Contextual Truth-Telling to Counter Extremist-Supportive Messaging Online:

The Wikileaks "Collateral Murder" Case Study

by Larisa Breton and Adam Pearson

On 5 April 2010, the website known as Wikileaks (www.wikileaks.org) posted two videos of a U.S. Army Apache helicopter engagement that occurred on 12 July 2007, in New Baghdad, Iraq (Christian Science Monitor, 06 April 2010). During this engagement, between ten and 15 Iraqi insurgents were killed, two Reuters employees were killed, and two children grievously wounded. The videos were a 39-minute unedited "research version" of the events which we will refer to as the original version, and a 17-minute version that had been edited and captioned by Wikileaks titled "Collateral Murder" which we will refer to as the edited version – it is this video to which they directed public attention. The original version was classified, and it was provided to Wikileaks in contravention of United States law. (While the Pentagon's investigation of the Army personnel has been provided to the public, the video, and any other classified American materials illicitly provided to Wikileaks, remain classified.)

Called "Collateral Murder," the edited video garnered more than 5,000,000 views on YouTube and was the subject of news reports and articles from around the world, most of them derogatory in sentiment to the U.S. Army and condemnatory of perceived American action. While the re-telling of a complex wartime engagement that raises painful questions of honor and morality has happened before in national contexts (Taras, 1994), and international press coverage of war is the norm, we sought to examine this instance of a *press-like actor*, Wikileaks, which promulgated a narrative specifically intended to discredit American action. Whatever Wikileaks' true social agenda may be, the "Collateral Murder" video certainly became grist for the terrorist mill. We examine this video in the context of Wikileaks' role as a press-like actor, and the role of an individual intervention, a re-edited video posted by a private citizen to refute and to debunk Wikileaks' claims about the incident.

The Collateral Murder video and an individual intervention

The same week as the "Collateral Murder" release, an individual who works near the U.S. defense contracting complex became enraged by the Wikileaks-edited video, which he believed would be used by extremist platforms (such as www.theunjustmedia.com) to further harden radicalized attitudes and to recruit future terrorists online. He particularly objected to Wikileaks' editing, which reduced a complex, difficult wartime engagement to a single-note issue of cold American aggression, and resolved to act. The individual created an online identity of a British subject called 'Bob', which is how we will refer to him throughout this paper. Acting as 'Bob', he downloaded and re-edited the original video, and posted the new version on YouTube (http://collateralmurder.wordpress.com/). In doing so, the interventionist re-pointed

attention to the following items, which had been redacted from Wikileaks' edited version (U.S. Army investigative reports, 2007):

> ➤ Recorded conversation from the pilots' transcripts in which they note steady insurgent activity in the area of engagement throughout that day;
> ➤ Use of Wikileaks-originated captioning on the edited video that called attention to Wikileaks' ideological agenda-items (IngerLassen, Strunck & Vestergaard, 2006, p. 237);
> ➤ Video of a black van that differed from the Apache-destroyed van shown at the end of the video, which had been used to pick up and drop off insurgents throughout the day;
> ➤ Photographic evidence that the Reuters journalists had been photographing the locations and positions of the Army personnel throughout the day and providing these locations to the insurgents – one of the most ambiguous elements of the situation. The journalists may have been knowingly aiding the insurgents by providing them U.S. Army positions throughout the day, or they may unwittingly have been providing the insurgents with tactical intelligence. Nonetheless, it is highly unlikely from the video and photographic evidence that these journalists were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time;
> ➤ Moreover, the journalists were not among a group of unarmed men, as the Wikileaks-edited video suggested.

