

THE STEREOTYPES OF MILITARY TOWARDS JOURNALISTS AND WORK WITH EMBEDDED REPORTERS IN MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS ABROAD

Neno Hristov¹, Gabriela Naplatanova²

¹Assoc. Prof. Dr., (NDA "G.S.Rakovski") <nenohristov@gmail.com>

²PhD researcher (NDA "G.S.Rakovski") <g.naplatanova@gmail.com>

Abstract

The impact of the news technologies development on the newsgathering business played significant role in setting new standards in the news coverage and the ethics of media outlets. The deadlines, the channels of communication and feedback changed so fast in terms of the media scope, focus, and news cycle.

Accordingly, this process posed certain challenges for the military leadership regarding operational planning. Now they have to consider the adequate media coverage while thinking about personal and operational security of their units on the field. The information is considered to be the fifth domain of warfare along with earth, sky, sea and space.

Due to that necessity we concluded survey of the attitudes for the ethical and technical standards of media and military in armed conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, so we can define the scope of cooperation between the two professional communities. We explored the stereotypes of 60 professionals from different background as media outlets, military expertise and job description, professionals with experience in missions abroad in conflict zones. The survey helped us to define the interactions between military and media in conflict zones; to determine the framework of their cooperation and the expectations they have, while trying to fulfil their obligations in the field.

Our main task-to target and enlarge the mutual understanding about the other professional community's standards and operational procedures and to make media and military working together in a less confrontational manner without altering the real picture in the battle field. The media operations are considered to be essential part of the military operations with respect to the media influence in shaping public opinion. Because the public opinion back home is crucial to the operational success of the actions undertaken by the government. The journalists and the military officers consider the need for mutual training while working in hostile environment and building a standard procedure to be necessary and periodical in terms of avoiding shortcomings from previous operations. This is very positive trend for learning the good examples and unlearning the contra productive ones.

This practice could be very useful in setting standards when a journalist willingly or unwillingly violates the ground rules while embedded in a military unit. 80 percent out of the all responders in the survey pointed out that media and military should have friendly and cooperative attitude towards each other in the field. Building ground rules procedures that could enable the working process both in media and military communities is

crucial. So is the military leadership readiness to navigate the media expectations to build strong and fair reporting of facts and tell realistic, objective and compelling stories from the battle field.

Keywords: interactions between military and media, military expertise, journalists, standard procedure, public opinion, mutual understanding, cooperation, personal and operational security

1 INTRODUCTION

The impact of the new technologies in the modern society sets new standards in the media and the speed of news cycle in terms of deadlines, use of sources and the channels of communication and the scope of media coverage. This imposes great challenge for the military forces and leadership to give adequate and correct information to the media avoiding risks for the security of the military personnel on the battle field and avoiding risks for the operational security because the information is considered to be of significant importance to the mission and is considered to be the fifth domain of warfare along with sea, land, sky and space.

Regarding the necessity of testing the attitudes of the professional communities of military and media who could receive assignments and have to work together in a zone of armed conflict we decided to assess the media influence in our homeland – state that participated in the operation of NATO in Afghanistan and the coalition of the willing and post-war recovering in Iraq.

In the survey we examined the attitudes and the experience of 60 professionals, who answered to various questions – ethical, related to operational procedures and technical aspects that could provide clear and adequate information about the capabilities, the options and the restrictions of interaction of media and military when a media crew is embedded in a military unit or freelance journalist travelling independently approaches the military unit in a zone of operation. Our task was to define and evaluate the area in which the two professional communities could interact successfully without tensions and controversial reporting that could alter the perception of the audience for the real events in the zone of the operation. The media plays significant role in shaping the public opinion for a certain military operation. And according to the communications experts in US the public opinion is the center of gravity for the support and legitimacy of a military operation that could determine the outcome of the operation itself.

The survey has been conducted in the period of July- August 2017 The number of professionals that took part is 62. 41 of them - military, 21 journalists.

2 MILITARY PROFESSIONALS

100% of the military participated in the survey are male. 75% of them have experience in missions abroad in conflict zones, 25 % have no such experience but still have important expertise that could offer a different point of view towards the problems in media-military relations. The average age of the military respondents is 39 years. The youngest is 31, the eldest participant is 60. The average working experience is 17 while the shortest is 8 years in the army and the longest is 38.

The questions for the military respondents are focused on their attitude towards embedded journalists, the forms of control for operational security and the possible flaws with leaks of sensitive information through unauthorized channels that could jeopardize the mission or impose certain threat to the military unit. We examined the ethical aspects based on the collision in the media practices; which mechanism prevails in a critical situation- the urge to report what is going on or the need to help and to cooperate with the military in a critical situation.

All these aspects are scrutinized so we can build different scenarios of media effects on the military operation based on media coverage or leaks of information or disinformation that could have significant impact in the perception of the audience for the situation in the zone of operation.

3 HYPOTHESES

1. We presume that there is a need for training in both military and media for better understanding of their interaction in a conflict zones and the special requirements for behavior of cultural and religious traditions in the host country.

This presumption is based on the Theory of Learning and Unlearning of Nonaka which has been adapted by Thomas Rid to the needs of the PR experts and media operations experts in US military during the operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. (Rid, Thomas: War and Media Operations, 2007, Routledge London and New York) He highlights the strategic importance of the media operations for the success of any military campaign and adapts the theory of learning through the communities of practice that embodies the practical knowledge in the strategic documents and later in operational procedures and routine practices.

The theory examines the process of unlearning ineffective practices and their change with effective ones. This is the reason to explore the options for update of the professional, ethical and technical standards for conflict zone both for the military and media.

2. We presume that there could be differences in the procedures in terms of control which the military consider that have to be imposed and the procedures that journalists consider acceptable. This presumption is based on extraordinary circumstances which could provoke different reactions and professional procedures that could result in confronting military and media.

For instance, if there is an attack to the unit the embedded reporters will be asked to report on the situation immediately while the military commanders would withhold the information putting the operational and personnel security first.

3. We presume that leaks of sensitive information for events or people are possible through social media or other unauthorized channels and we examine the reactions and attitudes of media and military how they will behave if having access to such information if the data is sensitive and could cause media effect and provoking significant shift in public opinion.

This presumption is based on a situation with leak of classified information related to friendly fire in Iraq 2004 when a Bulgarian soldier was shot by accident due to communication problems. The details for the accident were shared in an online forum below an article in military online newspaper and caused significant media effect that puts the government under serious pressure is classified as CNN effect by Chiara de Franco. (Media Power and the transformation of War, Chiara De Franco, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012)

4 SURVEY

The survey is anonymous, but the respondent shared information on their age, professional experience and details of previous assignments. In the military questionnaires' the first question is related to the organization of media coverage of armed conflicts. We asked what the options are facing the newsrooms for covering military operation abroad- to embed a crew or to send it separately. The option of separate and independent form military presence in the conflict region the military respondents are neutral 32% of the participants. The opinions pro and cons are divided equally 19.5% are for embed and the same number of people are for independent travel to the conflict zone.

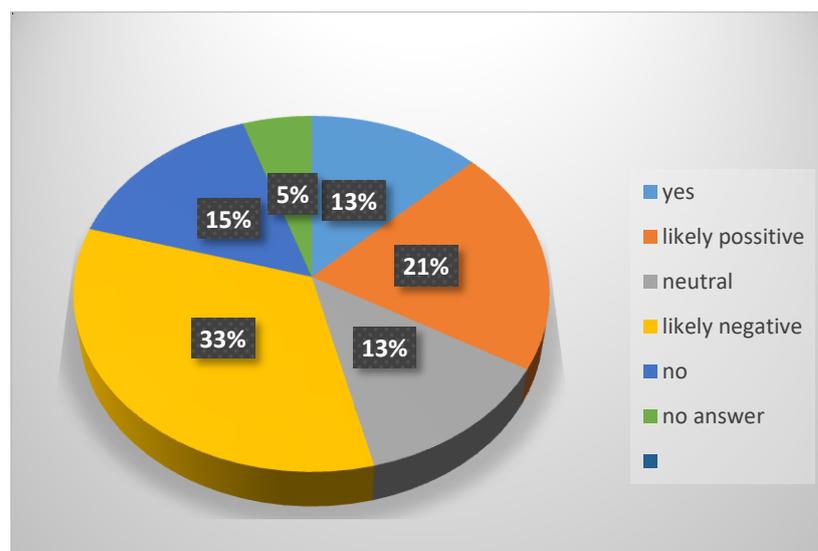


Figure 1 Independent presence in the zone of operations

The second option for embed in the military unit is supported by more than a half of the military respondents, 51.2% responded positively and 14.6% are sure that the embed is the only option for journalistic presence in

the area of operations.

