In the particular case of post-September 11 information warfare, the assertions of US unity by the Bush administration have resulted in a context in which public statements directed to the international community are interpreted as representative of the US as a political entity and not just the utterances of a particular individual in the current administration.¹

Before and during the March 2003 Iraq war, information technologies, and particularly the internet, inspired several groups belonging to all sorts of different backgrounds and ideologies to voice their opinion on the war and in certain instances to engage in symbolic hacking against opposing groups or institutions. But still, the principal originality of this conflict was the effect of the internet on war coverage. This section looks at three levels of the internet’s role in the conflict: its effect on the organisation and spread of the peace movement, its impact on war coverage and the issue of war-related cyberconflicts.

Before delving deeper, it would be helpful to explain again that with the advent of the internet, new forms of conflict have emerged, not directly linked with information warfare but rather, connected to a more subtle form of societal netwar², where new social movements, ethnic groups and terrorists use the internet to organise, acquire resources and attack ‘the other side’. Despite the high-tech name, the groups involved have quite traditional political goals - power, participation, democracy, alternative ideologies - using, however, a postmodern, interactive medium.

There are two types of cyberconflict. The groups in sociopolitical cyberconflicts (for example, the peace and anti-globalisation movements) initiate a newsworthy event by putting the other side on the defensive, sending stories for the whole world to see, rendering information uncontrollable and mobilising support by promoting an

² Arquilla and Ronfeldt (2001) Networks and Netwars, Rand: California.
alternative frame for the event. On the other hand, in ethnoreligious cyberconflicts (such as Israeli-Palestinian hacking and Indian-Pakistani activity), the opposing parties tend to use the internet as a weapon. While they might initiate events, they fail to promote an alternative frame. They simply attack the enemy or defend their electronic territory.\textsuperscript{3} Thereby, I analyse the different kinds of cyberconflict in the context of international conflict theory for ethnoreligious cyberconflict and social movement theory for sociopolitical cyberconflict, while keeping in mind that this takes place in a new media environment, using media theory.

The most recent opportunity to apply this theoretical framework arose with the recent war in Iraq. There the distinction (ethnoreligious/sociopolitical) worked quite well. There was sociopolitical CC before the war, starting with the peace groups organising demonstrations and events through the internet, and, while the tension was mounting, there were hackings between anti-war and pro-war hacktivists (sociopolitical), but also between pro-Islamic and anti-Islamic hackers (ethnoreligious). The most interesting part was the effect of the internet on war coverage. The war itself was dubbed as the first internet war, and the use of ‘blogs’ helped ordinary people to become involved in reporting the war and presenting an alternative by means of independent media, avoiding the restraints the corporate media face, namely censorship and the demands and politics of advertisers.\textsuperscript{4}


\textsuperscript{4} ‘Some critical media voices face censorship’, Media Advisory, Fair and Accuracy in Reporting, 3/4/03
6.1 The internet’s role in the organisation of anti-war protests

The importance of the internet in the organisation of political groups is not new. However, in this particular conflict, its effects were for the first time indicative of the full potential of the new medium in politics. In the months preceding the actual war in Iraq, we witnessed a plenitude of phenomena on, off and because of the internet that in previous international conflicts were only embryonic. Anti-war groups used email lists and websites, group text messages and chatrooms to organise protests, making politics more accessible to an unprecedented number of people from all backgrounds, who normally would not or could not get so involved.

In fact, anti-war protests in world capitals were impressive, whenever they actually made it to the newsrooms. In world capitals, people of all ages and nationalities took to the streets to demonstrate against the possibility of a war with Iraq. In only one weekend of February 15th and 16th 2003, or F-15 in activist parlance, about 10 million people protested globally against the war, rendering them the biggest peace protests since the Anti-Vietnam War protests of the 1960s/70s. In the US, the two biggest demonstrations took place in San Francisco and Washington. The disparity of protestors, where London is a case in point, is a sign that the antiwar movement has gone mainstream thanks to hundreds of anti-war websites and mailing lists. The internet speeds up organising, doing in months what took years in the Vietnam era. As historian and columnist Ruth Rosen explains in *The San Francisco Chronicle*, ‘[n]ever before in human history has an anti-war movement grown so fast and spread so quickly. It is even more remarkable because the war has yet to begin. Publicized throughout cyberspace, the anti-war movement has left behind its sectarian roots and entered mainstream culture’.

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5 Gumbel, A: ‘Global peace movement is alive and kicking’, The Sunday Independent, 16/3/03
6 Max, S, a Manhattan based trainer of community activists for 30 years, quoted in ‘Cyberspace spurs activism too’, Corydon Ireland, Democrat and Chronicle.
7 As quoted in Kahney, L: ‘Internet strokes anti-war movement’, wired, Jan/21/03, accessed 20/3/03
More astonishingly, millions of people all over the world were protesting the possibility of a war that had not even started yet. According to Sarah Sloan, an organiser with International ANSWER, the internet played a very significant role, because ‘it made a major difference in getting our message out there especially because the mainstream media is not covering the anti-war movement’. The internet also allowed protests to go international, with protestors in 32 countries holding demonstrations. ‘There is no way the event would have been international without the Internet’. The same is being suggested by Rayman Elamine, organiser with Direct Action to Stop the War, an umbrella organisation for a number of antiwar groups based in San Francisco Bay Area. ‘Groups wouldn’t have been able to do some of the logistical and other planning without the aid of the Internet for getting the message out’. Alistair Alexander from the Stop the War Coalition in England has commented in a Guardian article that the web ‘has allowed Stop the War to connect with people in a way politicians have failed to do. The much hyped age of online politics has finally arrived’.

Indeed there is no end to practitioners and theorists alike concerning the possibilities of the medium in the organisation of the anti war movement. Kahney, for instance, mentions the United for Peace website, which includes news, contacts of activist groups and travel arrangements to the protests from 3000 different cities. ‘Before the Internet people felt blacked out by the media, because it doesn’t represent their views. Now because of the Net, they feel like they are part of a movement. They are no longer isolated. It helps mobilise people, gets them to move’. Howard Rheingold, a well-known researcher in the field, has similar views. ‘Instead of having some hierarchical top-down coalition, it’s possible to have loose coalitions of small groups that organise very quickly’.

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8 As quoted in Kahney, L: ‘Internet strokes anti-war movement’, wired, Jan/21/03
9 As quoted in Glasner, J: ‘Protests to start when war does’, wired, 19/3/03
10 Alexander, A: ‘Britain’s biggest political protest was mobilised on the web’, The Guardian, 19/2/03
11 As quoted in Kahney, L: ‘Internet strokes anti-war movement’, wired, Jan/21/03,
12 As quoted in Glasner, J: ‘Protests to start when war does’, wired.
In fact, the distinguishing characteristic of these groups is their disparity and their full use of networking, where we witness ‘a mass mobilisation without leaders – a digital swarm’. In other words, it exhibits the characteristics of a rhizome.

What they (virtual networks) fostered was a form of interaction that preserved the integrity and autonomy of the constituent parts. No group was subject to the will of another. No group had to recognise one as a leading group or as the ‘vanguard’ of the movement. There was no need for bureaucracy, permanent staffs, officials, ‘leadership’, or even premises, beyond somewhere to house a server. Here was a form of interaction that denied the need for the very institutional and logistical framework that had for a century defined the terms and conditions of political activism.