The interventionist's video received slightly more than 6,000 views before being flagged by viewers and removed by YouTube for being excessively violent – while the Wikileaks-produced videos yet remained. This was action-taken against the interventionist at the behest of Wikileaks and its volunteer supporters. However, due to backchannel in the American defense contracting community, 'Bob's' video and his story was socialized by MountainRunner, a U.S. blog popular with the military (www.MountainRunner.us). The story was picked up by MyPetJawa, a U.S. right-leaning satirical blog that ridicules extremists (www.MyPetJawa.com), and thence by nationally-televised American satirist Stephen Colbert, who drummed Wikileaks founder Assange in an interview on his show, The Colbert Report. Colbert pointed to the inconsistencies between the Collateral Murder (Wikileaks edited) video, the full video, and information provided in the U.S. Army's investigative report. "That's not leaky. That's a pure editorial…You properly manipulated the audience into the emotional state you want before something goes on the air…. How can you call that Collateral Murder?" Colbert said (Colbert, 12 April 2010).

Unpacking the Interventionist's Aims

By uploading a competing version of the Collateral Murder video, the private interventionist 'Bob' had three major goals, containing component goals. They were:

Counter Wikileaks' agenda. The interventionist placed the re-edited video in public view as an entry into the competition for general public attention and mindshare (Harris, 2004). More specifically, 'Bob' wished to counter Wikileaks' agenda that positioned its edited version of the video as a creditable source of information about a potential war crime.

Refute specific instances of contrafactual reporting. The interventionist intended his intervention, when viewed by the public, to introduce enough question about the facts of the events as narrated by Wikileaks to alter the opinions of both general viewers, and viewers

already likely to use Collateral Murder as an ideological plank to support their violent extremist ideology. Nyhan and Reifler have shown that blog users of any political bent will seek out political blog material that supports their extant opinion (Nyhan, B & Reifler J 2010), while Lawrence, Sides and Farrell agree that already politically-polarized blog audiences "gravitate toward blogs that accord with their political beliefs" (2010). 'Bob' had a practitioner's knowledge of these concepts based on his experience as an analyst, and expressed them when speaking with the authors. He hoped that presenting competing information would help to refute idea and opinion formation in general viewers and in those already polarized in their opinions.

Introduce doubt about Wikileaks as a purveyor of factual information. By showing specific ways in which the Wikileaks' edited version of the full video had been edited to excise pertinent visual information, the timeline manipulated, and the pilots' recorded conversation about the persistent presence of insurgent activity in the area of engagement omitted, 'Bob' first sought to demonstrate that Wikileaks had used editing to create a narrative that supported its own stated anti-war activist position. For example, the 17-minute Wikileaks-edited version was the subject of a quote by Julian Assange made to American news outlet MSNBC: "[It] shows the debasement and moral corruption of soldiers as a result of war. It seems like they are playing video games with people's lives." Next, the interventionist intended his version of the video to support, and to promulgate, the U.S. Army's investigative findings that the personnel involved had not violated the Rules of Engagement at the time of the incident, had been investigated, and had been cleared of wrongdoing.

Introduce doubt about the credibility of Wikileaks' face. Additionally, 'Bob' wished to introduce doubt about the personal credibility of Wikileaks' founder, Julian Assange, that would follow him into the future, and give audients pause before automatically buying-in to future narratives created by Wikileaks (Dearing & Rogers, p. 51). "If we can even introduce a shred of doubt that sticks with this story, it would be worth it," 'Bob' said in a conversation with the authors.

As subsequent sections will show, the interventionist may only have been partially successful, due to the hybrid nature of Wikileaks as a content-delivery system with social movement attributes, the barriers-to-entry inhibiting would-be interventionists, and the human behavior factors, articulated in political and communications theory, stacked-up against the individual interventionist. But these factors examined against the intervention can be the lessons-learned to form the beginning of a roadmap for other successful interventions.

What is Wikileaks? Brief history

Wikileaks, a website containing leaked documentation from governments and private organizations all over the world, bills itself as an anti-war activism website. A nonprofit organization arranged online in "wiki" format, it provides a searchable trove of leaked documents that cover classified material, unclassified but sensitive material, unclassified material such as reports from the U.S. Congressional Research Service, and confidential materials such as membership lists and papers from parliamentarians' divorce proceedings.

