Keeping, Domestic Issues, Politics and Economics, Observances, Accidents and Losses, Women, Soldier's Life, and Celebrations.

Three research assistants were employed to conduct the content analysis. Several meetings were conducted to ensure that the research assistants categorized the data consistently. These are standard and conventional procedures in content analysis that have been fine-tuned over several years within the National Media Archive, directed by Miljan.

A more detailed content analysis was then conducted on the major story, Somalia, which included both the peacekeeping mission and the subsequent inquiry into the conduct of the CF. For this content analysis the same research assistants were used, but this more focussed analysis examined each and every statement made in the course of the news coverage. It also determined who

⁸ Josephine Mazzuca, "Network and Local TV News Sources Remain Most Popular," The Gallup Poll, Vol. 61, no. 9, February 6, 2001.

provided the statement and whether the content was neutral, positive or negative toward the armed forces. Again this procedure, which is quite labour-intensive, is also a standard and conventional one, and the usual intercoder reliability tests were administered to ensure consistency.

3. Results: The Importance of the Somalia Story

We begin by presenting the gross statistical information and then proceed to a more fine-grained analysis.

In all there were 589 CBC National News, 233 CBC Prime Time, 116 National Magazine, 56 Saturday Report and 55 Sunday Report stories on the Canadian Forces. In all, CBC's national nightly news casts provided 1049 stories over seven years. In the same time period, CTV presented 840 stories on the Armed Forces. Table One indicates gross network attention to the CF by year.

Table 1

Network Attention to Armed Forces by

	CB		CTV		Total	
	Coun	Col	Coun	Col	Coun	Col
1994	173	16.5%	158	18.8%	331	17.5%
1995	83	7.9%	68	8.1%	151	8.0%
1996	163	15.5%	156	18.6%	319	16.9%
1997	147	14.0%	102	12.1%	249	13.2%
1998	168	16.0%	129	15.4%	297	15.7%
1999	201	19.2%	153	18.2%	354	18.7%
2000	114	10.9%	74	8.8%	188	10.0%
Total	1049	100.0	840	100.0	1889	100.0

It shows that the amount of attention to Canada's military was relatively stable over the four year period. CBC paid the greatest attention to the CF in 1999. For

CTV, 1994, 1996 and 1999 each received about 18 percent of the total attention. The year with the least amount of coverage was 1995.

We next sorted all the stories by geographic focus and by network. The results are reported in Table Two.

Table 2

Geographic Focus by Network						
	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Canada	470	44.8	346	41.2	816	43.2
Somalia	153	14.6	136	16.2	289	15.3
Kosovo	94	9.0	80	9.5	174	9.2
Bosnia	71	6.8	72	8.6	143	7.6
Rwanda	38	3.6	25	3.0	63	3.3
Croatia	30	2.9	29	3.5	59	3.1
Persian Gulf	25	2.4	34	4.0	59	3.1
Haiti	29	2.8	20	2.4	49	2.6
France	19	1.8	14	1.7	33	1.7
Other	10	11.4	7	10.0	17	0.9
	939	100	763	100	1702	100

The “geographic focus” refers to the region of the world where the event being covered actually took place. Not surprisingly, the most frequent geographic focus for stories on the Canadian military was from Canada. Forty-five percent of CBC and 41 percent of CTV’s coverage was from Canada. The second most frequently cited geographic region was Somalia with 15 percent of CBC and 16 percent of CTV’s coverage. The several regions of the former Yugoslavia combined received 19 percent of CBC and 22 percent of CTV attention. Rwanda received roughly three percent of both network’s attention, as did the Persian Gulf. Haiti and France also ranked in the top 10 regions mentioned.

When we consider the theme of the stories broadcast it is again no surprise, given the events in Somalia, that “Controversy and Scandal” was at the top of the list. The results, reported in Table Three, indicate that 28 percent of CBC and 31 percent of CTV’s overall attention dealt with this theme.