I receive the same impression when looking at these protests, which were very graphically reported as

\[n\]ot just the usual left-liberal suspects with their tie-dyes and political correct slogans, but Spanish-speaking bus drivers, public health workers, suburban mothers and their children, blue-collar production line workers, lawyers and Republican-voting executives. Also unprecedented is the participation of the big labour unions, who where notoriously quiet during the Vietnam war…

Thus the internet has become more than just an organising tool. It can be argued that, by allowing mobilisation to emerge from free-willing amorphous groups, rather than top-down hierarchies, the net has changed protests in a more fundamental way. ‘It took four and a half years to multiply the size of the Vietnam protests twenty fold. This time the same thing has happened in six months’, Todd Gitlin, sociology professor at Columbia has commented.

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13 Lance Bennnet, University of Washington, quoted in ‘Internet may mobilise largest protests ever seen, Professor predicts’, www.ascribe.org, 17/3/03
16 Gumbel, A: ‘Global peace movement is alive and kicking’, the Sunday Independent, 16/3/03
Virtually, the evidence of this is seen in the growing number of web-pages supporting or criticising the war. For instance, Moveon.org, a political website with 650,000 subscribers based in Silicon Valley, raised $400,000 through 10,000 or more individual donations to remake the 1960s ‘Daisy’ anti-nuclear war ad.\(^\text{18}\) Also, online groups promote and offer updates on protests, list event information, use chatrooms, conferences and email lists and offer special updates on the conflict (www.notinourname.net, www.stopwar.com etc). These include religious sites, with examples ranging from the catholic church (www.vatican.va) and the US conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org) to Jewish and Muslim sites such as the aforementioned IslamiCity.\(^\text{19}\) The National Council of Churches provides a grassroots toolkit on its site, which puts it this way: ‘[h]ere is a grassroots tool, roughly based on the Sherrod Brown Amendment, that activists can use to request information from their member of Congress on Iraq’.\(^\text{20}\)

In Europe, anti-war groups are using the internet to organise protests outside US military bases and to organise protests generally, in countries such as Germany (www.resistthewar.de), Britain (www.reclaimthebases.org.uk, www.peaceuk.net), France (www.mvtpaix.org) and Spain (www.pazahora.org). Internationally, there are sites originating from Australia, South Africa, Egypt and also the global Independent Media Center (www.indymedia.org) which is linked to worldwide anti-war coverage or sites like ‘The Campaign Against Sanctions in Iraq’ (www.casi.org.uk).\(^\text{21}\)

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\(^{18}\) Kahney, L: ‘Internet strokes anti-war movement’, wired, Jan/21/03


\(^{20}\) ibid.

\(^{21}\) Webb, C: ‘Overseas the Internet is rallying point for antiwar activists’, Washington Post, 17/1/03
Not surprisingly, those supporting the war rallied around the flag online too. Organisations supporting the war used message boards, weblogs, online petitions and email to rally support for using force to disarm Iraq, from sites such as grassfire.net.22

More interestingly, there was a ‘Virtual March’ on Washington where tens of thousands of people bombarded the switchboard of the White House and other US government offices with protest calls and emails, halting much business in the capital. The coalition of 32 organisations which organised the action claimed that more than 400,000 people registered to participate in the campaign. Meanwhile, 700 theatre groups in 42 countries led coordinated readings of the Aristophanes’ anti-war comedy Lysistrata.23

Yet, there is not optimism everywhere one turns. Stewart Nusbaumer, coordinator of Veterans Against the War, makes a somewhat valid point. ‘On the one hand, [the internet] gives you larger numbers of people. But I’ve also noticed it’s not great for a specific demonstration somewhere. I get emails from people who say: I live 2,000 miles away’.24 Still, there is recognition that the internet has been important in the growth of the movement. ‘It has been invaluable in sharing information. With a growing constituency in the US becoming convinced the American Media is not giving an honest or complete picture, people have turned to alternative sources online, notably the European press’.25

The strength the internet gives these type of movements is that it preserves the particularity of distinct groups and causes, while greatly facilitating the creation of networks of the like-minded:

22 Webb, C: ‘Rallying around the flag online’, Washington Post, 14/3/03
23 Kahney, L: ‘Internet strokes anti-war movement’, wired, Jan/21/03, accessed 20/3/03, ‘Internet may mobilise largest protests ever seen’, Professor predicts, wwww.ascribe.org, 17/3/03
24 Glasner, J: ‘Protests to start when war does’, wired
25 Gumbel, A: ‘Global peace movement is alive and kicking’, the Sunday Independent, 16/3/03
As well as preserving a distinct space or presence, groups could make common cause with other groups that shared their values. This could be achieved either through a simple ‘links’ page which indicated which groups they felt some sense of common cause with or through more elaborate networks, sites and mechanisms that acted as an umbrella organisation all of its own.\(^\text{26}\)

On the other hand, there are weaknesses in this kind of politics, since it could be argued that the leaderless and dispersed nature of online activism is ineffective, in that it ultimately fails to reach the vast majority of the world, where many activists in developing countries have little or no access to the internet or ICTs in general.

6.2 The internet’s effect on media coverage

The internet was influential in the media coverage of this war for a variety of reasons, some touching on the simple fact that more people are online now than in the last war in Iraq, others emerging because technology has advanced to include instant messaging, audiovisual imagery, file sharing etc. Still, what made the difference in this conflict was that the media environment was in such a ripe state for alternative reporting of the conflict, mainly because Americans (as well as the rest of us) searched online for news they could not find at home. An indicative example is that as early as January 2003, according to Wired News, half the 1.3 million visitors to the Website for Britain's Guardian and Observer newspapers were from the Americas.27

This part of the discussion looks at three main aspects of the internet’s impact on war coverage: the integration of the internet into mainstream media, the effect of online material challenging official government sources and mainstream media, and the ‘blogging’ phenomenon, whereby everybody can be a journalist on the Net.

‘You are combining the speed of television with the depth of print. This could define how future wars are covered’, Mitch Gelman, executive producer of CNN, the media network that defined the coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, has commented.28 The web pages of all major media networks were well prepared for the integration of the internet in their coverage of the war. CNN itself planned for a war-tracker page, continuously featuring live reports from the frontline, 3-D charts that track bombs dropped, Iraqi casualties and defections and interactive maps of the battlefield, troop movements and terrain. ABCnews planned for fixed cameras on locations in Kuwait and Qatar 24 hours. MSNBC.com said that chat rooms and satellite transmitters that run off car cigarette lighters would be used, CBSNews.com would offer free video, maps and backgrounds and reporters with online notebooks and video feeds, and FoxNews would include the War on Terror page with a correspondent tracker and

27 Kurtz, H: ‘Webloggers, signing on as war correspondents’, Washington Post, 22/3/03
28 Swartz, J: ‘Iraq war could herald a new age of web-based news coverage’, USA Today, 18/3/03
video clips from the front.\textsuperscript{29} As for the BBC’s online coverage, it competed remarkably with its American counterparts. On the downside, many independent news operations on the internet have slimmed down or disappeared altogether since the info-bubble burst in 1999.\textsuperscript{30}

Despite all the available tools, a large number of media watchdogs, journalists and audiences have protested the unchallenging position of the mainstream media towards both the decision to go to war and in terms of the actual coverage during the war. As a result, the internet itself was used not only to mobilise international civil society as explained above, but also to offer alternative coverage of the conflict. There are different lines of development here: the US government’s troublesome if not ‘bombastic’ relationship with the media, American media mostly following the government line with patriotic fervor, Americans turning to non-US sources by using the internet, and the rest of the world discovering the unpredictable and amazing effect of the internet on coverage, and the potential for first-hand eyewitness accounts via emails and blogging.