Wikileaks rose to prominence in 2007 when it published a leaked Kroll report detailing money-laundering involving former Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi and other irregularities surrounding the Kenyan presidential election (www.wikileaks.org), thus establishing its reputation as an organization able to procure and promulgate information to the public and to

expose hitherto unknown transactions. It also achieved notoriety for publishing personal email of American vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin. Two other examples are pertinent in setting-up Wikileaks as an organization with an expository function. In the first, Wikileaks published a leaked copy of a World Health Organization draft of drug development for developing nations (Mullard, 2010) that had been provided to a consortium of pharmacological companies for an early review. Proponents of the provision argued it was fairly standard practice for the private sector to stay close to policy developments, while critics cried foul and argued that this type of sharing allowed Big Pharma to wield undue influence on policy (Mullard, 2010). In the second, in 2008 Wikileaks published a leaked copy of the controversial British National Party's membership list (*Computer Fraud & Security*, 2008). There was furor on both sides of the disclosure.

In all of these cases, it is meaningful that the existence of the leaked information, itself, and the act of the leaking, led to press coverage and interpretation of these events, with included commentary from proponents and opponents of the events at hand, by national and international press. Over time, by following a course of action notable for its similarity to standard advertising campaign practice of using frequency and interruption to garner share of mind to make its way by direct and indirect pathways (MacInnes & Jaworski, 1989), Wikileaks has been able to establish its near-ubiquity as a go-to source for revelatory information drawn from multiple domains. (So much so that in at least one instance, the United Nations itself has used Wikileaks-purveyed information in a report as a citation to provide information about wartime activity and refugee status in Afghanistan (Giustozzi, 2009)). Thus consumers of information, by mental synecdoche, are to understand that press coverage of Wikileaks postings means something heretofore hidden, thus controversial, has been revealed.

Using press-delivery format with an agenda-setting function

In both 'making the news' and setting up its own brand identity as a creator of news (Griffin, 2003, p. 394), Wikileaks has moved aggressively to set the *frame* of its politicized communications to the public (Altheide & Snow, 1991, Griffin, 2003) as news, as well as to use its mass reach based on previous releases, to set its *agenda* to the public (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Blumler and Gurevich write: "Over the past quarter of a century, the media have gradually moved from the role of reporting *on and about* politics, 'from the outside' as it were, to that of being an *active participant in*, shaping influence upon, indeed an integral part of, the political process" (1995, p. 3). Similarly, Harris writes that "our experience with media is a major way that we acquire knowledge about the world" but "the act of transmitting that knowledge may itself become the event of note" (Harris, pp. 2-3). The shape, or frame, of news (or news-like content) delivery increasingly defines and drives content (Altheide & Snow, 1991) – or as Marshall McLuhan famously observed, the medium has become the message. We, the public, know this intuitively, but it becomes increasingly apparent when we observe complex events like the 12 July 2007 engagement in New Baghdad, Iraq, issued in pre-digested format with embedded political meaning ascribed within the messaging. "An impoverishing way of addressing citizens about political issues has been gaining an institutionally rooted hold that seems inherently difficult to resist or shake off," write Blumler & Gurevich (1995, p. 203). Wikileaks' brand identity, that of controversy, expository function, and attendant publicity, establishes the tone and tenor of its communications, while it reduces ambiguity by simplifying the story.

In its tone, and also its habits, Wikileaks seeks to set a public agenda. Long known as agenda-setting by the press (Griffin, 2003, Harris, 2004; Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Soroka, 2002), the frequency with which a media outlet delivers on a particular theme, as well as elements that it chooses to promote, will have an effect on public perception. For example, the press can create a climate of fear around a specific crime wave although the danger to the public is statistically no different than normal (Muzzatti & Featherstone, 2007). However, Wikileaks differs in substantive ways from mainstream news outlets, in that it does not attempt to cover a broad spectrum of newsworthy events but instead only focuses on events it deems controversial, pushes forward information that has been revealed to it, and assertively announces and protects the anonymity of its sources and associates while widely promulgating the information it has collected under its remit as an "activist" organization.