Table 3
General Theme by Program

	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Controversy & Scandal	294	28.0%	259	30.8%	553	29.3%
International Peace Keeping	281	26.8%	203	24.2%	484	25.6%
Domestic Issues	189	18.0%	133	15.8%	322	17.0%
Politics and Economics	104	9.9%	91	10.8%	195	10.3%
Observances	110	10.5%	68	8.1%	178	9.4%
Accidents and Losses	23	2.2%	35	4.2%	58	3.1%
Women	19	1.8%	27	3.2%	46	2.4%
Soldier's Life	21	2.0%	17	2.0%	38	2.0%
Celebrations	8	.8%	7	.8%	15	.8%
Total	1049	100.0%	840	100.0%	1889	100.0%

The importance of the events connected to Somalia is underlined in the data presented in Table Four.

Table 4

Somali	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Coun	Col	Coun	Col	Coun	Col
Canada	73	24.8%	53	20.5%	126	22.8%
Former Yugoslavia	34	11.6%	40	15.4%	74	13.4%
Persian Gulf	18	6.1%	27	10.4%	45	8.1%
Haiti	9	3.1%	6	2.3%	15	2.7%
Rwanda	1	.3%	3	1.2%	4	.7%
USA	1	.3%	2	.8%	3	.5%
German	1	.3%	1	.4%	2	.4%
Bermuda			2	.8%	2	.4%
Asia			1	.4%	1	.2%
Europe			1	.4%	1	.2%
Iraq			1	.4%	1	.2%
Normandy			1	.4%	1	.2%
Total	294	100.0	259	100.0	553	100.0

When we examine only the controversy and scandal stories, we see that 53 percent of CBC and 47 percent of CTV's coverage focused on the events of Somalia and the subsequent inquiry. Canada as a focus of controversy comprised one-quarter of CBC and one fifth of CTV attention, while actions in the former Yugoslavia comprised 12 percent of CBC and 15 percent of CTV coverage of controversy and scandal.

Stories dealing with controversy and scandal where the geographic focus was Canada examined issues of military justice, sexual harassment, and transsexuality. The hazing rituals of the armed forces, besides those of Canadian Airborne Regiment, which unit was also the focus of the Somalia scandal, received some coverage as well. By definition, accounts of the Somalia scandal are negative. It is a well-known rule of thumb in the production of TV news that stories must be presented as dramatically as possible. The impact of so much

coverage of an inherently unfavourable story was bound to visualize the CF poorly.

In contrast, it has often been maintained that Canadians are particularly gifted as peacekeepers. If Somalia was an inherently negative story, peacekeeping was more likely to be visualized positively. As is indicated in Table Five, international peacekeeping was the second most frequently mentioned story theme. In this instance, stories from the former Yugoslavia dominated coverage with 57 percent of CBC and 65 percent of CTV's coverage. It should be noted that during our time period, the Somalia story was framed as a peacekeeping story only on four occasions by CTV.

Table 5
International Peacekeeping Regions by Network

	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Former Yugoslavia	159	56.6%	132	65.0%	291	60.1%
Rwanda	36	12.8%	22	10.8%	58	12.0%
Haiti	18	6.4%	13	6.4%	31	6.4%
Canada	13	4.6%	5	2.5%	18	3.7%
Yugoslavia	14	5.0%			14	2.9%
Zaire	9	3.2%	4	2.0%	13	2.7%
Sierra Leone	7	2.5%	5	2.5%	12	2.5%
East Timor	6	2.1%	4	2.0%	10	2.1%
Iraq	4	1.4%	6	3.0%	10	2.1%
Persian Gulf	7	2.5%	2	1.0%	9	1.9%
Aviano, Italy	4	1.4%	1	.5%	5	1.0%
Somalia			4	2.0%	4	.8%
England			2	1.0%	2	.4%
Africa	1	.4%			1	.2%
Israel			1	.5%	1	.2%
Latin America			1	.5%	1	.2%
Cambodia	1	.4%			1	.2%
Bermuda Caribbean			1	.5%	1	.2%
Guatemala	1	.4%			1	.2%
Senegal	1	.4%			1	.2%
Total	281	100.0%	203	100.0%	484	100.0%

It is clear, therefore, that Somalia was the major story covered during the time period we examined. Turning to Table Six, the data indicate that Somalia was rarely framed outside of the controversy and scandal lens. CTV did, however, cover the Somalia incident 14 times as a politics and economics story. Table Six presents data on all the themes dealt with in visualizations of Somalia. Here coders could include up to three themes for each story. Most stories had only one theme, some included more. Table Six, therefore, reports totals that are higher than what appear in previous tables.