Let us now examine these developments one by one. As far as the US administration is concerned, even though it made it clear there would be no censorship, it made it very difficult for war correspondents that were not embedded with their troops to get non-official stories out. On the other hand, embedded journalists were controlled by the military. ‘We will tell you what you can report from the speech afterwards’, an army media organiser told journalists on their first day as embedded correspondents with 1\textsuperscript{st} Fusiliers Battle Group.\textsuperscript{31}

Embedded journalists in Iraq topped 800 at the height of the combat in 2003, but their number has since dropped to the double figure. Five journalists have been kicked out of embed slots for reporting secure information.\textsuperscript{32} Most US journalists do not leave

\textsuperscript{29} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{30} Noted by David Carlson, professor in media journalism in the University of Florida, quoted in ‘Media plot online war coverage’, Reuters, 6/3/03  
\textsuperscript{31} Tomlin, J: ‘Censored in the desert’, Press Gazzete, 16/5/03  
\textsuperscript{32} Strupp, J: ‘Five embeds booted out of Iraq in recent months, www.editorpublisher.com, 7/1/05
their hotels, and in some cases, even their rooms are located in heavily fortified compounds in and around the Green Zone, the US military’s Baghdad enclave. Their reporting is based in large parts on handouts from the US occupation officials or material gained while ‘embedded’ with US military units, is supplemented by on-the-spot accounts and interviews obtained by Iraqi ‘stringers’, who risk their lives for a fraction of the salary paid to their Western counterparts. Colonel Steve Boylan, a spokesman for the US military forces, acknowledged that some of the detained journalists have been ‘held for several months’. None of them have been formally charged with any crime or even presented in court.

This ‘difficulty’ demonstrates itself in the fact that the largest single group of war correspondents appears to have been killed by the US Military. As Philip Knightley, writer of The First Casualty: The war correspondent as Hero and Myth Maker from Crimea to Kosovo, puts it, ‘[t]he figures in Iraq tell a terrible story. Fifteen media people dead, with two missing, presumed dead. If you consider how short the campaign was, Iraq will be notorious as the most dangerous war for journalists ever’.

In a single day on April 8 2003, a US missile hit an al-Jazeera office, killing a Jordanian journalist, and a US tank fired a shell at the Palestine Hotel, killing two more. Al-Jazeera offices in Basra were shelled on April 2 and a car clearly marked as belonging to the same station was shot at by US soldiers a day before the Palestine Hotel incident. International journalists and press freedom groups have condemned the attacks on the press corps in Iraq. ‘We can only conclude that the US Army deliberately and without warning targeted journalists’. ‘We believe these attacks violate the Geneva conventions’. The attacks on journalists ‘look very much like murder’, Robert Fisk of the London Independent reported on March 3, 2003.

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33 ibid.
35 Knightley, P: ‘Turning the tanks on the reporters’, 14/6/03, The Guardian
36 Reporters Without Borders
37 Committee to protect journalists in a letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, 8/9/03
38 Fair and Accuracy in Reporting, www.fair.org has a wealth of information on this, these quotes are from ‘Is Killing part of the Pentagon policy?’, 10/4/03
Eason Jordan, CNN’s chief news executive, suggested at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland that some of the 63 journalists killed in Iraq had been specifically targeted by US troops.\textsuperscript{39} Jordan quickly backed off his suggestion, but constant exposure from political weblogs led to his resignation. A year before that, he had admitted that CNN withheld news of atrocities taking place in Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein because the network was afraid it might lose access to the country. Echoing the same claim, the president of the 35,000-member Newspaper Guild asserted US troops deliberately are killing journalists in Iraq.\textsuperscript{40}

Furthermore, with 600 correspondents, including about 150 from foreign media, accepting the Pentagon offer to be embedded with military troops, one would expect satisfying coverage. But even when embedded reports not consistent with the official Pentagon line appeared, they were not taken up from American media.\textsuperscript{41} A look at some examples helps explain why more and more people turned to the internet for information on the war. A \textit{Washington Post} article on William Branigin’s eyewitness account describing the killing of civilians outside the Iraqi town of Najaf, where military procedures may not have been properly followed, was not picked up from the \textit{New York Times}, which instead ran a story presenting the official line: ‘Failing to Heed Warning, 7 Iraqi Women and Children Die’.\textsuperscript{42}

Such uncritical coverage is hardly surprising, since several national and local media figures in the US had their work jeopardised, either explicitly or implicitly, because of the critical views they expressed on the war. Veteran war correspondent Peter Arnett was fired by NBC after giving an interview to Iraqi TV, Henry Norr was suspended without pay from the \textit{San Francisco Chronicle} for using his sick day to get arrested in an anti-war protest and Phil Donahue’s talkshow was cancelled, in what the MSNBC

\textsuperscript{39} World Net Daily: ‘US troops killing journalists, \url{www.globalresearch.com}, 20/5/05, accessed 7/8/05
\textsuperscript{40} World Net Daily: ‘President of Newspaper Guild Echoes Claim of Ex-CNN Exec’ 19/5/05, \url{www.costalpost.com}, accessed 21/9/05
\textsuperscript{41} ‘Official story vs eyewitness account’, 4/4/03, \url{www.fair.org}, also see another incident considering Robert Fisk’s report on evidence that civilians were killed by US strikes: ‘Journalist’s evidence that US bombed market ignored by US press’, 4/4/03, \url{www.fair.org}
\textsuperscript{42} ‘Official story vs eyewitness account’, 4/4/03, \url{www.fair.org}
argued in an internal memo leaked to the All your TV website on 25 February 2003 would be a ‘difficult face for NBC in a time of war… He seems to delight in presenting guests who are anti-war, anti-Bush and sceptical of the administration’s motives’. 43

Again, this is to be expected in a media environment where official sources dominate US network newscasts and dissent is considered immoral. 44 Nearly two-thirds of all sources, 64 per cent, used in news programs were pro-war, while 71 per cent of US guests favored the war. Anti-war voices made up only 10 per cent of all sources, just 6 per cent of non-Iraqi voices and a miserly 3 per cent of US sources. Viewers were more than six times as likely to see a pro-war source as one who was anti-war, and with US guests alone, the ratio increases to 25 to 1. 45 ‘Given how timid most US news organisations have been in challenging the White house position in Iraq, I am not surprised if Americans are turning to foreign news services for a perspective on the conflict that goes beyond freedom fries’, Wired News quotes former Newsweek contributing editor Deborah Branscum as saying. He continues:

Although it’s true that anyone with a website can publish news, it’s still the established media players, such as newspaper publishers, that attract the largest share of an online audience, it’s also true that more people are using the Internet as their primary news source, the same handful of companies run these sites. 46

46 Chris Murray, legislative counsel for Consumers Union quoted in Glasner, J: ‘Media more diverse? Not really’, wired news 30/5/03
The ‘100 Orders’ penned by former US administrator in Iraq L. Paul Bremer include Order 65 passed March 20 2004 to establish an Iraqi communications and media commission. This commission has powers to control the media because it has control over licensing and regulating telecommunications, broadcasting, information services and all other media establishments. The media commission sent out an order asking news organisations to ‘stick to the government line on the US led offensive in Fallujah or face legal action’. It would be a worthwhile undertaking to look at http://www.iraqbodycount.net/resources/Fallujahh/index.php, which archives three hundred selected news stories on the April 2004 siege of Fallujah.