Spots or stripes? Asymmetric delivery power and social-movement attributes

Thus far, we have examined the ways in which Wikileaks behaves like a press outfit in that it makes information widely available to the public, attempts to create its own frame (or paradigm) to ascribe meaning to this information, and attempts to set an agenda with the information it chooses to promulgate. However, Wikileaks also demonstrates the attributes of a social movement in the ways it communicates to, and with, its audience and associates. White (Lee, 1995, p. 93) writes:

> Social movements, in order to strengthen identification and loyalty, tend to introduce and legitimate an alternative pattern of communication which, relative to the dominant pattern, insists that all members have a right to obtain and *make communicative inputs when they wish, that members may participate* in all phases of the collective communication decision-making process, that members may engage in 'horizontal' communication between individuals and groups without being vetted by authorities, that communication be *dialogical* in the sense that members have a right to reply and expect a direct reply.

In addition to democratizing information by allowing a flat pool of leakers, informants, and associates able to participate on the site, Wikileaks frequently leverages its position by relying on the horizontal, emotional relationships that bind online communities, knowing that adherents and devotees will tweet, post, and blog about Wikileaks-offered topics. This has the effect of amplifying the reach, and the resonance, of Wikileaks' topics, or is what the military calls an effects-multiplier. Consider the difference between this practice and that of a mainstream news outlet such as CNN, which has democratized information to a lesser extent by allowing individual readers to post comments at the end of a news story, or providing space for i-reporters online, which are caveatted [mediated] by an editor as not having been fact-checked. Consider, also, a second example of democratized, unmediated communication with social movement attributes: Facebook, with 500,000,000 members, which The Economist pointed out has now achieved "country-like features" in which the "horizontal ties" between members and groups may someday "matter more" to members than their ties to a specific geopolity (24 July 2010). The strong social ties among and around Wikileaks adherents provide Wikileaks with an asymmetric strength. That is to say, its ability to wield influence is greater than it should be, based on its size and its actual function as a repository.

So in Wikileaks we have something like a social movement that behaves like a press outlet in that it 1) sets an agenda for what the public should think about; 2) drives its agenda

aggressively by framing all issues it covers in the same way; and 3) maximizes the "human interest" aspect of its coverage by emphasizing the event's personal impact, the dramatic, using an observable event, and emphasizing this event's "deviance" from social norms (Harris, 191-192). To this explosive mixture of press and social-movement agendas, add net-enabled speed for near real-time updating, and the many-to-many horizontal communications capability of social networking entities such as Twitter, "part blog part e-mail," and Facebook , "an intimate, continuing conversation between friends," (The Economist, 30 January 2010, p. 8) as accelerants.

This provides Wikileaks with the asymmetric power of rapid, unmitigated delivery to a mass following which can be reasonably relied-upon to believe what Wikileaks tells them – and could eventually be called upon to act in ways more onerous than flagging a competitor's video product on YouTube. This is no specious claim: one small and relatively innocuous example should suffice. In August 2010 an American teenager hacked one of the social-messaging accounts of an associate of international pop star Justin Bieber, and boasted about these accomplishments online. Bieber responded immediately by posting the teen's phone number on Twitter and announced it as his own. An avalanche of phonecalls and text messages ensued, costing the teen's family more than $25,000USD in charges (*Chicago Tribune Online Edition*, 20 August 2010).

Therefore, Wikileaks is more than an information-source for ideologically polarized blog readers (Lawrence, Sides & Farrell, 2010) and a touchstone for those with hardened anti-Western attitudes (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). It also may be a catalyst, or an instigator, for as-yet-seen asymmetric actions-taken online by those who support its aims.

Effects and implications for individual interventionists: barriers to entry

We believe it is an understatement to say that Wikileaks is polemic, as are its individual releases. Why, then, do not more people opposed to Wikileaks' releases intervene, and particularly why not in the instance of "Collateral Murder," which was beyond incendiary to supporters of the American military? The interventionist, 'Bob', provided the authors with what he perceived were the mechanical, cultural, and professional barriers-to-entry that may have dissuaded other would-be interventionists from taking action.