Table 6

Specific Somalia Stories by Network

	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Cases	Col Response %	Cases	Col Response %	Cases	Col Response %
Airborne Inquiry	93	57.4%	95	66.9%	188	61.8%
Airborne Cover-up	9	5.6%	49	34.5%	58	19.1%
Airborne Documents	11	6.8%	20	14.1%	31	10.2%
Military Leadership	1	.6%	30	21.1%	31	10.2%
Airborne Trials	16	9.9%	4	2.8%	20	6.6%
Airborne	12	7.4%	5	3.5%	17	5.6%
Airborne Convictions	8	4.9%	7	4.9%	15	4.9%
Airborne Videos	9	5.6%	5	3.5%	14	4.6%
Airborne Disbanding	7	4.3%	5	3.5%	12	3.9%
Airborne Investigation	6	3.7%	5	3.5%	11	3.6%
Airborne Pictures	5	3.1%	6	4.2%	11	3.6%
Reforms	5	3.1%	3	2.1%	8	2.6%
Airborne Acquittals	4	2.5%	3	2.1%	7	2.3%
Criminal behaviour - civilian	5	3.1%	1	.7%	6	2.0%
Airborne Resignations	3	1.9%	2	1.4%	5	1.6%
Public Opinion			4	2.8%	4	1.3%
Hazing	1	.6%	3	2.1%	4	1.3%
Military Justice	2	1.2%	2	1.4%	4	1.3%
Morale	1	.6%	2	1.4%	3	1.0%
Racism	2	1.2%	1	.7%	3	1.0%
Airborne Reborn	1	.6%	1	.7%	2	.7%
Investigations			2	1.4%	2	.7%
Sexual harassment	1	.6%	1	.7%	2	.7%
CFB Airborne			2	1.4%	2	.7%
Soldier Life			1	.7%	1	.3%
Awards medals statues	1	.6%			1	.3%
Battle of the Atlantic			1	.7%	1	.3%
Individual	1	.6%			1	.3%
WWII			1	.7%	1	.3%
Controversy & Scandal			1	.7%	1	.3%
Soldiers discipline	1	.6%			1	.3%
Acquisitions			1	.7%	1	.3%
ForeignSecurity Defence Policy			1	.7%	1	.3%
Staff changes	1	.6%			1	.3%
Training exercises	1	.6%			1	.3%
Total	162	127.8%	142	185.9%	304	154.9%

Once again the negative coverage associated with the Somalia Inquiry and events connected with it captured the most attention with over half of CBC and

CTV attention. This interpretation is enhanced when stories are recoded. These data are presented in Table Seven.

Table 7

Recoded Somalia Stories by Network

	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Cases	Col Response %	Cases	Col Response %	Cases	Col Response %
Airborne Inquiry	93	57.4	95	66.9	188	61.8
Airborne Scandal	81	50.0	118	83.1	199	65.4
Other Airborne	28	17.3	45	31.6	73	24.0
Other Somalia	5	3.0	6	4.3	11	3.7
Totals	162	127.8	142	185.9	304	154.9

The sheer quantitative importance of the Somalia story, which the data in Table 7 indicate was visualized for understandable reasons as a negative story (it is hard to be positive about racism, trials of soldiers, or hazing rituals), is confirmed by an analysis of the statements made to present the story of the conduct of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in that country. These data are presented in Table Eight.

Table 8

Direction of Attention by Network

	CBC		CTV		Total	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Neutral	2021	61.1%	1846	44.8%	3867	52.1%
Positive Opinion	147	4.4%	318	7.7%	465	6.3%
Negative Opinion	1139	34.4%	1953	47.4%	3092	41.6%
Total	3307	100.0%	4117	100.0%	7424	100.0%

When each statement is examined for tone of content we find that 61 percent of CBC and 45 percent of CTV's coverage was neutral, or simply reported events, which themselves were largely negative. Of the statements that

expressed an opinion, 34 percent of CBC and 47 percent of CTV were negative. In contrast, only 4 percent of CBC and only 8 percent of CTV's coverage offered positive opinions with respect to the Somalia story. As noted, however, considering the events that actually took place in Somalia, namely the killing of a Somali citizen, Shidane Arone, by members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, and in light of the conventional proclivity of TV news to visualize dramatic events, negative coverage of an unquestionably negative event is no great surprise. The question we wished to analyze, however, was not so much the fact of a generally negative coverage as the circumstances within which positive and negative opinions were visualized, and who were the "authorized knowers" that presented these opinions.⁹