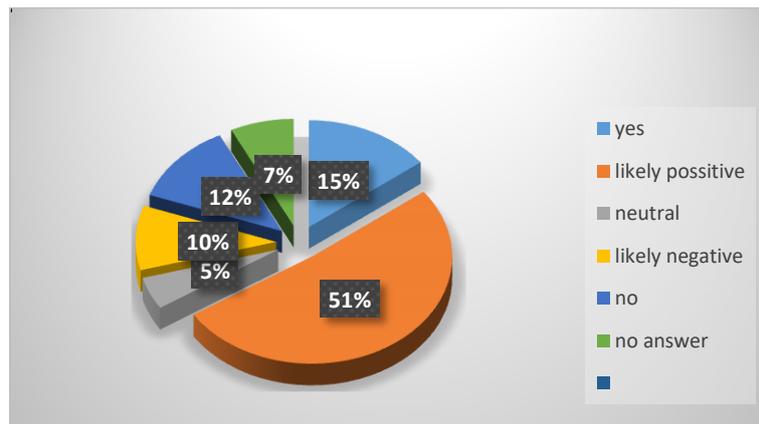


Figure 2 Reporters are embedded in military unit

Considering the experience of the Bulgarian army in Iraq and the situation with the investigation of the terrorist attack against the Bulgarian military base in Karbala Iraq we asked the question for journalists travelling independently to the battle field. In the case with the terror attack in 2003 at least 2 media outlet have travelled alone to Karbala to investigate the reasons for the attack. They travelled alone without accreditation and accommodation to the site where they were rejected any contact with the military personnel. Later on they received permission to talk to the military eye witnessed the terror act.

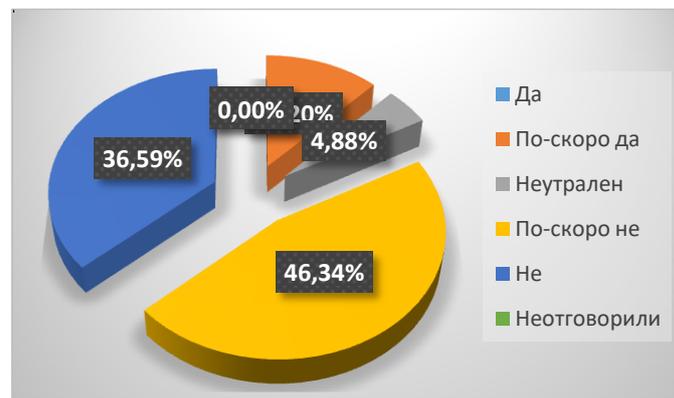


Figure 3 Is the independent travel and stay of reporters in the conflict zone an option?

Today such practices are considered as unacceptable for 36.5% of the responders, and 46.3% are not likely to support them. The question is related to the readiness of the unit commanders to react in such cases when crisis emerges. In terms of establishing contact with media representative on the field the results are diverse, 19.5% will establish contact. 9.7% are neutral and 36.5% are more likely negative while, 31.7% are firm in their perception that journalists that came uninvited and are not embedded with the unit are not welcome in the military camp.

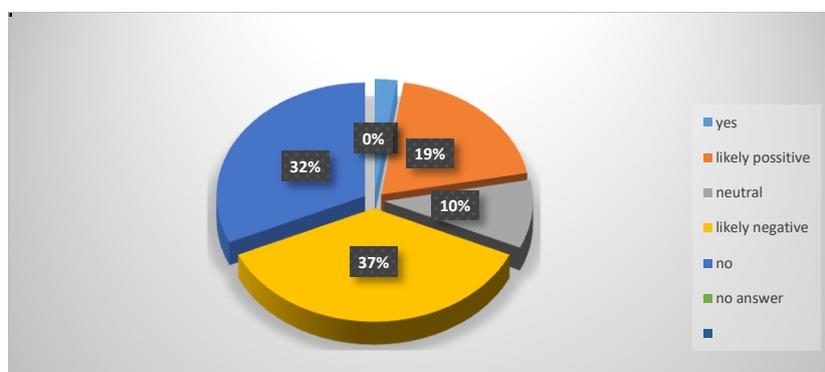


Figure 4 Would you contact a media that is not embedded with your unit?

The respondents were asked who should provide information for the journalists if this should be the commander or other military personnel the answer is in favor of commander's responsibility to inform the media 30% of the participants are firm on that opinion and 47.5% are supportive.

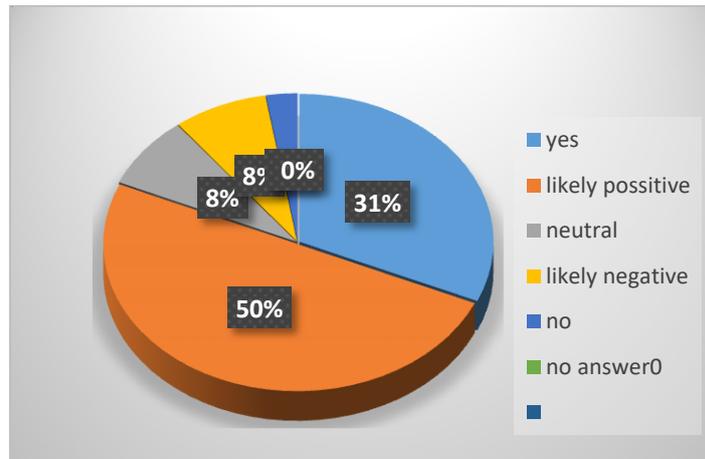


Figure 5 The journalists have to gather information from the commanders.

The option other members of the unit to provide information for media is supported by 17 % of the respondents, the same number of people are neutral and 6% are likely to reject the possibility, 30% are against it but 30% tend to be positive.

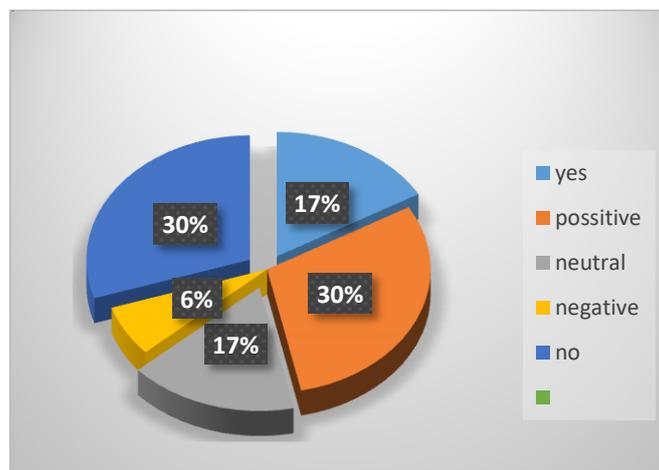


Figure 6 The media gathers information form members of the unit

The division of the results in the answer of the dilemma what should be the leading principle for the journalist in the conflict zone if this should be the necessity to cover all aspects of the operation is supported by 34%, 19.5% demonstrate firm approval and 12% are neutral while 24% are not likely to support the necessity to cover the operation from all its aspects

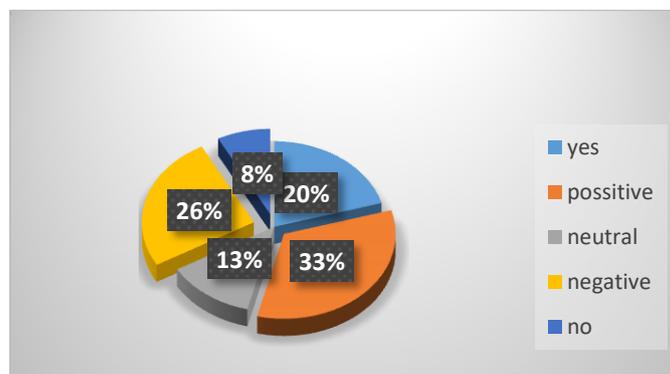


Figure 7 Coverage of all aspects of the operation.

Far more definitive are the military respondents in defending the second option – to limit the media presence for the purpose of operational security. 16% approve, 45% are more likely to accept the restrictions, 10% are neutral and 25% consider that there is no need to limit media presence and just 5% are firm that media should be granted unlimited access.

The questionnaires' personal information and demographics shows that the minority granting full access to the media have combat experience in operations abroad. Likewise, the full restrictions option is backed by the military who also declared combat experience.

To draw an inference: There are no clear ground rules and procedures for media presence in the zone of operations; there is no defined reason for their presence and the format of their presence. The same has to be concluded for the rules of embedding. If there is such code the military should be more confident how to approach the media. The second conclusion is that the controversial answers came from controversial experience with media and is related to different stages of the operation they have encountered media.

