

spokesman and briefing officer during the crisis, told the seminar that the Department of National Defence in Ottawa based its planning mainly on lessons learned during the confrontation with Mohawk Indians at Oka during the summer of 1990. Editors considered this a particularly ill-chosen model, given the attempts of the army to interfere with the transmission of news. By comparison with American numbers, Canada's press contingent was relatively small, although Rear-Admiral Murray remarked on the high reporter/pilot ratio at the Canadian air bases in the Gulf States, reaching as many as thirty reporters to thirty-six pilots. Some of the pilots at times felt they were over-covered.

However, the Canadian contribution to the allied forces was so small that Canadian reporters were completely excluded from all the press pools organized by the Americans. Thus, while American and British correspondents chafed under the restrictions of the pool system, the Canadians never even got that far. They had to be content with military briefings in Dhahran, in north-east Saudi Arabia, which were instantly telecast all over the world, and with press conferences and briefings in Washington, Ottawa and at bases in the Gulf States. Colin MacKenzie, Washington correspondent for *The Globe and Mail*, said he thought Washington was the best place to cover the war. Briefings were excellent and provided reporters with a good story every day. "The briefings were not filled with lies, but with errors of omission," he said.

On behalf of concerned Canadian news organizations, William Thorsell, editor of *The Globe and Mail* wrote to the government seeking assistance in getting Canadian reporters into the war zone press pools. No answer was ever received, said James Travers, editor and general manager of Southam News. Although five Southam writers were in the Middle East during the crisis, none was ever chosen for a pool. "You might have done better if you'd sent a brigade," said General Sidle.

When the build-up against Iraq got underway, it became obvious that a very large number of reporters was also massing around the fringes of the potential war zone. As the number of troops increased, so did the media numbers, until by December 1990 about 800 reporters and support people (mainly television crews) had gathered in Saudi Arabia to cover the impending war. When the war ended in February, 1,600 were there, and several hundred more were in the process of gaining entry.