

avoided. Maybe the press was suffering a crisis of confidence -- thinking that perhaps they had played too great a role in Vietnam. "I believe we really did a lousy job in bringing this information to the people of the United States in order for them to make a valid, well-informed decision about the war. I think we ought to be ashamed of ourselves!"

General Sidle popped up to say that General Schwarzkopf's position in the command system had given him responsibility for the Gulf area, and therefore there was nothing unusual in his pre-war visits to Kuwait.

On the final afternoon of the seminar, Jeremy Kinsman, assistant deputy minister for political and international security affairs at the Department of External Affairs, gave another version of how the war began. He had not been present during the earlier sessions of the seminar, arriving from a visit to Moscow just in time to deliver his own view. Despite that, his comments sounded to the seminar audience like a rebuttal of the Viorst speech the previous day.

Bernard Wood described a "groundswell of opinion" among participants that the Americans had not really tried to avoid the war, asking for Mr. Kinsman's comments, which were emphatic. There was no question in his mind at any time, he said, that the United States preferred a peaceful settlement to war. He described the Iraq affair as "a crisis of failed communications," in which television played a major part. It was not true, he said, that the Americans had decided in September or October to go to war. Despite the role played by CNN (see Chapter IV), there was very little communication of information. Every government had a self-serving relationship to television.

The key event, he argued, was the Helsinki summit meeting between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in September. Mr. Kinsman said that Canadian officials were worried about the Americans demonizing Saddam Hussein, but, "We were wrong. Demonizing him was understating it. Imagine the impact for Saddam Hussein watching Bush and Gorbachev in Helsinki, talking entirely about him." Saddam completely misunderstood the impact of his own television performances, and he thought the United States was a paper tiger. For President Bush, once the extraordinary forces of the coalition had been assembled, the preference for peace persisted, but not, "with any