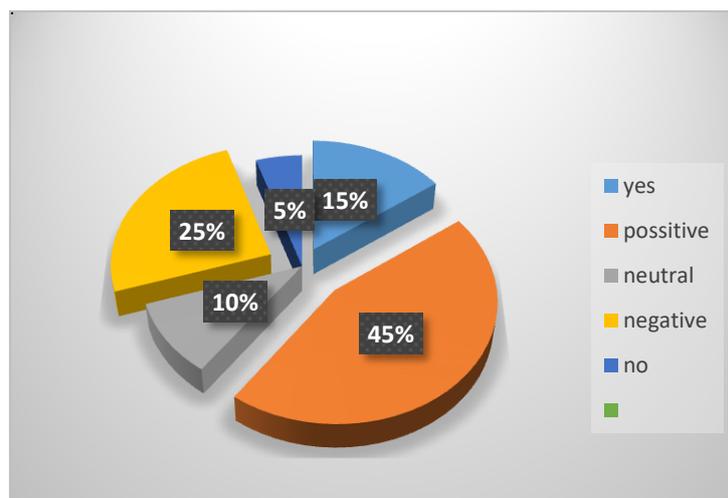


Figure 8 To limit media presence for operational security reasons.

The military respondents were asked to rank the necessary limitations for filming in the military base or camp. The highest approval is granted to the limits imposed for the safety of military personnel and the operational security, these requirements are followed by the protection of communication facilities and check points, the protected persons and interpreters who are assisting during the operation.

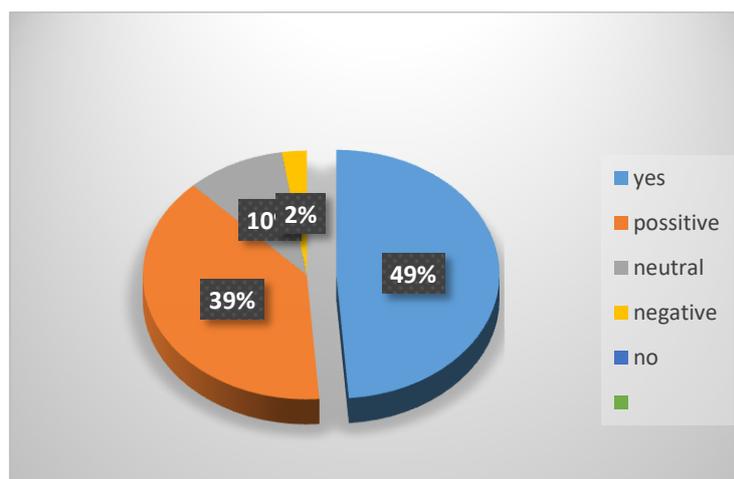


Figure 9 Restricted filming not to endanger the communications.

While the restrictions for filming are supported by the 39% for protection of communications 48.7% consider restrictions for the personal safety reasoning is strongly supported by 68% of the responders and there is no supporters of the opposite opinion

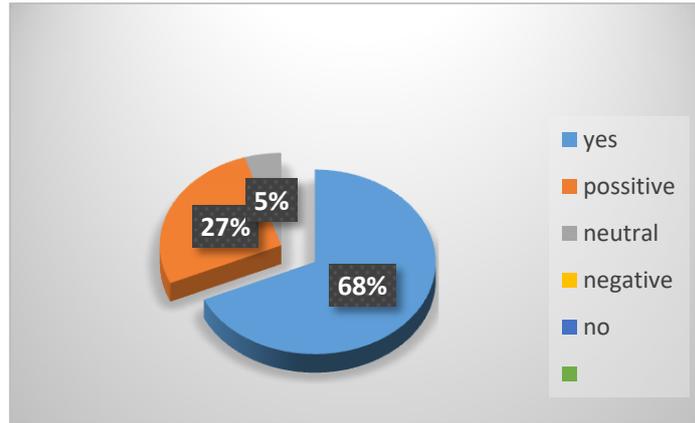


Figure 10 Restricted filming not to endanger the personal.

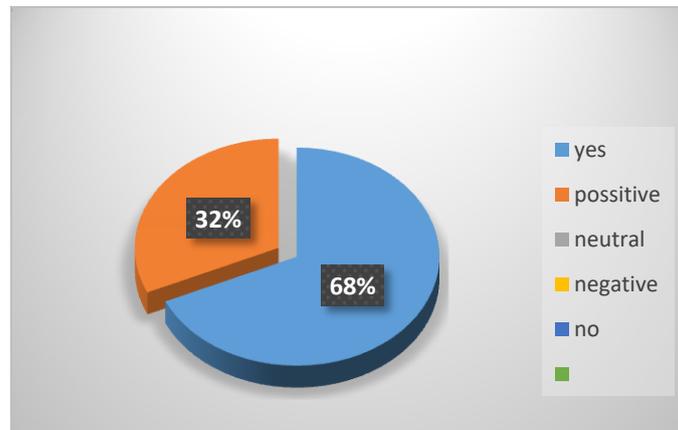


Figure 11 Restricted filming not to endanger the operational security.

Less affirmative is the support for restrictions of filming protected person, contractors, interpreters. This is sensitive issue because the protected persons are defended by international humanitarian law and in the same time they may have witnessed the atrocities of war, crime and extinction which by default is the main focus on journalistic interest. 7.3% from the participants don't consider this an issue and 87% think that there should be some protection of the privacy of support staff in the military bases such as local contractor's interpreters and protected persons suffered during the conflict. Their presence on base gives an additional value and emotional touch to the story how military conflicts affect the ordinary people's life.

So, including such persons in the news stories has to be coordinated with the command in case there is a possibility that sensitive information is disclosed.

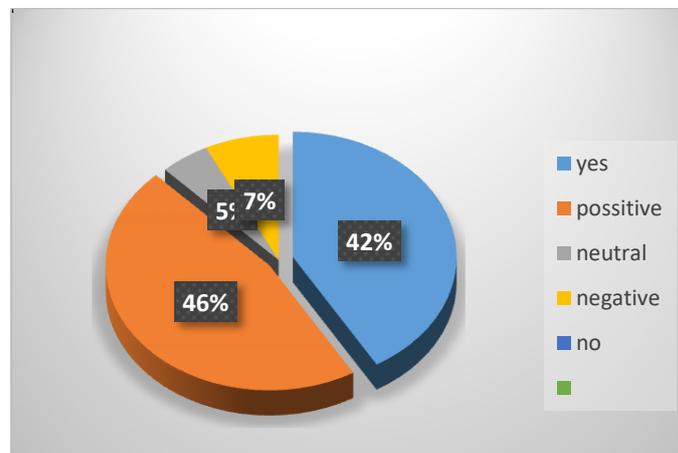


Figure 12 Restricted filming not to endanger the protected persons.

This is essential detail. Because very often we could see reports from the battle field without a single civilian with his or hers story or the locals are framed in exotic light just to underline the importance of the military presence. The framing as a process and using certain media stereotypes towards reporting in conflict zones have to be taken into account when selecting, training and allowing media to embed in military unit. It has to be done in advance; later if some of the ground rules are broken it could be too late to correct the mistakes.

The next question is important from the technical point of view. As the technologies in newsgathering develop every single day it's essential to explore how they determine the pace of reporting and alter the news cycle. This alters the ethical aspect of the news gathering. It could happen right away and to reach everyone around the globe. So we have to clarify how the information is gathered processed and broadcasted, when does it happen and under what circumstances the raw footage have to be reviewed, edited and aired, how we do live coverage or we prefer to withhold information for ongoing operations that could be endangered. The result of the survey has to bring satisfying answers for both communities: media and military.

There is a big difference between the notion of what has been broadcasted and the consequences for both professional communities.

While the journalists prefer to have freedom and independent in their reporting from the conflict zone and to be instructed and introduced to the ground rules before the assignment want should be shown and what shouldn't and then the content is not supposed to be reviewed and without interference in any of the phases of newsgathering and broadcasting. Contrary the military, participated in the survey tend to control every aspect of the reporter's activity on the field from the raw footage filming to the edited video story that has to be broadcasted and published. 43.9% are firm in their requirement to be monitor the raw footage. 26.8% are likely to support such measure. Usually, this measure is considered to be extra measure when the journalist is not escorted by authorized personnel during the time of filming to prevent filming of check points, gates, communication facilities, radio frequencies, tactical operational centers and critical infrastructure. This could be easily solved by reviewing the video ready for broadcasting. This is very important condition regarding the sophisticated cross media platforms with international partners combining video streaming, still images, scripts and audio that could be broadcasted not only for the national but for international audience that could understand the contentment in different context.

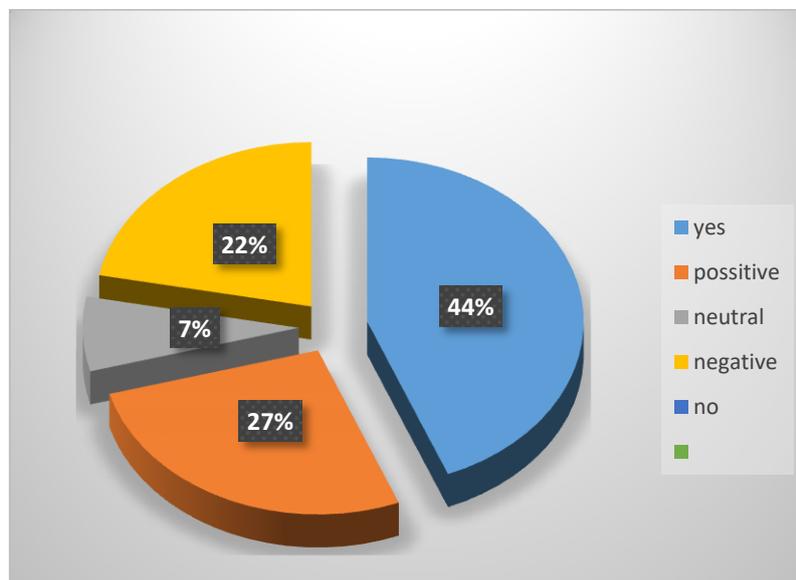


Figure 13 The reviewing of raw footage before broadcasting.