Looking first to CBC, Table Nine indicates that themes from the inquiry were the most frequently discussed item on the national news, comprising 29 percent of the total coverage. Of that coverage, 57 percent was neutral, while 37 percent was negative. The inquiry itself also received 38 percent negative attention. However, the theme with the highest frequency of negative attention was the video tapes of hazing rituals within the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

Table 9

⁹ We borrowed the term "authorized knowers" from Gaye Tuchman, Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality, (New York, Free Press, 1978). See also Barry Cooper, Sins of Omission, 78-9, 103-6.

CBC's attention to Somalia

	Neutral		Positive Opinion		Negative Opinion		Total	
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
Inquiry Themes	545	56.8%	57	5.9%	357	37.2%	959	100.0%
Inquiry	554	58.6%	31	3.3%	360	38.1%	945	100.0%
Tapes	151	42.8%	30	8.5%	172	48.7%	353	100.0%
Trial	225	74.0%	7	2.3%	72	23.7%	304	100.0%
Somalia Mission	189	65.6%	18	6.3%	81	28.1%	288	100.0%
Documents	227	85.7%	3	1.1%	35	13.2%	265	100.0%
Arone Incident	124	66.7%	1	.5%	61	32.8%	186	100.0%
General Operations	6	85.7%			1	14.3%	7	100.0%
Total	2021	61.1%	147	4.4%	1139	34.4%	3307	100.0%

For CTV, Table Ten indicates that coverage was much more consistently negative towards all the themes. However, coverage of the trials of the soldiers involved in the killing of Arone stood out with proportionately the highest number of negative statements concerning the Canadian Forces.

Table 10**CTV's attention to Somalia**

	Neutral		Positive Opinion		Negative Opinion		Total	
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
Inquiry Themes	701	42.2%	140	8.4%	821	49.4%	1662	100.0%
Inquiry	455	49.8%	62	6.8%	397	43.4%	914	100.0%
Somalia Mission	172	43.5%	39	9.9%	184	46.6%	395	100.0%
Trial	139	36.8%	19	5.0%	220	58.2%	378	100.0%
Documents	157	47.6%	19	5.8%	154	46.7%	330	100.0%
Tapes	113	40.8%	36	13.0%	128	46.2%	277	100.0%
Arone Incident	97	67.8%			46	32.2%	143	100.0%
General Operations	9	60.0%	3	20.0%	3	20.0%	15	100.0%
Total	1843	44.8%	318	7.7%	1953	47.5%	4114	100.0%

Turning now to sources and “authorized knowers” used to discuss, analyze, and contextualize the Somalia story, Tables Eleven and Twelve indicate that for the Somalia story, the most frequently heard were anchors, reporters, or journalists. Combined they comprised, 66 percent of total statements on CBC and 52 percent of the sources used on CTV.

Table 11

CBC's Sources' Opinions on Somalia

	Neutral		Positive Opinion		Negative Opinion		Total	
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
Journalist	1390	63.1%	70	3.2%	744	33.8%	2204	100.0%
Military	263	53.5%	47	9.6%	182	37.0%	492	100.0%
Military Commentator	137	63.4%	9	4.2%	70	32.4%	216	100.0%
Government	91	58.0%	17	10.8%	49	31.2%	157	100.0%
Inquiry	88	58.7%			62	41.3%	150	100.0%
Legal	42	67.7%	2	3.2%	18	29.0%	62	100.0%
Defence Critic	3	23.1%	2	15.4%	8	61.5%	13	100.0%
Unidentified	7	53.8%			6	46.2%	13	100.0%
Total	2021	61.1%	147	4.4%	1139	34.4%	3307	100.0%

Table 12

CTV's Sources' Opinions on Somalia

	Neutral		Positive Opinion		Negative Opinion		Total	
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
Journalist	1276	59.7%	61	2.9%	802	37.5%	2139	100.0%
Military	302	31.3%	147	15.2%	517	53.5%	966	100.0%
Government	160	42.7%	69	18.4%	146	38.9%	375	100.0%
Inquiry	34	13.1%	7	2.7%	218	84.2%	259	100.0%
Legal	39	20.9%	21	11.2%	127	67.9%	187	100.0%
Defence Critic	9	6.9%	5	3.8%	116	89.2%	130	100.0%
Military Commentator	15	40.5%	7	18.9%	15	40.5%	37	100.0%
Unidentified	8	61.5%			5	38.5%	13	100.0%
Military Court	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	3	50.0%	6	100.0%
Total	1845	44.9%	318	7.7%	1949	47.4%	4112	100.0%