Mechanically, while the file size of the original and edited Wikileaks videos were not onerous and could be downloaded to an ordinary commercial computer, the file translation software required to unlock Wikileaks' encoding, as well as the processing time required (about eight hours) and what 'Bob' referred to as "fiddling with it" (and what we describe as a robust set of video editing skills) are the first barriers that may hold back other interventionists. Skill in manipulating gateway software to mask individual identity, as well as the tradecraft to successfully hide one's true identity (should one wish to hide it) are not typical skills, so those in the private sector wishing to intervene may abandon attempts at any of the afore-mentioned gates.

Next, potential language barriers add the cultural dimension when an interventionist would like to address a different audience.

Professionally, video processing time while on the clock and commercial workplace security requirements may prevent interventions. Last, individuals working in and around the

intelligence community and the military are likely to be dissuaded by U.S. security requirements even though they may possess the requisite languages, tradecraft and equipment to intervene.

Polarized opinion, spiral of silence, and 'backfire' inhibit direct interventions

From the mechanical, cultural, and professional inhibitors to direct intervention, we turn to the likely efficacy of individual interventions and examine why 'Bob's' attempt may not have been entirely successful. As noted in earlier sections, blog readers in particular tend to gravitate towards blogs that support their extant political beliefs, although more politically-active readers may read more widely (Lawrence, Sides & Farrell, 2010). Therefore, blog readers supportive of Wikileaks are less likely to seek out information that runs counter to their beliefs, and be less likely to come across alternative viewpoints in their general reading. This self-reinforcing polarization may be one key factor to explain why 'Bob's' intervention garnered lower traffic before it was pulled down by YouTube. People simply weren't out there in the blogosphere, looking for something to balance what they'd just seen in the Wikileaks-edited video.

Next, when an issue attracts mass attention, and a prevailing opinion begins to form, those exposed to the issue and the prevailing opinion become increasingly unlikely to publicly express a dissenting opinion, for fear of social ostracization and/or reprisal. Known as spiral of silence theory, developed by Noelle-Neumann, it is especially important in the context of this examination to emphasize that people are more likely to publicly express the prevailing opinion, whatever their private opinion may be (Jeffries, Nuendorf & Atkin, 1999). In the case of the Wikileaks-edited video, which received global media coverage and a preponderantly anti-American sentiment expressed therein, the spiral of silence theory suggests that even those with doubts are unlikely to express them publicly (Jeffries, Nuendorf & Atkin, 1999). Diminishing returns are likely to result from an individual intervention, in that the competing argument is unlikely to be picked up, repeated, or supported by others if it is the minority argument. Any interventionist going against what the public perceives to be as popular opinion will be running uphill, as their message is less likely to be repeated.

The third human factor to inhibit individual interventions is the old maxim, "Please don't confuse us with the facts." New research by Nyhan and Reifler shows that people holding firm opinions do not, in fact, wish to have them refuted (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). When refuted, the refutation is likely to result in "backfire," the strengthening of the original opinion. "Ideological subgroups failed to update their beliefs when presented with corrective information that runs counter to their predispositions. Indeed….we find that corrections actually *strengthened* misperceptions among the most strongly committed subjects," Nyhan and Reifler wrote.

The conflation of already-polarized opinion, the spiral of silence, and the likelihood that direct refutations will backfire create a formidable obstacle to successful direct intervention by individuals. 'Bob's' intervention, standing alone, may not have had the intended effect in reaching or influencing the opinions of those who use Wikileaks' messaging to support extremist views. However, the intervention was not a complete failure, as the issues raised in the intervention seemed to have serendipitously made their way into mass media via The Colbert Report, which may have introduced the subject of inaccuracies in the "Collateral Murder" video to portions of the public who were not yet of strong opinion on the subject. Colbert's treatment of Assange may also have introduced the beginnings of doubt about the credibility of Wikileaks the outfit or Assange its founder.