43.9% from the military identify this issue as crucial part of their work with media, other 46.3% are willing to control on this phase of the working process, and 7.3% trust the edited and ready for broadcasting content, they don't tend to interfere in the selection of video, still images, interviews and human stories. This practice of content control is not supported by media and is considered to be censorship.

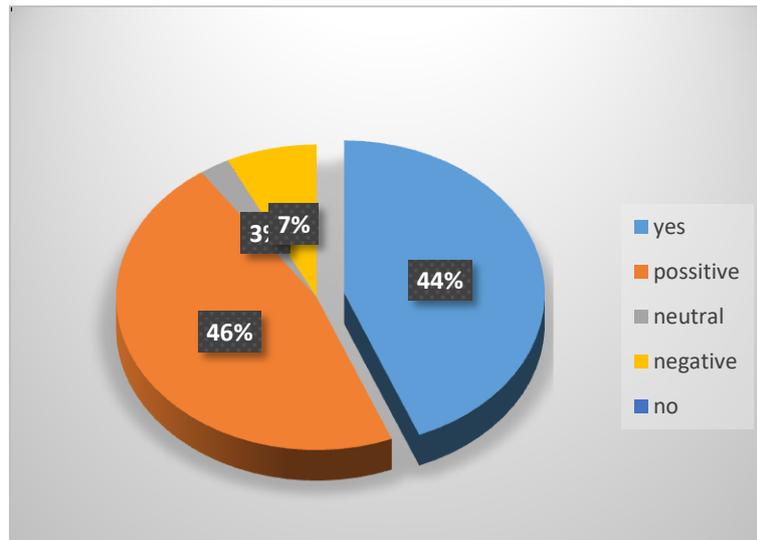


Figure 14 Reviewing of the edited video before broadcasting.

The next chart of the answers supports the notion of the commanders which are not likely to let a TV report to be aired if they are not aware what will be revealed in it. Half of them 43.9 % are against broadcasting without reviewing in advance but to different extent. This could not be analyzed as a trust in the media and their professional skills and ethics, but more an effort to avoid mistakes which could jeopardize the security of the unit and the reporters embedded in it.

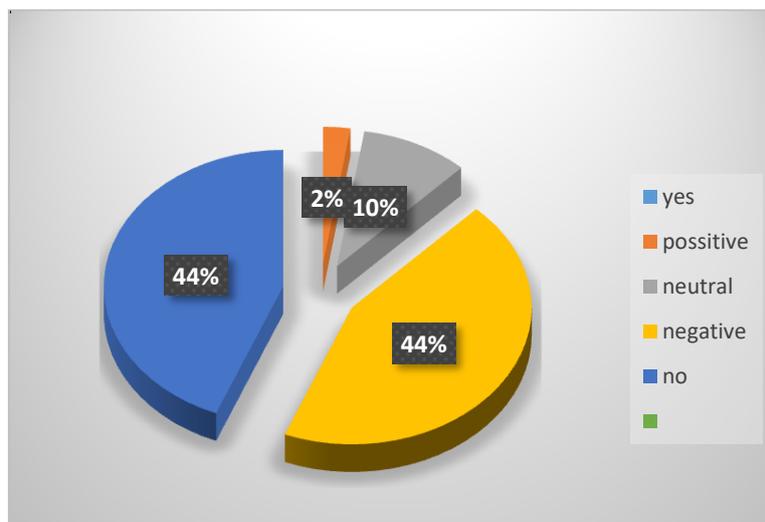


Figure 15 Broadcasting without reviewing in advance.

The responders, participated in the survey are against online streaming and live coverage from big TV outlets via satellite and cross media using the technology to integrate radio TV and web. Just one of the responders supported that option, 41.4% are against it and 31.7% are not likely to let online streaming or live broadcast via satellite. Similar attitude towards the social media streaming 51.2% are against it.

The issue is ethical and technical – to what extent the live broadcast has been negotiated between media and military what has been flagged as sensitive information and what could be shared with the audience and be strictly followed. The second aspect is related with the technical capabilities of each media outlet to broadcast independently with various technical tools. Here we can explore the problem of the authority of the commander to control the speed of the communications channels - what will be the limit of the internet connections or the ground rules of using satellite trucks, phones, control over the mobile network operators etc.

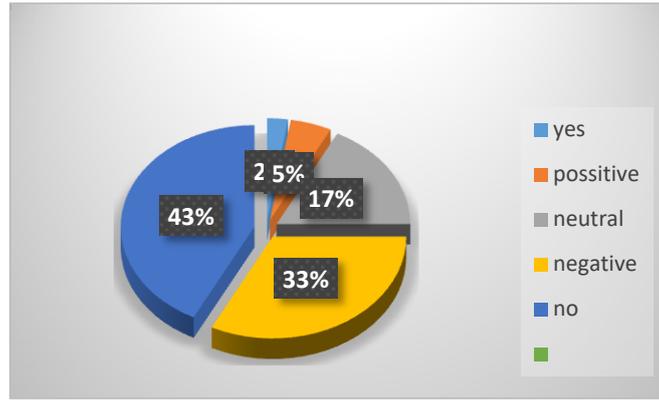


Figure 16 Direct broadcasting via satellite.

Conclusion - with respect to satellite use the presence of satellite facilities can be a subject of control in the area of operations, there has to be clear notion of the technical options of the internet use form mobile cells or satellite internet use. In this case there should be an agreement how the news stories should be broadcasted, when and from which location so the communications and operations are not exposed to risks. These agreements may vary due to the different aspects of the operation defined by time before during and after and defined by the type of military and operation land, sea, air operation etc.

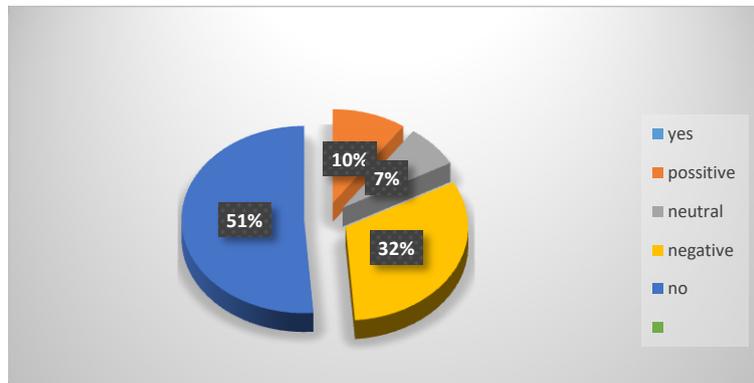


Figure 17 Broadcast online for websites and social networks.

The military are not likely go give freedom and initiative of big cross media outlets for instance TV with several channels, radio and websites and international partners. 14.6% are against, there are no participants answered “yes” unconditionally, only 19.5% are likely to accept, 39% are neutral. The last 26.8% are not willing, and 14% are against. The conclusion, the opportunity to embed media is still not valued and capitalized true the possibility to target the audience with tailored messages which could reach more people with different demographics and background with news about the events in the zone of operations and shape their attitude towards the mission. The cross media platform with different channels radio tv web could act like a pool for smaller media outlets.

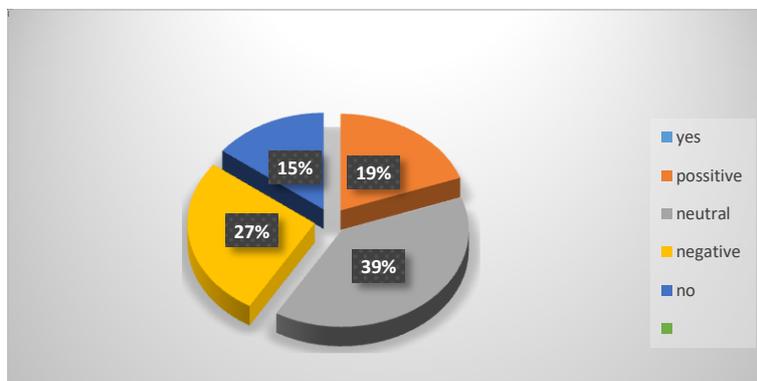


Figure 18 Broadcasting for big cross media outlet.

The military respondents are firm in giving advantage to reporters representing weekly magazines or special

websites with security and foreign relations profile. 51.2% support the coverage from specialized defense and foreign affairs media, 29.2% are neutral. The same percent of the respondents support coverage from analytical media and defense blogs and websites.