It is, of course, true that journalists often provide the context of a story and link the story to the opinions of “authorized knowers.” Even so, it is unusual that journalists themselves should provide such a large proportion of negative opinion rather than merely introduce the negative (or positive) views of others. The data show, however, that 34 percent of CBC and 38 percent of CTV statements by journalists consisted of negative commentary about the Canadian Forces.

For example, on the November 12, 1995 CBC Sunday Report, Wendy Mesley introduced a story saying: “Horrible images from the Somalia Affair. Shidane Arone, beaten, tortured and left to die by Canadian soldiers. On

Tuesday, the Federal inquiry resumes into one of the most shameful episodes in this country's military history." Similarly, on January 19, 1995, Lloyd Robertson on CTV introduced the lead story of the night: "Good evening. A once proud regiment of the soldiers whose roots go back to fight against fascism in the Second World War is now in danger of being disbanded. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Defence Minister David Collenette are obviously appalled by what they've seen and heard about the Canadian Airborne Regiment the past few days. It's been 24 hours now since CTV News first aired the home video tape of a degrading hazing ceremony at Canadian Forces Base in Petawawa in 1992. To put the story in context we'll be showing a glimpse of these pictures again and we warn, again, they are disgusting. Reaction to them has ranged from stark horror to a blasé 'so what?' But not in the government where reaction is pure outrage. More now from Cynthia Drummond."

It is hard to imagine a more consistently negative visualization. It is true that consistency is important in TV visualization, but it is also clear that a more nuanced version of events was possible. From the response of the Minister of Defence to the reporters and anchors, it seemed there was no room for explanation or interpretation: outrage, it seemed, was appropriate.

4. Conclusions

The media coverage analyzed in this report ended some nine months prior to the terrorist attacks on the United States, and a year before this report was completed. If it is true that there has been a fundamental shift in the form of

everyday life in North America, this will be reflected in television news reporting. One of the most significant areas of this alleged shift is bound to be the place of the military in the life of the two major democracies that share the continent. Obviously, it would take another study, replicating the analysis completed here, to determine the extent of the shift. The value of this study for future research, therefore, is that it can serve as a benchmark by which to measure the much discussed notion of the “new normality.”

Many of the attributes of that benchmark have been noted during the course of this study so that only a summary account is currently required.

First, compared to public opinion, which is relatively volatile, media images and visualizations are stable. The chief reason for this is because visualizations must be consistent to be effective: changing the valence of the dramatis personae in the presentation of the news undermines the credibility of the performance. Indeed, it is because television visualizations are relatively stable that they can influence the perceptions and judgement of audiences, and thus of the mass public.

Second, it is clear from the data that media priming of the Somalia story outweighed any other coverage of the Canadian Forces. Moreover, the story was framed in such a way that it projected a negative image of the CF for the obvious reasons discussed above.

Third, this negative framing of the CF and the extensive priming of the Somalia story was to an unusual extent conducted by journalists, anchors, and

reporters directly instead of producing and editing interviews or soliciting the views of authorized knowers to indicate the significance of events to audiences.

Finally, to return to the present position of the CF and the visualization of the military in the current political and strategic milieu: the attacks of September, 2001 have carried the strong message that a robust military capability is first of all immediately useful to the defence of the nation and to the things it holds dear. The military is secondarily, if at all, the projection of a symbolic fool's paradise that visualizes the CF as the expression of the peace-loving nature of Canadians.

There is no doubt that the behaviour of soldiers in the Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia was militarily inexcusable and that there are military measures that can be undertaken to ensure that such conduct is unlikely to be repeated. The symbolic importance of the Somalia story and the unquestioned damage it has done to the Canadian military are a different matter. Further analysis of media coverage after January 2001, and especially after September 11, would be needed to determine whether Canadians are still primed to view the CF in a negative context and are in agreement with the generation-long policies of their government that has helped sustain the negative framing of the CF so evident in the Somalia story.