In an article in the Guardian Dahr Jamail, an unembedded journalist in Iraq, noted that refugees from Fallujah told him that ‘civilians carrying white flags were gunned down by American soldiers. Corpses were tied to US tanks and paraded around like trophies’. American documentary film-maker mark Manning returned from Fallujah after delivering supplies to refugees. Manning was able to secretly conduct 25 hours of videotaped interviews with dozens of Iraqi eyewitnesses. In an interview with a local newspaper in the US, Manning recounted how he was told grisly accounts of Iraqi mothers killed in front of their sons, brothers in front of their sisters, all at the hands of American soldiers. He also heard allegations of wholesale rape of civilians, by both American and Iraqi troops. Manning said he heard numerous reports of the second siege of Fallujah [November 2004] that described American forces deploying – in violation of international treaties – napalm, chemical weapons, phosphorous bombs, and ‘bunker-busting’ shells laced with depleted uranium.

A Los Angeles Times scoop (3/6/04) revealed that one of the most enduring images of the war – the toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein in a Baghdad square on April 9, 2003, was a US Army psychological warfare operation staged to look like a

48 Steel, J and Jamail, D: ‘This is our Guernica’, The Guardian, 27/4/05
spontaneous Iraqi action: ‘As the Iraqi regime was collapsing on April 9, 2003, Marines converged on Firdos Square in central Baghdad, as was widely assumed from the TV images – who decided to topple the statue, the Army report said. And it was a quick thinking Army psychological operations team that made it appear to be a spontaneous Iraqi undertaking’.

As Gardiner sums it up:

Among the fabricated stories was the early surrender of the commander and the entire 51st Iraqi mechanized division. We were told of an uprising in Basra – it did not happen. We were told on White House and State Department web sites that Iraqi military has formed units of children to attack the coalition – untrue. We were told of a whole range of agreements between the French and Iraq before the war over weapons – false. We were told Saddam had marked a red line around Baghdad and that when we crossed it Iraq would use chemical weapons – completely fabricated.

Again, in ‘psy-op’ terms, on the evening of October 14, a young Marine spokesman near Fallouja appeared on CNN and made a dramatic announcement. ‘Troops crossed the line of departure’, 1st Lt. Lyle Gilbert declared, using a common military expression signalling the start of a major campaign. ‘It’s going to be a long night.’ CNN, which had been alerted to expect a major news development, reported that the long-awaited offensive to retake the Iraqi city of Fallujah had begun. In fact, the Falloujah offensive would not kick off for another three weeks. As Mazetti explains, Gilbert’s carefully worded announcement was an elaborate psychological operation – or ‘psy-op’- intended to confuse insurgents in Falloujah and allow US commanders to see how guerrillas would react if they believed US troops were entering the city, according to several Pentagon officials.

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51 Gardiner, S: ‘The enemy is us’, Salon.com, 22/9/04
52 Mazzetti, M: ‘PR meets Psy-Ops in War on Terror’, www.latimes.com, accessed 24/1/05
53 ibid.
A report by the Defense Science Board, a panel of outside experts that advises Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, concluded that a ‘crisis’ in US ‘strategic communications’ had undermine American efforts to fight Islamic extremism worldwide. The study cited polling in the Arab world that revealed widespread hatred of the United States throughout the Middle East. A poll taken in June by Zogby International revealed that 94% of Saudi Arabians had an ‘infavorable’ view of the Unite States, compared with 87% in April 2002. In Egypt, the second largest recipient of US aid, 98% of respondents held an unfavourable view of the United States.\footnote{54}

In May 2004, photos of Iraqi prisoners being humiliated by US soldiers popped up all over the web as the internet once again proved to be the place millions of people turned to get information on a big story. While American newspapers were careful in how many and which prisoner photos they printed, lots of websites posted as many images as they could find in great graphic detail. Among the sites were www.thememoryhole.org and www.globalsecurity.org, a global think tank, which posted the full text of the army’s report into the Abu Ghraib abuse and other documents on the Iraq prison scandal. Among the many activist sites covering the prison scandal were ElectronicIraq (electroniciraq.net) and AlterNet.org. Weblogs also posted exhaustive commentary on the naked pictures that were first publicised on CBS’s ‘60 Minutes II’. English-language website al-Jazeera (english.aljazeera.net) published more subdued coverage such as a photo gallery showing Muslims protesting outside the prison and a survey of site visitors in which 62 per cent of the 72,840 respondents said they suspected that abuse of Iraqi prisoners was routine.\footnote{55}

Paul Taylor explores the extent to which the ‘mental atmosphere’ of the Abu Ghraib prison reflects more widespread values within the western mediascape that has become increasingly synonymous with our idea of public discourse.\footnote{56} As Taylor very intelligently puts it, Baudrillard’s notion of the ecstasy of communication was implicitly acknowledged by Donald Rumsfeld who complained that it was much

\footnote{54} ibid. For more on the poll, visit www.zogby.com
\footnote{55} Walker, L: ‘Iraq prison scandal at its most graphic’, Washington Post, 9/5/04
\footnote{56} Taylor, P: ‘The pornographic barbarism of the self-reflecting sign’, fwd in email, undated.
harder nowadays to control information sent back home by soldiers serving overseas. Unlike conventional letters in which the censors can black out the offending parts, Rumsfeld bemoans the fact that US soldiers were ‘running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise’.  

Specifically in the light of Abu Ghraib, Sontag points out that although ‘trophy’ pictures have been taken in many previous military and social conflicts, these particular photographs:

…reflect a shift in the use of pictures – less objects to be saved than evanescent messages to be disseminated, circulated…now the soldiers themselves are all photographers – recording their war, their fun, their observations of what they find picturesque, their atrocities – and swapping images among themselves, and emailing them around the globe, it was all fun. And this idea of fun is, alas, more and more – contrary to what Mr. Bush is telling the world – part of the “true nature and heart of America”.  

It is worth mentioning how online newspapers operate here. With the net able to supply information almost instantly, newspapers had little choice but to put everything they publish every day up on the internet in the hope of keeping people on their site and returning to their site the next day. The struggle has always been how to make money by charging for the content while also keeping as many people as possible visiting the site to make it attractive to advertisers with the ever-present back-of-the-mind fear that free and diverse online content will stop people buying printed newspapers.