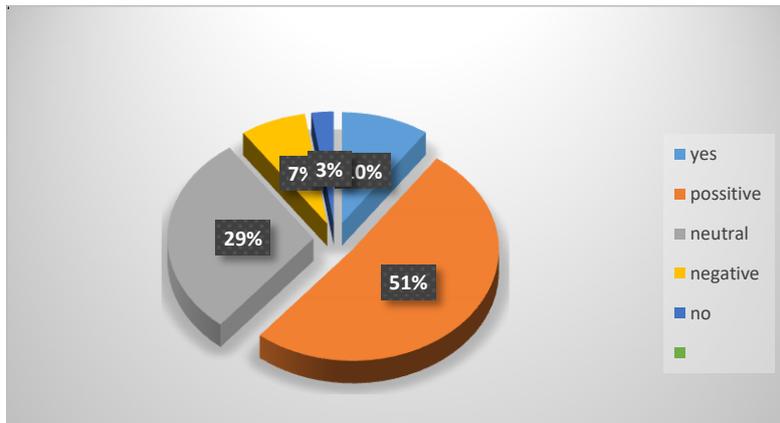


Figure 19 Media coverage form special magazines and blogs.

The conclusion: A journalist could take notes and write later at home a book for example without any monitoring or option for correction or argument as long as the reporter is not putting at risk the operational security or the security of the military personnel. Taking into account the trend for publishing everything online, there is a possibility for a breach of ground rules and leak of information, that could endanger not only the unit in the zone of operations, but later create reputational problems revealing facts and events in the past.

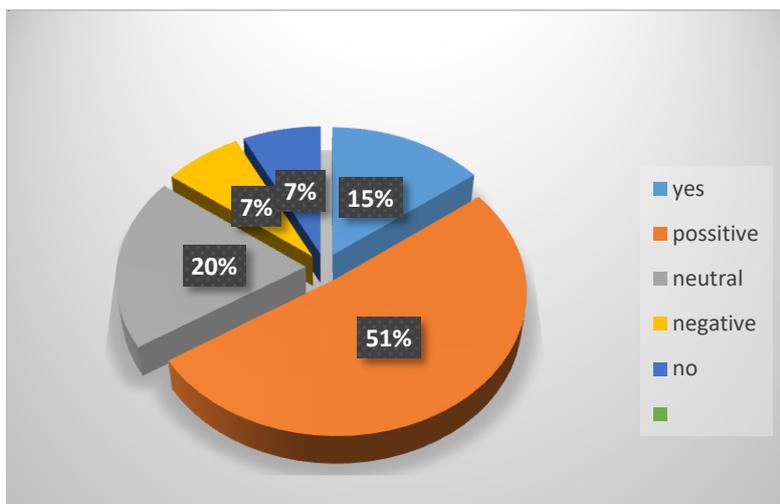


Figure 20 Media coverage in war blogs or foreign affairs magazines.

There is e crucial question to what extend the private life of the military is exposed in the social media. 4.8% of the respondents are willing to post a picture form the military assignment, the rest of the participants in the survey are neutral and likely to reject the option, 31.7% are negative or tend to be negative. It is possible that the military could take the opportunity to make popular their mission once the operation is ended. 17% are willing to post footage pictures or information related to their mission after its end. This process is important in terms of the operational procedures in NATO countries and partners, which define the ground rules for putting information on the web. This could happen only with permission. This issue was explored due to unprecedented video that went viral on the web depicting soldiers in Kandahar encouraging people to donate money for children in the intensive care units in Bulgarian hospitals. Unfortunately, the fundraising video was not coordinated with the ministry of defense, the headquarters of the operation and the US command. Nevertheless, filmed with respect to all the security restrictions the initiative was considered controversial by the national command staff. That case brings to our attention the need for precise guidelines not only for media but for filming military too.

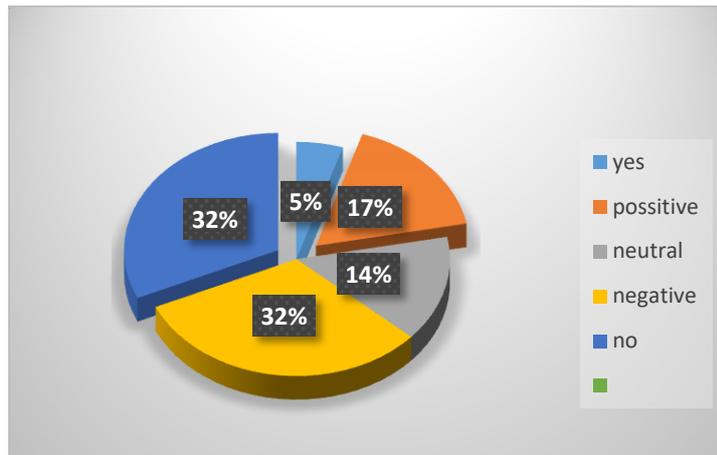


Figure 21 Posting and sharing on FB Twitter Instagram and other social media.

The survey explored not only technical and ethical issues but the role of the media in the armed conflict, the way media is presented and dealt with in the zone of operation, how media is approached when travelling independently or embedded, how they justify the pros and cons in the two options of media coverage. The issue of embedded media and the benefits of this practice are explored in the light of the notion that it is impossible to win without the support of the public opinion. We asked the military if the journalists should report in unbiased and independent manner or the reporters should mobilize and generate public support for the armed forces. The military are firm in their belief that media should cover the conflict to generate support 43.9% are positive in this position, and 41.4% more or less expect such support form media, some 43.9% expect media to act and report in a fare and unfavorable and independent way. When asked the same questions the journalists tend to define their role as independent observer more than a patriot that generates support in public opinion in their country while reporting the activities of their own military units as it was in the as it with military correspondents. Obviously the patriotic media support has disappeared which could affect the strong bond between the army and the other branches of the society.

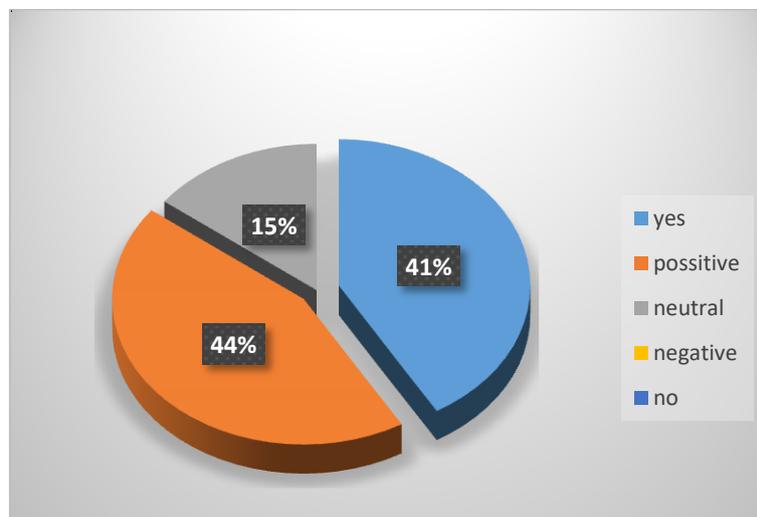


Figure 22 The media should cover the operation in a fare and independent way.

In US where the press tends to be more critical (in the Vietnam war for instance) the neutral and independent reporting is considered positive, which is the best professional approach form journalistic point of view.

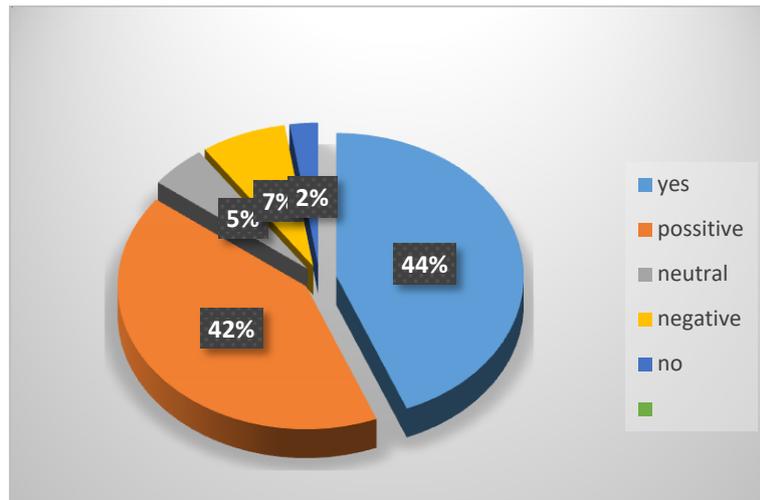


Figure 23 Media should generate support for military in the public opinion.

