

What was clear as desert stars were the irreconcilable differences of view between military spokespersons, with their concern for security and the safety of their troops, and the news media whose job it is to seek the facts, see the action and tell the story. Reporters and news executives who addressed the seminar usually accepted the need for the security of military plans and the need to keep secrets for the purpose of saving soldiers' lives. But the point was also made that secrecy and controls on reporters are often imposed for reasons of political convenience, for example to avoid blame for military and political errors that deserve exposure.

On one point there was wide agreement: that this particular debate had been going on for centuries, and was unlikely to conclude any time soon. One practical reason for this is that there appears to be little public support for the journalistic side of the argument in the United States, in Canada, or in Britain, where the current American techniques of news management and control of reporters were pioneered in the Falkland Islands, in the far-off South Atlantic, in the summer of 1982. For editors and journalists in the field, that is a disturbing fact.