According to K. McCarthy, newspaper websites and their content have gradually become split into six areas: First, news stories which are free and will always be. After a week, though, these stories become archive stories and access to them may be

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[58] Sontag, S: ‘What have we done?’, The Guardian G2 Section, 13/5/04 quoted in Taylor as before
charged for. Second, columnists and opinion pieces news items that are exclusive and identifiable to the individual paper. Third, email services - giving people a concise rundown of stories that are likely to interest them direct to their inboxes. Fourth is the digital facsimile of the printed newspaper - whether in internet-standard jpeg images, PDF files or using some proprietary software. And finally there are the add-ons: crosswords, competitions, games, etc.\textsuperscript{59}

To continue, \textbf{MoveOn.org}, already mentioned for its successful anti-war efforts, concluded the same in a recent advertising campaign, which featured media mogul Rupert Murdoch under the banner, ‘[t]his man wants to control the news in America’, claiming that Murdoch’s News Corp, Disney, Viacom, GE and AOL Time Warner control 75 per cent of the total television audience and 90 per cent of the television news audience for broadcast and cable in the United States.\textsuperscript{60} Under this light it is worrying that the Federal Communications Committee is considering scrapping decades old regulation that have kept one or two companies from dominating news.

In the first week of the war, internet traffic ran at twice the usual rate, according to ComScore Media Metrix. The at-work audience reached 36.5 million people on that particular Wednesday, almost matching the home audience of 37.1 million. \textbf{Yahoo.com} was among the places where usage skyrocketed. The volume of traffic to its news selection jumped 600 per cent on Thursday and Friday and CNN.com had the most traffic of all news sites: 9 million visitors. MSNBC was next with 6.8 million. The website of Britain’s BBC drew nearly half a million visitors from the US alone on the Sunday of the same week, 60 percent more than usual. The BBC site drew a worldwide audience of 3.1 million visitors on Sunday, while the top news site, CNN, drew 4.3 million.\textsuperscript{61} Traffic also increased rapidly on anti-war websites, where on average, three leading protest sites (\texttt{www.antiwar.com}; \texttt{www.unitedforpeace.org}; \texttt{www.stopwar.org.uk}) drew 160 per cent more traffic than they did four weeks previously.\textsuperscript{62} Also, according to Hitwise’s media alerts service, which trawls 11,000 articles daily (covering the top 300 global news and media sites), 40 per cent of

\textsuperscript{59} McCarthy, K: ‘This is the future of online newspapers’, posted 9/7/03
\textsuperscript{60} Glasner, J: ‘Media more diverse? Not really’, wired news 30/5/03
\textsuperscript{61} Walker, L: ‘Casting a wider net for world news’, Washington Post, 26/3/03
\textsuperscript{62} Walker, L: ‘Web use spikes on news of war’, Washington Post, 21/3/03
articles that week related to the war against Iraq. For the week ending 22 March, news websites accounted for a 22.47 per cent share of all web traffic in the UK, an increase of 9 per cent.\(^\text{63}\)

Moreover, three-quarters of online Americans (77 per cent) have used the internet in connection with the war in Iraq. More than half of the nation’s 116 million adult internet users have used email to communicate or learn about the war.\(^\text{64}\) According to the PewInternet study 17 per cent of online Americans say their principal source of news is the internet and in the days before the war broke out, 37 per cent of internet users got news on a typical day. Interestingly, war opponents are slightly more likely than supporters to report intensified internet use.

Another contribution of the internet to this war was in the form of ‘blogs’. Blogging is an easy and fast way for personal publishing on the web. Some examples are indicative of the potential for citizen journalism. During extensive flooding, CNN and the BBC and others received powerful firsthand accounts by email long before camera crews and correspondents were on the scene. The email newsgathering was vivid and also included colour stills which were posted into website galleries hours before newspapers published their accounts.\(^\text{65}\) To a lesser extent, blogging was experienced during the NATO bombing of Belgrade in 1999.

In South Korea, OhmyNews, which publishes 200 stories a day, mostly written by more than 26,000 registered citizen journalists, has 2 million daily readers and has been widely credited as helping elect South Korea’s new Prime Minister.\(^\text{66}\) By some

\(^{63}\) Europemedia.net: ‘War dominates the Web’, report
\(^{64}\) Rainie, L, Fox, S and Fallowes, D: ‘The Internet and the Iraq war: How online Americans have used the Internet to learn war news, understand events and promote their views’, Pew Internet and American Life Project, www.pewinternet.org
\(^{65}\) Cramer, C: ‘How the net will play a key role in this war’, The Observer, 9/3/03. Also, there is an interesting quote on interactivity of the medium by Nigel Chapman, the deputy director of the BBC World service in Lawson, A: ‘War prompts text message boom’, The Guardian: ‘Suddenly text messaging appears to have moved on from personal communication to personal statement…New technologies are giving us a level of interaction with our audiences that we have never seen before’. According to the same article the volume of text messages to the broadcaster has grown tenfold since March to a total of 6,000. Talking point, the show that enables listeners to quiz world leaders has received more than 160,000 emails from listeners commenting on the war. BBC Arabic version of Talking point in its launching day received 3,000 emails.
\(^{66}\) Kahney, L: ‘ Citizen reporters make the news’, www.wired.com, 17/3/03
measures, South Korea is the most wired country in the world, with broadband connections in nearly 70 percent of households. Around election time OhmyNews was registering 20 million page views per day. The service averages about 14 million visits daily, in a country of only about 40 million people.

In June 2003, Iranian blogs gave voice to dissidents (www.hoder.com, www.iranian.com) while a growing network of Iranian-American media outlets have been aiding the student-led protests. In another instance, bloggers reported alternative news from a G8 meeting. During the Iraq conflict, a blogger called Salam Pax blogging from Baghdad (Dear_raed.blogspot.com), and Christopher Allbriton, A New York based veteran journalist (Back-to-iraq.com), have been profiled in many news stories. Reporters of Time magazine, the BBC and other leading news outlets had their own blogs. Kevin Sites, a CNN correspondent, posted pictures, audio and commentary on his website from the Kurdish section of Iraq. CNN asked Sites to suspend the blog.

The effect blogging had on coverage might not have been profound in this war, but it is an indication perhaps of where war coverage might be going.

For all the saturation coverage of the invasion of Iraq, this has become the first true Internet war, with journalists, analysts, soldiers, a British lawmaker, an Iraqi exile and a Baghdad resident using the medium’s lightning speed to cut the fog of war. The

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68 The Iraqi blogger was later revealed to be the interpreter of Slate Journalist Peter Maas, White, C: ‘Iraqi blogger revealed’, dot journalism, 12/6/03. Salam Pax’s site featured in hundreds of news stories, including pieces by MSNBC, the BBC, the New York times and the Washington post. The bandwidth demands caused by the ensuing stampede of visitors overwhelmed servers, to the extent that Taylor Suchan who runs Industrial Death Rock and Pyxz.com out of Texas, said he directed the links from the original photos to a parody image out of frustration, after trying contacting both Pax and Blogger, but received no response. The images on Suchan’s servers are being viewed on average at least 140,000 times a day (Delio, M: 'Iraq Blog: Hubbub over a headlock’, wired, 26/3/03)
69 The PewInternet survey on how online Americans use the internet and the Iraq war shows that blogs are gaining a following, but are not yet a source for the majority of users. Some 4% of online Americans report going to blogs for information and opinions. (www.pewinternet.org)
result is idiosyncratic, passionate and often profane, with the sort of intimacy and attitude that are all but impossible in newspapers and on television.\textsuperscript{70}

Kurtz also cites law professor Glenn Reynolds, whose site, \texttt{InstaPundit.com}, saw a surge in traffic as the Iraq crisis has heated up, doubling to 200,000 hits a day.