Usually the role of the embedded reporter in Bulgarian army is reviewed in three aspects: first to inform the audience for the conflict, second to inform about the effects of the operation and third to inform about the consequences of the operation. In these three aspects the answers are diverse. Nevertheless, the first important question for the media newsroom is “What is happening now?” this is what the reporter tries to find out and tell from various sources he or she could reach. Among the military participants in the survey the answers are very different – the largest number of the respondents assumes that military should provide updates on the operation- 41.4%, 24.3% are neutral, and 19.5% consider that such information shouldn't be disclosed.

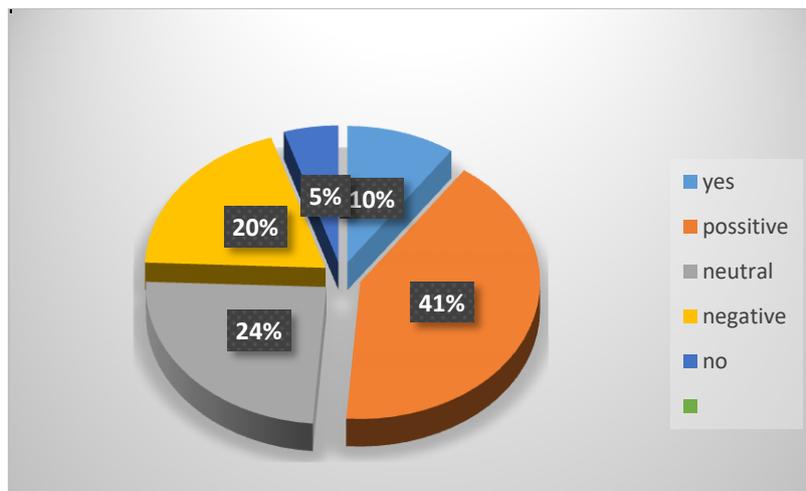


Figure 24 Media shows the development of the military operation.

The issue raising the biggest concern is the issue about the consequences from an operation. The longer it lasts the smaller support it will have and less popular it will be as the number of casualties goes higher and the public support shrinks. The key question according to the media always is if the crises deserved engaging in military operation. Such questions have been raised during the Iraq military campaign in 2003¹.

¹ Seib, Philip. 1997 г., *Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Effects Foreign Policy*. Westport (CT): Praeger.

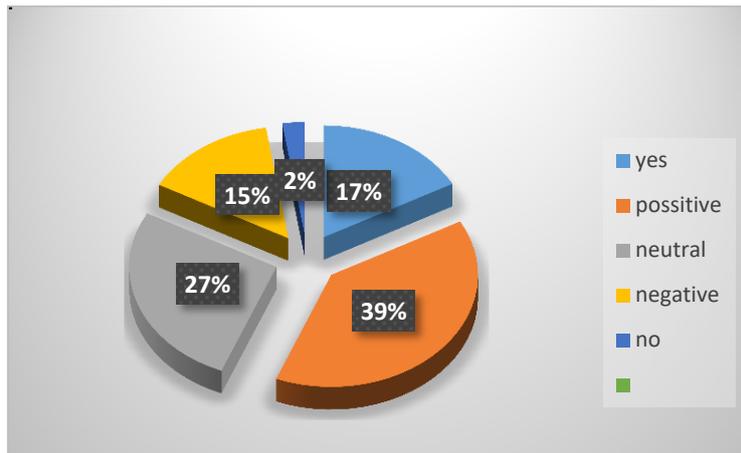


Figure 25 Media should report the consequences of the operation.

The military participants in the survey confident about showing the consequences of the operation are 17%, 39 % of the participants tend to expect the same from the media. 14.6% expressed the opinion that the outcomes of the operation shouldn't be exposed.

Majority of the military answered confidently that the effect of the operation has to be shown 34.1% are positive and 51.2% accept this as a task.

The opposite opinion is supported by ten times less responders.

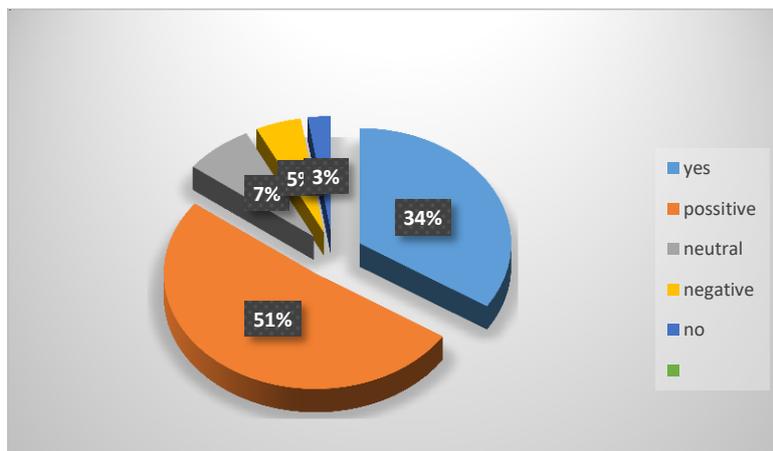


Figure 26 Media should expose the effects of the operation.

The relationships between the two professional communities when the media is embedded have to be friendly and friendship does not affect the professional standards of both military and media is the opinion of 80% of the responders rely on building trust and friendship. 31.7% are firm in supporting this principle and 48.7% tend to support the same point of view

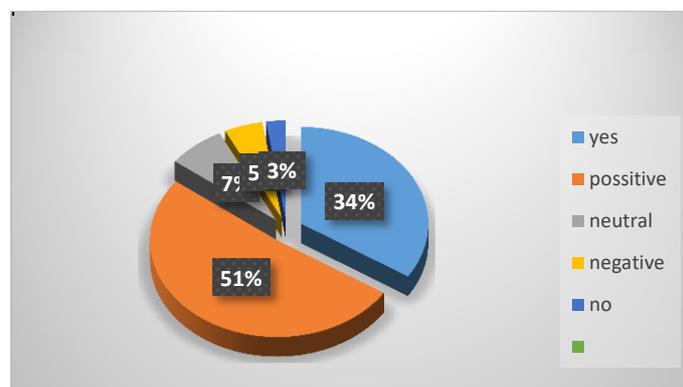


Figure 27 Do you support building on trust and friendship between military and media?

The relationships of trust and friendship doesn't have a negative impact according to 17 % of the military and 43.9% also tend to support the same opinion.

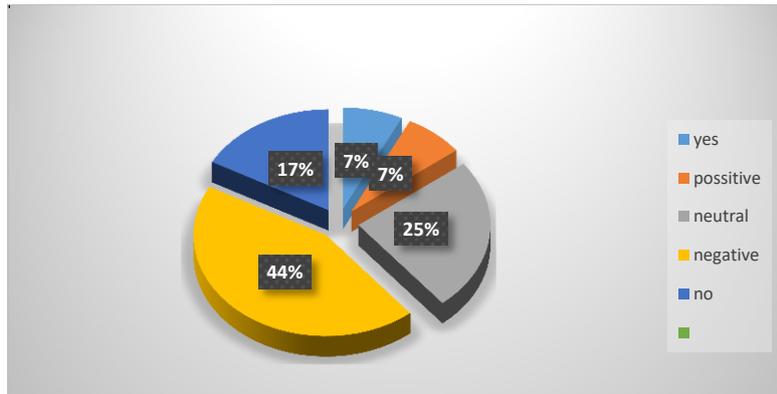


Figure 28 Is the friendship affecting in a negative way the work of both communities?

The majority of the people participated in the survey, think that the journalists have to be considered as a part of the unit and the communication with them doesn't necessary have to be restricted. So there have to be a manual with procedures in the units and for the journalists, in which to be defined how and when they can be quoted, when quotes are not acceptable and how journalist has to inform when and what part of the statement or conversation he intends to use. The same rule applies to using still images, video or audio from the zone of operations.

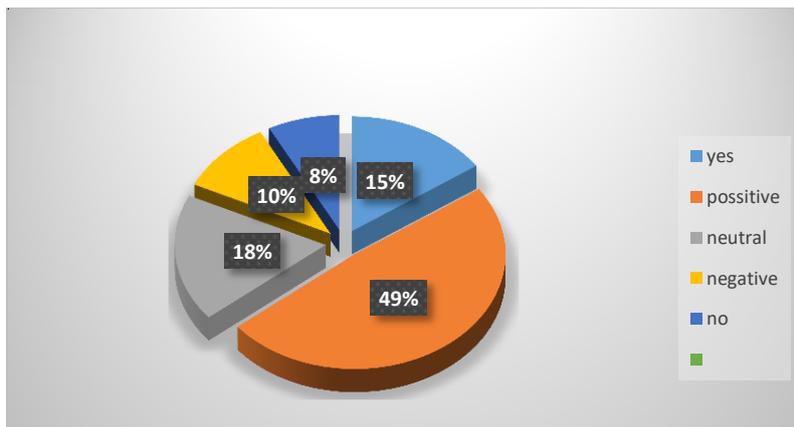


Figure 29 Do you consider embedded media as part of the military unit?