Conclusion

Wikileaks, by communicating edited versions of events likely to be picked up and used by extremists to support their ideological opposition to the West, poses a complex problem-set to would-be interventionists. It positions itself as a press-like entity, while piggybacking on the mainstream press and individuals to promulgate its releases. It also operates like a social movement, in that it democratizes information and relies on strong social bonds within its adherents. An individual interventionist will face numerous challenges to rebut memes introduced in this manner, including mechanical and professional barriers-to-entry. More importantly, however, the public's predisposition to seek out opinions with which it already agrees; spiral-of-silence effects that inhibit the expression of dissenting opinions; and factual "backfires" that actually reinforce strongly-held opinions; are likely to render individual interventions ineffective. Without a mass-media platform, or the ability to seed the intervention into audiences that will take it viral, the individual intervention is likely to remain a lone voice in the blogosphere.

Bibliography

Altheide, DL & Snow, RP 1991. *Media Worlds in the Postjournalism Era*. Aldine de Gruyter, Hawthorne.

Armstrong, MC 2010, *The true fiasco exposed by Wikileaks*, 08 April, viewed 15 May 2010, < http://mountainrunner.us/2010/04/wikileaks.html>.

Blumler, JG & Gurevitch, M 1995. *The Crisis of Public Communication*. Routledge, New York.

Breton, L 2009, 'The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 and Some Implications in a Global Communications Environment', ordinary paper, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C..

Bumiller, E 2010, 'We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint', *The New York Times*, 27 April, p. A1.

Chatriwala, O 2010, 'WikiLeaks vs the Pentagon', *Al Jazeera Online Edition*, The Americas Blog, 05 April, viewed 16 July 2010, <www.blogs.aljazeera.net/americas/2010/04/05/wikileaks-vs-pentagon>.

Choo, KKR, 'Organised crime groups in cyberspace: a typology', *Trends in Organized Crime*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 270-295.

Colbert, S 2010, WikiLeaks Military Video: Stephen wants to know where the WikiLeaks guys are located and how soon the Pentagon can reach them with a Predator drone, aired on Comedy Central 12 April 2010, <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/270711/april-12-2010/wikileaks-military-video>.

Dearing, JW & Rogers EM 1996. Agenda-Setting. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Editors, 2008, 'BNP loses member list in Wikileaks row', Computer Fraud & Security, December, pp. 3-4.

Editors, 2010, 'A world of connections: A special report on social networking', The Economist, 30 January, pp. 1-20.

Editors, 2010 'U.S. pilot seen firing on people in Iraq', MSNBC.com, 05 April 2010, < http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36182383/>.

Editors, 2010, 'Is Wikileaks a security threat?', Small Wars Journal blog, 07 April, viewed 10 July and 22 August, < http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/04/is-wikileaks-a-security-threat/>.

Editors, 2010, 'The future is another country', The Economist, 24 July, p. 59.

Giustozzi, A 2009, *AFGHANISTAN: GETTING WORSE BEFORE GETTING BETTER?*, WriteNet Report, Commissioned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (ERPS), New York.

Gorman, L & McLean, D 2003. *Media and Society in the Twentieth Century: An Historical Introduction*. Blackwell Publishers, Malden.

Grant, CB 2007. *Uncertainty and Communication: New Theoretical Investigations*. Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire.

Grier, P 2010, 'Video of Iraqi journalists' killings: Is WikiLeaks a security threat?', *The Christian Science Monitor* online edition, 06 April, viewed 20 August 2010, <www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2010/0406/Video-of-Iraqi-journalists-killings-Is-WikiLeaks-a-security-threat>.

Griffin, E 2003. *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Handler, JF 1986. *The Conditions of Discretion: Autonomy, Community, Bureaucracy*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

Harnden, T 2010, 'Wikileaks: A diversion from the truth?', *The Telegraph* online edition, 22 August, viewed 22 August 2010, <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/7959227/Wikileaks-a-diversion-from-the-truth.html>.