The most interesting thing about the blog coverage is how far ahead it is of the mainstream media. The first hand stuff is great. It’s unfiltered and unspun. That doesn’t mean it’s unbiased. But people feel like they know where the bias is coming from. You don’t have to spend a lot of time trying to find a hidden agenda.\textsuperscript{71}

Because of their personal nature, weblogs have served as a great filter for the pro- and anti-war lobbies, but apart from the now globally famous Iraqi blogger Salam Pax, very few of these sites actually gives new information. The wire services, broadcasts and newspapers have the most journalists close to the fighting and are able to fire reports off instantly through TV, radio and the web. And this is perhaps where electronic media have made the biggest difference. The BBC’s very successful rolling weblog of all correspondents in the Gulf and the US carried a mention of the missile hitting the Baghdad marketplace before it made it to air.\textsuperscript{72}

However, the global internet audience is still in its earliest stages. Only about 5 per cent of the world’s population can access the internet, according to Nielsen/Net Ratings. It is hard to fathom what will happen to world opinion should net use reach 50 per cent or more.\textsuperscript{73} Notably, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, before the World Electronic Forum, a summit of world leaders in December 2003, said that the focus should be on expanding internet use and reaffirming media freedoms and the rights of ordinary people to stay informed.

\textsuperscript{70} Kurtz, H: ‘Webloggers, signing on as war correspondents’, Washington Post, 22/3/03
\textsuperscript{71} ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Bell, E: ‘The blogs of war’, The Observer, 30/3/03
\textsuperscript{73} Walker, L: ‘Web use spikes on news of war’, Washington Post, 21/3/03
The information summit centred on whether the United Nations should have more control on the internet, since the key decisions are made by a private, US-based organisation of technical and business experts known as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and as well as who will pay for getting more poor nations online. The broadcasters asserted that the future is not only online, since radio and TV will remain dominant means of mass communication in many poor countries for decades.\(^74\) One of the main areas of conflict was over who should pay for technology projects in the developing world. African nations have been rallying behind a proposal from Senegal to set up a new ‘digital solidarity fund’. Many industrialised nations are wary of creating a new UN fund, instead supporting investment by private companies and redirecting existing fund.\(^75\)

\(^74\) ‘Kofi Annan: Keep media free!’, wired, 9/12/03
\(^75\) ‘Discord at digital divide talks’, BBC online, 29/9/03
6.3 The impact of the war on the internet itself

The possibility of war with Iraq and the actual war caused cyberattacks between pro-islamic/anti-islamic hackers (ethnoreligious cyberconflict) and pro-war/anti-war hackers (sociopolitical cyberconflict).\textsuperscript{76} Despite the official US government warning against patriotic hacking,\textsuperscript{77} the most notorious incident occurred when the al-Jazeera website was knocked offline by an American web designer. In an incident originally thought to be perhaps an inability of the site to deal with traffic,\textsuperscript{78} the site was disabled by hackers for long periods of time. The Arabic news broadcaster’s domain name was redirected to patriotic web pages or porn sites.\textsuperscript{79} According to Ballout, an employee of Network Solutions was tricked into giving the culprit a confidential password that allowed the hacker to temporarily assume total control of Al Jazeera’s domain.\textsuperscript{80} Al-Jazeera became the internet’s number one search query for 48 hours, according to web portal Lycos. The reason was that people were hunting for video footage that al-

\textsuperscript{77} ‘Government warns “Patriotic hackers” against cyberattacks on Iraqi interests’, 12/2/03, Associated Press
\textsuperscript{78} Knight, W: ‘Key Arab news station knocked offline’, new scientist.com cites P.Huggins a security expert interpreting as such, which goes to show how problematic internet security diagnosis can be.
\textsuperscript{79} Users trying to log onto the al-Jazeera website in the US found a message that read ‘hacked by Patriot, Freedom Cyberforce Militia’, beneath the logo of the US flag (Deans, J: ‘Hackers divert al-Jazeera users to US porn and patriot sites’, The Guardian, 28/3/03). According to Ballout, an employee of Network Solutions was tricked into giving the culprit a confidential password that allowed the hacker to temporarily assume total control of Al Jazeera’s domain (Delio, M: ‘Hackers condemn Arab site hack’, wired 31/3/03). Despite this social engineering tactic, at the time it was also reported that the likely technique was DNS poisoning, which fools traffic-directing computers across the Internet, similar to vandalising exit signs on an interstate to misdirect travelers. It is relatively difficult to defend against (Associated press: ‘Hackers beat up on al-jazeera’, AP, 27/3/03). Finally, in a plea agreement with the US Attorney’s office, John William Racine, a 24-year old web designer admitted to tricking VeriSign subsidiary Network Solutions into giving him ownership of the aljazeera.net domain. He turned himself in to FBI agents on 26\textsuperscript{th} of March, according to the plea agreement. He could have faced 25 years in prison, but if the judge agrees to the plea he is getting three years of probation and 1,000 hours community service (‘Al-Jazeera hacker admits guilt awaits sentence’, www.silicon.com).
\textsuperscript{80} Delio, M: ‘War worms inch across internet’, wired, 21/3/03
Jazeera had aired of dead American soldiers and US prisoners being interrogated by their Iraqi captors -including gruesome images that American TV networks mostly declined to show. Most foreign news sources\(^81\) noted that the US media had shown images of Iraqi prisoners before demurring on showing the American prisoners of war.\(^82\)

Yet, this only gives a small taste of what really happened before and during the war. Cyberattacks were occurring as early as October 2002, debating virtually the situation in Iraq. London-based computer security firm mi2g said October 2002 was the worst month for digital attacks since its records began in 1995. It estimated 16,559 attacks were carried out on computer systems and websites during that month. But the computer security firm said the economic damage caused by the attacks is decreasing, reflecting a decline in the quality of targets chosen. According to mi2g, which monitors the hacking of websites, the number of attacks by groups opposed to action in Iraq, as well as Israeli attacks on Palestinians, rose tenfold that month. ‘We have noticed that more and more Islamic interest hacking groups are beginning to rally under a common anti-US, UK, Australia, anti-India and anti-Israeli agenda. The most active hacking groups are USG, with members from Egypt, Morocco and Eastern Europe, and FBH which is based in Pakistan’.\(^83\) Unix Security Guards (USG) defaced nearly 400 websites in a single day with anti-war slogans written in Arabic and English, according to iDefense.\(^84\)

When the war actually started, Zone-H, a firm that records and monitors hackings reported 20,000 defacements in the first week of the war. Hundreds of US and British business, government and municipal websites were defaced with anti-war messages, security experts reported. Seemingly within hours, more hawkish hackers went on the offensive against Arab sites. Roberto Preatoni, founder of Zone-H commented at the

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\(^{81}\) Walker, L: ‘Casting a wider net for world news’, Washington post, 26/3/03 writes: Typical was this report in Australia’s Age which said US media ‘had little hesitation in running graphical pictures of surrendering, captured, dead or dying Iraqi soldiers’, and concluded: ‘It was a powerful insight into the enormous sway that the Bush Administration and the Pentagon exert over the media’s coverage of the Iraq war’.