Most of the military 43% that took part in the survey are confident that the media have to obtain training and to act as they were trained. Their work has to be regulated by manual with ground rules explaining the cultural and religious traditions in the region where the operation unfolds. 43% are positive towards the idea for such document facilitates the knowledge and good practices for media-military interaction in the zone of operations.

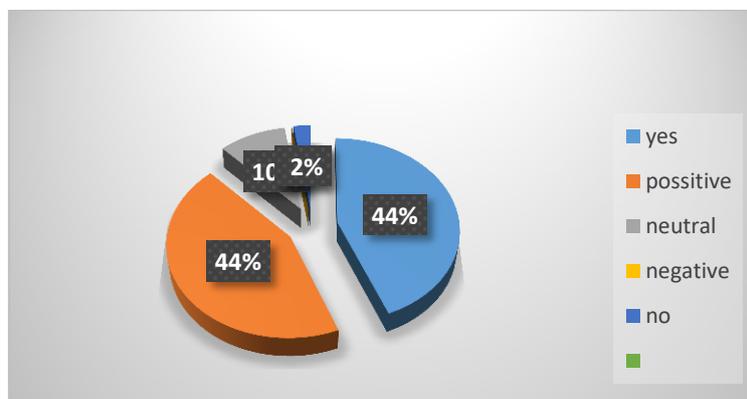


Figure 30 Is there a need for manual explaining the military – media relations?

29.2% of the military are confident that there should be training for developing practical media skills and presentation skills for the military personnel, other 65.8% also support the idea.

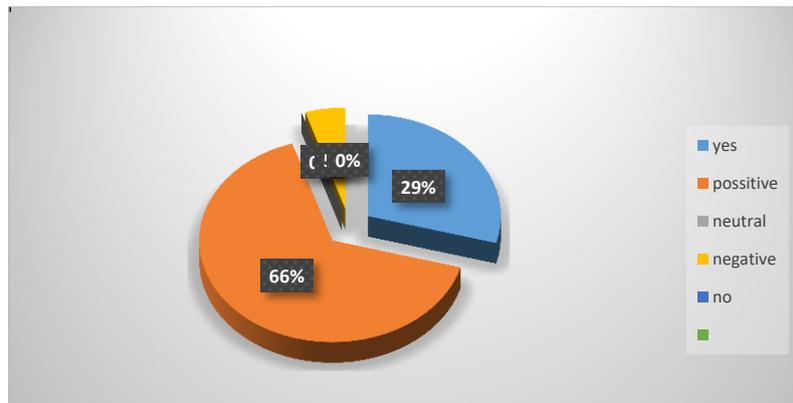


Figure 31 Is there a need for media training of the military personnel?

There is an argument who should provide and conduct the training, 26.3% are confident that the training should be outsourced to a civil media specialists coming from the media outlets, 57.8% care positive towards such media training. Some of the people in the survey want to trained by media experts in the army if there are such experienced lectors that are aware of all the technical updates and new reporting skills and tactics that a military commander could encounter while talking in front of media. On the contrary – there is an argument that the civil media specialist is not aware what could be sensitive information, what are the possible consequences if some sensitive information is revealed.

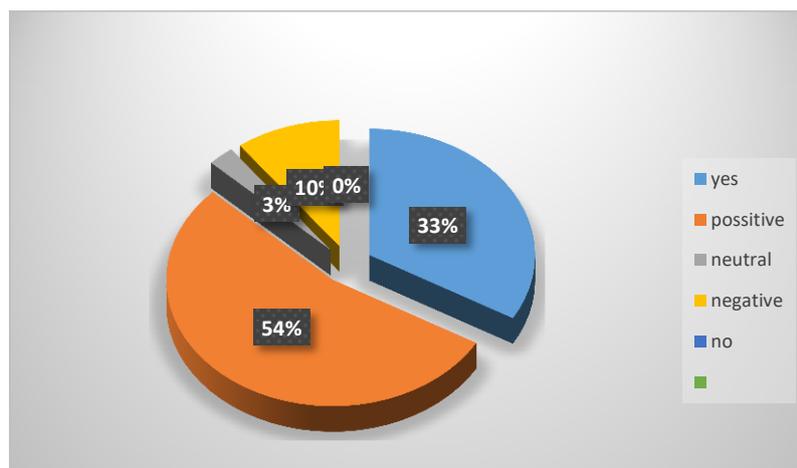


Figure 32 Is there a need for periodical media training?

The positive trend is that the military recognize the need for updates in the training practices and communication technologies for any new. That appears to be very important for the learning - unlearning process of previous experience. Learning the practices that have proven their effectiveness and unlearning the ineffective practices. This correlation between learning and unlearning form the communities of practice in the US armed forces is identified by Thomas Ride in his book Media Operations, 2007.

Bulgarian Armed Forces have ambiguous attitude towards maintaining their own channels of communications via social media for instance official pages of the operation , unit and commander .Though the practice of supporting the unit in social media with additional information and asking for feedback the media is widely implemented in US and western armed forces, the Bulgarian military in the survey tend to consider that additional efforts are needed for defining which information is appropriate to be posted online. Usually there is a media officer or unit responsible for supporting and social media communication.

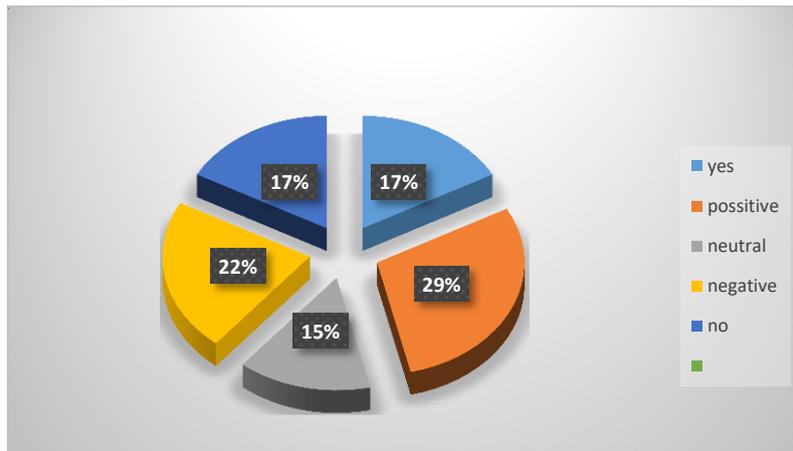


Figure 33 Is there a need to support social media presence?

The social media is an extra channel for communication that could be established with the audience which was underline previously in the survey results. The participants were asked if the news for the operation should be more visible and high profile coverage in traditional media the answers tend to be in the neutral part of the scale. This leads us to interpretation that in most cases the news coverage is related to bad occasions. Positive tend to be 36.5% of the participants, 26.8% tend to reject the idea of high-profile presence in traditional media, 19.5% are neutral but mostly the attitude towards the idea is positive. Conclusion; There has to be planning of the coverage which provides more continuous presence in selected media according to their characteristics and audience, to put the events in context, so that the activities of armed forces and their units abroad could be viewed in adequate prospective.

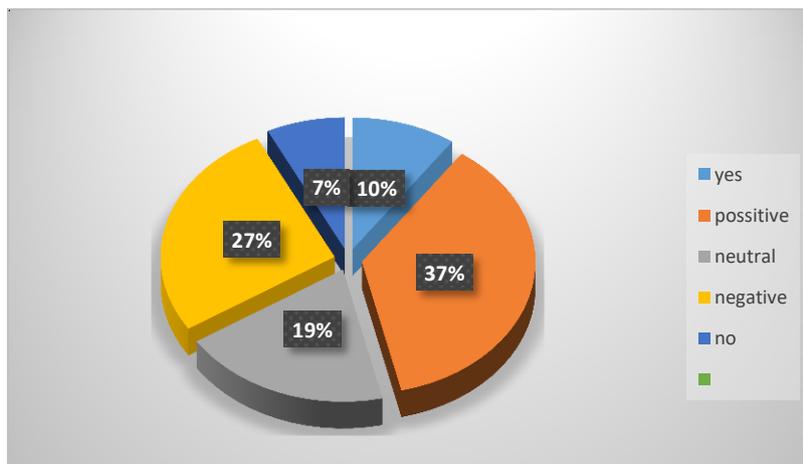


Figure 34 Do we find sufficient information about armed forces in media?

Information that is considered to be of high priority and generates huge public interest will make its way to the media with or without command's consent. There are numerous examples. For instance, the images of the blown military base India in the Bulgarian zone of operations in Karbala, Iraq where the insufficient security measures could be seen are confronting the official narrative that all the measures for force protection have been taken. Similar controversy is observed in the case with the friendly fire against Bulgarian patrolling unit in Iraq when a Bulgarian private Gardev died due to communication mistakes and operational procedures shortcomings. The information for the accident was withhold and kept in secrecy from the nation for three days and made its way through anonymous post in comments section of online article in Bulgarian Army website. Similar videos related to Iraqi mission of Bulgarian Army were shared and posted online in video platforms during the years. Some posted videos about the lack of equipment, some posted about the bullying of Iraqi kids with offensive language. So this was the reason to ask the military officers in the survey if they would keep information which is important for the society and doesn't endanger their colleagues or the operation.