Harrington, CL & Bielby, DD 1995, 'Where Did You Hear That? Technology and the Social Organization of Gossip', *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 607-628, viewed 20 July 2010, <www.jstor.org>.

Harris, RJ 2004. *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Malwah.

Harvard National Security Journal 2010, *NSJ Analysis:WikiLeaks and Jus in Bello: Room for a Congressional Response*?, Harvard National Security Journal, A Harvard Law School Publication, viewed 12 August 2010, <http://www.harvardnsj.com/2010/04/nsj-analysis-applying-the-law-of-armed-conflict-to-wikileaks/>.

Jeffries, L, Neuendorf, KA & Atkin D 1999, 'Spirals of Silence: Expressing Opinions When the Climate of Opinion is Unambiguous', *Political Communication*, vol. 16, no. 2, viewed online at <www.ebscohost.com>.

Keohane, J 2010, 'How facts backfire: Researchers discover a surprising threat to democracy: our brains', *boston.com, The Boston Globe Online Edition*, 11 July, viewed 24 July 2010, <http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/07/11/how_facts_backfire?mode=PF>

Lassen, I, Strunck, J & Vestergaard, T (eds) 2006. *Mediating Ideology in Text and Image*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam.

Lawrence, E, Sides, J, & Farrell, H 2010, 'Self Segregation or Deliberation? Blog Readership, Participation, and Polarization in American Politics', *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 141-157.

Lee, P (ed.) 1995. *The Democratization of Communication*. University of Wales Press, Cardiff.

'Leave it to Bieber: Pop star takes revenge via Twitter', *Chicago Tribune Online Edition*, viewed 20 August 2010, < www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/sc-ent-0816-justin-bieber-twitter,0,7539358.story>.

Logan, L 2010, *Lara Logan: Wikileaks Documents Tell the Wrong Story*, 02 August, CBSNews.com, Political Hotsheet, viewed 10 August 2010, <http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20012383-503544.html>.

MacInnis, DJ & Jaworski, BJ 1989, 'Information Processing from Advertisements: Toward an Integrative Framework', *The Journal of Marketing*, vol. 53, no. 4, pp. 1-23, viewed 20 July 2010, <www.jstor.org/stable/1251376>.

McChesney, RW 2008. *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas*. Monthly Review Press, New York.

McCoy, TS 1993. *Voices of Difference: Studies in Critical Philosophy and Mass Communication*. Hampton Press, Cresskill.

McElroy, D 2010, 'Calls for inquiry into Apache attack on Iraqi civilians:
The US military is facing demands for an inquiry after the leak of a video showing an American helicopter attack on innocent Iraqi civilians', *The Telegraph* online edition, 06 April, viewed 16 August 2010, <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/7560561/Calls-for-inquiry-into-Apache-attack-on-Iraqi-civilians.html>.

McGuire, WJ 1976, 'Some Internal Psychological Factors Influencing Consumer Choice', *The Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 302-319, viewed August 25 2010, <www.jstor.org>.

McLuhan, M 2005. *Understanding Me*. McClelland & Stewart, Ottawa.

Misuraca, G 2010, 'Exploring public governance implications of Social Computing', *Technical Seminar on Information and Communication Technology in Social Security*, International Social Security Association, Beirut, Lebanon, pp. 3-7.

Mullard, A 2010, 'WHO report on drug development marred by big pharma leak', *Nature Medicine*, vol. 16, no. 2, p. 133.

Muzzati, SL & Featherstone, R 2007, 'Crosshairs on Our Backs: The Culture of Fear and the Production of the D.C. Sniper Story', *Contemporary Justice Review: Issues in Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 43-66.

Name redacted, 2007, 'Investigation into Civilian Casualties Resulting from an Engagement on 12 July 2007 in the New Baghdad District of Baghdad, Iraq', Report of Investigation UP AR 15-6, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry MND-B, available online at < http://www.scribd.com/doc/29487634/Centcom-FOIA#open_download>.