\(^{82}\) Walker, L: ‘Casting a wider net for world news’, Washington post, 26/3/03

\(^{83}\) ‘Islamic hackers step up attacks’, BBC news, 29/10/03

\(^{84}\) Krebs, B: ‘Websites vandalised with antiwar messages’, Washington Post, 20/3/03
time: ‘[t]his is the future of protest. If you take down Al-Jazeera, every body around the world knows it. And you never have to leave your house’. 85

As a result of the escalating conflict, thousands of websites were the target of Denial of Service attacks, defacement, worms and viruses. 86 According to F-Secure, another security firm, the majority of defacements were from anti-war hackers, with anti-war messages or images, including ones comparing the physical similarity between US president George Bush and a monkey, scrawled across various homepages. On the Sunday after the initial bombing, 10 Downing Street’s website was inaccessible, having been the target of a distributed Denial of Service assault 87 and then in mid-June hackers put up a picture of President Bush carrying his dog, with Prime Minister Tony Blair’s head superimposed on it. 88 ‘At the moment we are tracking over a thousand such defacements, most with anti-war messages’, commented Jason Halloway of F-Secure. ‘I have never seen that level of political hacktivism before, nor so many defacements in such a short time’. 89

Defacements and denial of service were accompanied by at least three war-related worms - Ganda, Lisa and Wanor - which shut down security, delete critical system files or erase hard drive data. 90 However, according to Symantec, most attacks, including one in October 2002 that brought down nine of the 13 servers that support the internet, cannot get around the fact that, when online traffic is disrupted or blocked in one place, it tends to flow through thousands of alternate channels.

85 ‘War attacks tit for tat’, Reuters, 28/3/03
86 Delio, M in ‘War worms inch across internet’, 21/3/03 reports that at least three email viruses that their authors claim they were released in response to the war made rounds on the Net. Virus writers often include messages tied to currents concerns like war, or eternal human urges like lust, to get people to open infected attachments. In widest circulation is Ganda, a low security threat by most security firms. Once attachments with references to the current military action are opened on PCs running Windows, Ganda behaves like many other email worms, emailing itself to all the addresses in the affected machine’s Outlook contact list. It also scans the machine for security software and shuts them down.
87 ‘Iraq invasion leads to massive increase in pro-war, anti-war hacker activity’, europemedia.net, 1/4/03
88 ‘Britain’s Labour Party website hit by hackers’, Reuters, 16/6/03
89 ibid.
90 Krebs, B: ‘Websites vandalised with antiwar messages’, Washington Post, 20/3/03
instead. With most netwarriors wanting the internet up and running, such attacks are symbolic and do not aim to bring down the net. Symantec itself has been in the centre of controversy a generous amount of times and in different cases—as mentioned throughout this thesis. In this particular antiwar cyberconflict, American online activist David Swanson says ISP Comcast, and security services company Symantec, blocked emails with ‘www.afterdowningstreet.org’ in the body of the email for a week. The emails were drawing attention to the so-called Downing Street memo, first published in the Times newspaper, which shows that the Iraq war was planned well in advance. A spokeswoman for Symantec said that a spam rule was created due to an increase in email traffic, but was later turned off for being too broad.

Nevertheless, the truth of the story is that such activities are not appreciated by hackers, who in many instances have served as scapegoats for script kiddies with moderate computer skills. Oxblood Ruffin, director of Hactivismo, a group that develops tools to circumvent censorship, has commented that ‘the individual(s) who did this are committing a computer crime and causing censorship’. Robert Ferell, a security researcher, adds that ‘[m]ost of them have no clear grasp of the causes they are supposed to be supporting or fighting against. They just want to appear ‘hacktivists’, because that’s a cool label to have’. And Mark Loveless, a hacker working for US security software company Bindview, put it this way: ‘[i]n a protest or

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91 McMillan, R: ‘Wartime internet security is business as usual’, Washington Post, 27/3/03
92 Symantec itself has been in the centre of controversy a generous amount of times and in different cases—as mentioned throughout this thesis. In this particular antiwar cyberconflict, American online activist David Swanson says ISP Comcast, and security services company Symantec, blocked emails with ‘www.afterdowningstreet.org’ in the body of the email for a week. The emails were drawing attention to the so-called Downing Street memo, first published in the Times newspaper, which shows that the Iraq war was planned well in advance. A spokeswoman for Symantec said that a spam rule was created due to an increase in email traffic, but was later turned off for being too broad.(Varghese, S: ‘ISP “censored” anti-war email’, Sydney Morning Herald, 27/7/05, accessed 2/8/05.)
93 According to the New Hacker’s Dictionary script kiddies do mischief with scripts and programs written by others, often without understanding the exploit, Delio, M: ‘Hackers condemn Arab site hacked’, wired, 31/3/03.
94 Delio, M: ‘Hackers condemn Arab site hacked’, wired, 31/3/03.
95 ibid.
activist scenario, one would hope that one’s cause and message were strong enough that ‘shouting down’ the opposing viewpoint is considered unnecessary’.96

In fact, the US government used the internet for the first time in a campaign aimed at Iraqi email addresses, spamming recipients to contact the UN if they wanted to defect. Saddam responded by shutting down internet service providers.97 The US action was quite a paradoxical venture, since only 12,000 of Iraq’s 12 million people were online. Also the US was censoring troops’ emails to family and friends to prevent leaks of sensitive information. Yet, the real potential of cyberwar for the US military probably lies in the military use of a highly secure intranet and wireless systems that speed audio, video and other data back to command and control systems, as noted by Winn Schwartau, a cyberwar expert.98

US diplomacy officially entered the electronic age with the completion of a two-year project to provide internet access to all US embassies and consulates, with some 44,000 foreign service officers and other embassy staffers able to access the web at Washington’s more than 260 far-flung diplomatic missions from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.99 Accordingly, the US Department of State is well aware of the information warfare threat, as are the diplomatic departments of the top industrial nations. However, the extent of knowledge of the average diplomat and the staff of embassies and consulates around the world remains questionable.

