

didn't make any news. He wanted to be on live via satellite and was really offended when we explained that we did not have the opportunity at the moment to rush an uplink to his tent from which he was calling, according his staff aides, outside Tunis.

Given the pace of events in our news network, the Gulf War now seems rather distant. For example, since then we have had to confront and cover -- often live via our own portable uplinks and let me assure you in the States anything is portable, an elephant would be portable if it had a handle on it -- those stories to remind you include the Bangladesh floods and the deaths from that, the Kurdish refugee disaster. We were live from Turkey, Iraq and Northern Iran the first time ever for a live broadcast from Northern Iran and I hope it's our last! We had live reporting from Northern Ireland, the Ethiopian-Somalian famine, the break-up of Yugoslavia, the economic summit in London and in Moscow. This is not to say I am offering a travelogue in lieu of a speech. Rather to say we continue to collect evidence that television news does have an impact on the conduct of foreign policy, but no one knows how much. Some things we do know: heads of state and their aides do most certainly watch CNN and our fellow broadcasters; leaders of institutions such as other networks, newspapers, think-tanks, academia, corporations are close and careful viewers of the news product.

We believe we are a factor in the decision-making, but of course, to what extent is unclear. But for fear one would believe too many of the compliments CNN has received, you only have to recall the thought expressed by that singular Chinese leader Chou-en-lai when he was asked to assess the effects of the French Revolution on modern-day China, he said "it is too early to know."

There are some conclusions and strategies I think we are learning from this global picture. First off -- hardly a bulletin -- governments will use and manipulate if they can. The manipulatee must determine whether what is being offered is newsworthy. Often the material is propaganda and there is nothing new in that. However, it still can be news within the context of that particular story. In accepting the said pieces, a prepared statement or an official offer for an interview, television is not doing anything particularly new. Newspapers have been a similar vehicle for hundreds of years. Ours is just faster, the results more quickly known.