



MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

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Mass media outlets are relevant actors in the [information environment](#) (IE), and their role has significant implications for modern warfare. Through technology and a complex web of relationships, today's mass media outlets possess global reach and the capabilities to actively gather, synthesize, and distribute news and information around the clock at a very high tempo. Though all media outlets have their editorial policy and define and cover news differently, and often with widely varying biases that can change how events are framed, most major national and international outlets focus heavily on military operations during times of international crisis and war.

Most media outlets cover military operations from multiple perspectives. They simultaneously pursue stories on all aspects of warfare—strategic, operational, tactical, diplomatic, economic, and human interest. They leverage technology and a complex network of reporters and sources to provide audiences insight into as many dimensions of the news as possible. As with military operations, senior editors and producers at these outlets make important strategic decisions at a rapid pace, often with less than perfect situational awareness. In this modern, highly competitive industry, media places tremendous emphasis on seizing the initiative and then providing agile, timely responses to world events.

The evolution of the IE increased the demand for information and the competition to discover and report unique stories. As such, social media outlets, independent of the major outlets, have dramatically expanded to fill the gap. These outlets are a vital part of the 24-hour news cycle, which results in tremendous amounts of analysis and editorial commentary that may or may not present an accurate account of military operations. In some cases, dissemination of inaccurate information is because of the speed at which it is provided to support an ever-growing demand. In other cases, it is due to biases of the outlet, its malign intent, or the malign intent of other actors feeding it information. The challenge becomes even more significant in the modern IE, where global audiences select channels that often reinforce their biases with little or no regard for competing perspectives. Additionally, these outlets can set the public agenda by driving coverage of events that might not otherwise garner significant attention. Modern military operations are widely viewed events and are often watched in real-time by global audiences shaping perspectives, influencing behavior, and ultimately affecting military operations or creating strategic outcomes.