It was also the first war ‘in which thousands of hours of digital imagery will be shot of actual combat. A lot will be from unmanned aerial vehicles flying over the battlefield’.100 As Der Derian notes, the Pentagon’s current gospel is network-centric

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96 ‘War attacks tit for tat’, Reuters, 28/3/03
97 Cramer, C: ‘How the Net will play a key role in this war’, The Guardian, 9/3/03
98 Tsuruoka, D: ‘Internet, wireless to play key role in an Iraq war’, yahoonews, 17/03/03
99 ‘US cyber- diplomacy now up and running’, YahooNews, 29/10/03
100 Kebt Lee, CEO of East View Cartographic, a firm that sells satellite-generated maps and other digital imagery, quoted in Tsuruoka, D: ‘Internet, wireless to play key role in an Iraq war’, yahoonews, 17/03/03. Also, Associate Press also reported the possibility of the US military using ‘e-bombs’, which create a brief pulse of microwaves powerful enough to fry computers, blind radar, silence radios, and disable electronic ignitions in vehicles and aircraft. However, despite the e-bombs being classified, military analysts believe their range is a few yards at most (‘E-bombs aims
warfare,\textsuperscript{101} an observation also found extensively in the work of Arquilla and Ronfeldt.\textsuperscript{102} As Der Derian graphically puts it:

Command and control networks, like the air defense networks, will be taken out with missiles and possibly even electromagnetic pulse weapons. Prime time/cable networks will be red hot with war fever and coverage. NGOS will roll out humanitarian networks. Anti-war networks will send out marching orders. Soldiers, sailors and airman will email stories back home. This war will be started and ended by networks.\textsuperscript{103}

\textit{Conclusion}

Searching for a satisfactory theoretical framework, I have come up with the following parameters to be looked at while analysing cyberconflicts.

1. Environment of Conflict and Conflict Mapping (real and virtual). The world system generates an arborescent apparatus, which is haunted by lines of flight, emerging through underground networks connected horizontally and lacking a hierarchical centre (Deleuze and Guattari). The structure of the internet is ideal for network groups (since it is a global network with no central authority) and has offered another experience of governance (no governance), time and space (compression), ideology (freedom of information and access to it), identity (multiplicity) and fundamentally an opposition to surveillance and control, boundaries and apparatuses. However, in ethnoreligious cyberconflicts, where the groups’ systems of belief and organisation aspire to hierarchical apparatuses (nation, religion, identification with parties and leaders), this network form is not always evident. This is why there is a dual modality of cyberconflict: one rhizomatic and one hierarchical.

\textsuperscript{101} McClellan, J: ‘War on the Web’, The Guardian, 19/2/03


\textsuperscript{103} McClellan, J: ‘War on the Web’, The Guardian, 19/2/03
2. Sociopolitical Cyberconflicts: The impact of ICTs on: a. Mobilising structures (network style of movements using the internet, participation, recruitment, tactics, goals), b. Framing Processes (issues, strategy, identity, the effect of the internet on these processes), c. Political opportunity structure (the internet as a component of this structure), d. hacktivism.

3. Ethnoreligious Cyberconflicts: a. Ethnic/religious affiliation, chauvinism, national identity, b. Discourses of inclusion and exclusion, c. Information warfare, the use of the internet as a weapon, propaganda and mobilisational resource d. Conflict resolution, which depends on the legal and organisational framework, the number of parties and issues, the distribution of power, and the content of values and beliefs.

4. The internet as a medium: a. Analysing discourses (representations of the world, constructions of social identities and social relations), b. Control of information, level of censorship, alternative sources, c. Wolfsfeld: Political contest model among antagonists: the ability to initiate and control events, dominate political discourse, mobilise supporters, d. Media effects on policy (strategic, tactical, representational).

If we look for instance at the mobilisation structures (2a), they were greatly affected by the internet. The peace groups were organising demonstrations and events through the internet, to the effect that 10 million people protested against the war globally, with the net speeding up mobilisation remarkably. It helped mobilisation in loose coalitions of small groups that organised very quickly, at the same time preserving the particularity of distinct groups in network forms of organisation.

Moreover, the framing process (2b) was affected as well, since email lists and websites were used to mobilise, changing the framing of the message to suit the new medium. The language used to mobilise through the internet differs from traditional political discourse (for instance, speeches or texts in traditional media) in that it can combine
various technical media (video, satellite images, file-sharing) in a way that delivers on the one hand a richer message, but on the downside a sometimes hasty and crude, under-analytical political message. The political opportunity structure (2c) in this particular case can refer to the rise of alternative media (as we see below), but also to an opening of political space, and an opening of global politics to people who would not or could not get so involved before. In virtual terms, hacktivism (2d) was apparent in anti-war/pro-war hacking, anti-Islamic/pro-Islamic hacking and a Virtual March on Washington which had an impact on the city's communication infrastructure.

On the hacking front, the pro-Islamic/anti-Islamic hacking is an example of ethnoreligious cyberconflict and we can see the link with ethnoreligious affiliation and discourses of exclusion/inclusion (3a, 3b), if we consider the al-Jazeera hack from American hackers, and the movement of Islamic hackers united in a common anti-US, UK, Australia, anti-Indian and anti-Israeli agenda. Furthermore, the use of the internet as a propaganda and mobilisational tool (3c) is common to both sides (anti- and pro-war) through a considerable amount of websites advocating one view or another and mobilising, countermobilising and anti-mobilising against each other.

On the media front, it is clear that political discourse (4a) is constructed in the American mainstream media to mobilise support for the war as analysed above, since, for example, more than two-thirds of all sources in news programs were pro-war. Very important is also the issue of alternative sources and censorship (4b). Due to the embedded system, journalists having their work jeopardised for not being ‘patriotic’ enough, and the American media generally following the government line, Americans and the rest of the world went online to find alternative news and first-hand eyewitness accounts via emails and blogging. The result was the integration of the internet into media coverage and the distribution of online material challenging official sources. The Wolfsfeld model (4c) is comfortably applied when we consider that the anti-war groups had the ability to initiate and control protest events and to mobilise supporters, but were not as successful in dominating political discourse. The media effects on policy (4d) are more technical than anything else, meaning there was instant 24-hour access to the war and the pressure that inevitably puts on any administration, but no
actual debate or impact on policy, since the American media failed to question any
decisions being taken by their government.

In the final analysis, the internet played a distinctive role in the spread of the peace
movement, on war coverage and on war-related cyberconflicts, in relation to which we
witnessed the full potential of the new medium in politics. In the months preceding
the actual war in Iraq, we witnessed a plenitude of phenomena on and off the internet
that in previous international conflicts were only embryonic. Anti-war groups used
email lists and websites, group text messages and chatrooms to organise protests and
in some cases to engage in symbolic hacking against the opposite viewpoint. The
integration of the internet into mainstream media, the effect of online material
challenging official government sources and the mainstream media, and blogging, are
an indication perhaps of where war coverage might be going when internet users
exceed their present numbers.

The most interesting thing in a brief application of the CC theoretical framework is
the level of censorship (2b) and the Wolsfeld model (4c). In terms of censorship the
latest literature supports the idea that journalists were not only censored and
manipulated (CNN incident), but also targeted in this conflict. Which brings us to
whether the US could control information. Apparently through psy-ops, they could
manipulate the conflict and control the media, especially the American mainstream
ones (almost always submissive to the patriotic/nationalistic discourse after the 9/11) -
(4a). Their mentioned inability to control inconsistencies and fiascos from 24 hour
internet coverage, blogs and US soldiers using the internet to send pictures (as in Abu
Graib prison incident) or to manipulate the American image in the Muslim world is
nevertheless another issue. Accordingly, the anti-war movement succeeded in that
respect at gradually building their own image of the Americans and their allies and
framing their message (no WMD, dodgy dossiers, humanitarian concerns etc) (2b).