Names redacted, 2007, 'Sworn Statement' taken from Army investigation of Apache helicopter attack, 12 July, found online at <www2.centcom.mil/sites/foia/rr/CENTCOM%20Regulation%20CCR%2025210/Death%20of%20Reuters%20Journalists/2--Sworn%20Statements%20.pdf>.

Nyhan, B & Reifler, J 2010, 'When Corrections Fail: The persistence of political misperceptions', *Political Behavior*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 303-330.

Palmer, AW & Carter, EL, 2006, 'The Smith Mundt Act's Ban on Domestic Propaganda: An Analysis of the Cold War Statute Limiting Access To Public Diplomacy', *Communication Law and Policy*, vol. 11, no. 1.

Pezzi, SM 2010, 'Wikileaks and the First Amendment', Harvard National Security Journal, A Harvard Law School Publication, viewed 22 August 2010, <www.harvardnsj.com/2010/08/wikileaks-and-the-first-amendment/>.

Post, JM 2007, *The Mind of the Terrorist*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York.

Shoemaker, PJ & Reese, SD 1991. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content, Second Edition*. Longman, White Plains.

Soroka, SN 2002. *Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada*. UBC Press, Vancouver.

Taras, D 1995, 'The Struggle over "The Valour and the Horror": Media Power and the Portrayal of War', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 725-748, viewed 20 July 2010, <www.jstor.org>.

Tesson, KJ 2006, 'Dynamic Networks. An Interdisciplinary Study of Network Organization in Biological and Human Social Systems', PhD thesis, University of Bath, Bath. Found online at <www.actionresearch.net/living/tesson.shtml>.

Van den Broeck, T, Frissen, V, Huijboom, N & Punie, Y 2010, *Government 2.0: Hype, Hope or Reality?*, The European Journal of ePractice, viewed 7 July, <www.epracticejournal.eu>.

Verdier, R 2009, 'The Rise of Web 2.0 Technology and Its Implications for Democracy', BA Honors Thesis, Wesleyan University, Middletown.

'Video shows U.S. troops killing Baghdad citizens', *Tehran Times International Daily*, p. 15, 7 April, viewed 20 August 2010, <www.tehrantimes.com>.

Waterman, S 2008, 'Analysis: U.S. Lost Fallujah's Info War', originally published by United Press International, republished in *Information Operations Newsletter,* US Army Strategic Command, G39, Information Operations Branch, vol. 8, no. 7, pp. 1-2.

Whittel, G & Fordham, A 2010, 'Leaked video footage shows Iraq journalists killed by US gunships', *The Times*, 7 April, viewed 15 July 2010, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/iraq/article7088548.ece>.

Winter, J 2002. *Media Think*. Black Rose Books, Montréal.

Wood, JT 1997. *Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont.

Woodside, AG 1996. *Measuring the Effectiveness of Image and Linkage Advertising: The Nitty-Gritty of Maxi-Marketing*. Quorum Books, Westport.

Woodward, P 2010, *War on Iran more likely — thanks to Wikileaks*, 28 July, War in Context website, viewed 22 August 2010, <http://warincontext.org/2010/07/28/war-against-iran-more-likely-thanks-to-wikileaks/>.

Larisa Breton is a strategic communications engagement and influence specialist with a wealth of US Government, commercial digital, and traditional multimedia experience. From her roots as part of the digital vanguard that revolutionized Internet usage in the early 1990s, Larisa pioneered digital commerce to Fortune 100 companies. Since transitioning to Strategic Communications, Larisa has helped to frame strategic and tactical programs, and program execution, on complex and challenging engagement projects conducted worldwide.

Adam Pearson is a Cyber Investigator with Striker Pierce Investigations, LLC, and has over 12 years experience with the Intelligence Community in both the military and civilian world. He is proficient in multiple languages and is a subject matter expert in Strategic Influence and Information Operations.