The answers are positioned in the negative part of the scale – 24.3% are confident that they won't leak information, 43.9% are not likely to give information without authorization that would confront the official narrative, 19.5% are neutral, and 7.3% tend to leak the information, and 4.8% are confident that the

information has to be revealed for the public interest. If the information is withheld or altered usually the news make its way through alternative channels of communication informal and other institutions break the news to the nation, which brings negatives to the armed forces and ruins the trust in the institution.

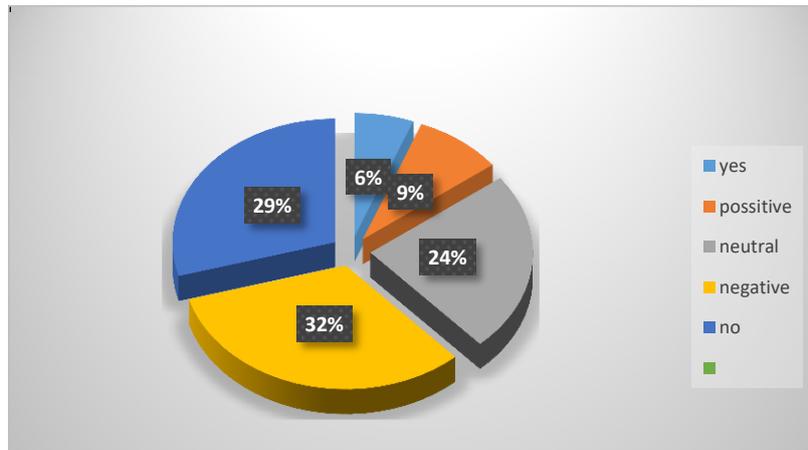


Figure 35 will you leak important information of public interest to the media if personal and operational security are not jeopardized.

The results revealed that the military doesn't consider media as a factor that could influence the rules and regulations of the unit. Not everyone answered the question as 17.7 % reject that media could affect the discipline in negative or positive way. 40% also tend to think there is no mechanism in which journalist could be corrective to hierarchal structure with clear subordination army represents.

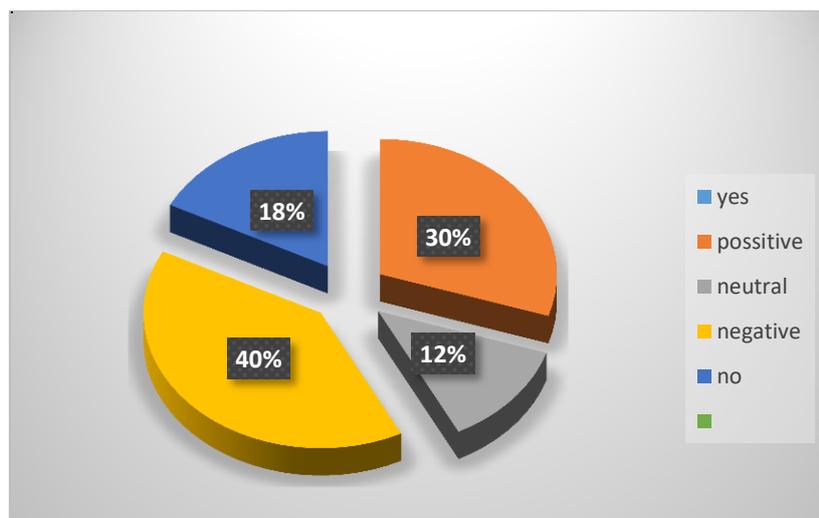


Figure 36 Are the reporters corrective and discipline factor?

29.2% think that there is certain effect firm the media presence in the military unit. We asked the military for the ethical standards when filming suffering people in case they are local civilian people or their military colleagues. The reason to divide the question about two categories of subjects is that all these people are protected by the international law and conventions, but in time of conflict they are the most emotionally engaging subjects of news stories. The American reporters with extended experience covering conflicts like Kevin Sites underline that there are restrictions when an injured or suffering military from the nation is filmed but the rule doesn't apply to injured civilians. Usually these restrictions are imposed to traditional media, but the rule doesn't apply to the websites where the regulation is different and the website strategy relies on sensational and shocking content that generates clicks. According to the Bulgarian military people suffering or injured have to be forbidden for filming - 34.1% of the respondents, 21.9% support the opinion to certain extent, the rest 19% are neutral, and 12.1 think that filming is possible under some conditions.

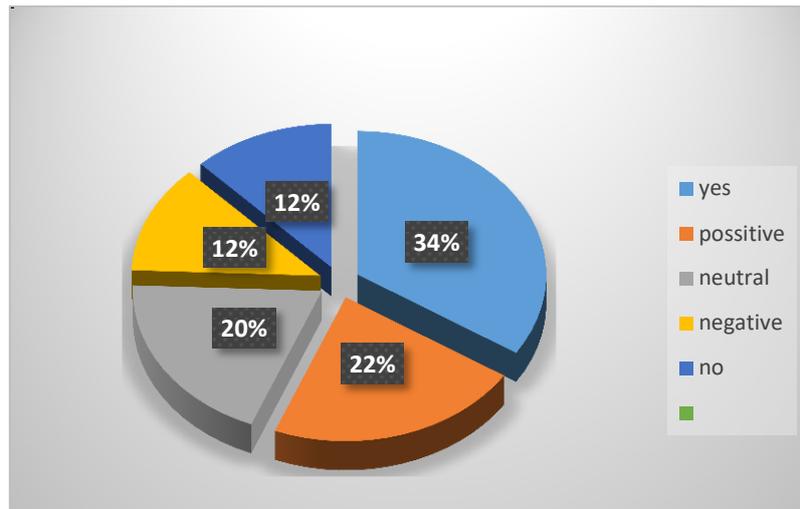


Figure 37 Filming of suffering and vulnerable people from the unit to be forbidden.

The issue with the civilian casualties and filming the atrocities of war the restrictions are vague in the online media and the military respondents in the survey show with their answers that support the ban for filming wounded and suffering people 24.3%, supporting partly the ban and neutral respondents have share of 29.2% for each group. People that support lifting the ban are 9.7% of all the participants. The problem is how the media would film the military medics doing their job and saving people's lives, for instance? Their role in civil-military cooperation during peace keeping and peace supporting operations is crucial. BTV Media Group the largest and most watched private media on the TV market has broadcasted two documentaries devoted to the military medics in Afghanistan, "Medics in Herat" 2007 by Venelin Petkov and "Afghan wounds" 2012 by Gabriela Naplatanova.

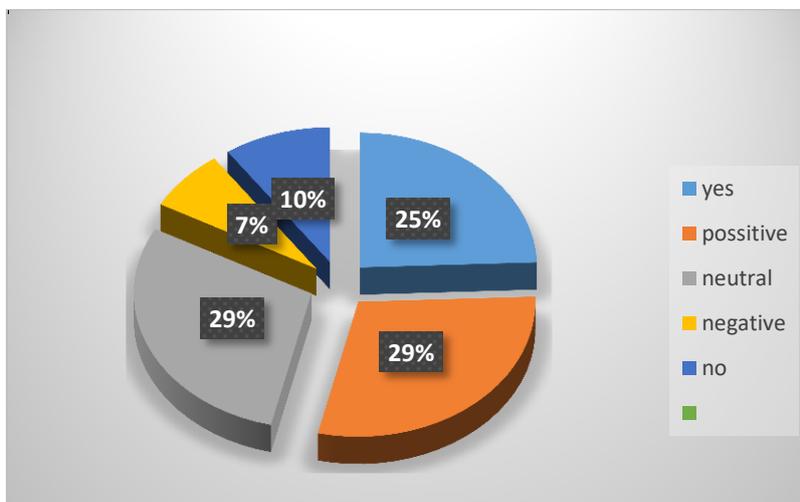


Figure 38 Is there a necessity for restrictions of filming civilian casualties or suffering people?

There is considerable need for reshaping the media standards in a way that saves suffering people's dignity without affecting the quality of the news stories from the zone of operations. The people injured, displaced or suffering the atrocities of war are the ugly side of the military conflict to avoid putting them in a news story means that censorship of the facts and events and the reasons for the events. The idea of using shots of different weapons and powerful aircraft and vessels has been analyzed as a tool for picturing war as a humane, precise, fair and good. In terms of filming of kids, the ban should be taken into account when the relatives are not think 43.9% of the respondents which shows good knowledge of the international law. It is necessary to be defined the procedure if a reporter willingly or by fault discloses sensitive information about the personnel or the operation. The actions of the command in the unit or headquarters how they tackle the issue. Each of the cases has to be decided in advance. These cases have to be reviewed carefully as hypothetical situations in terms of contra measures and the media should be introduced to the consequences in advance, before embed. Most of the military respondents view the measures against spreading information as censorship and are unwilling to use them.

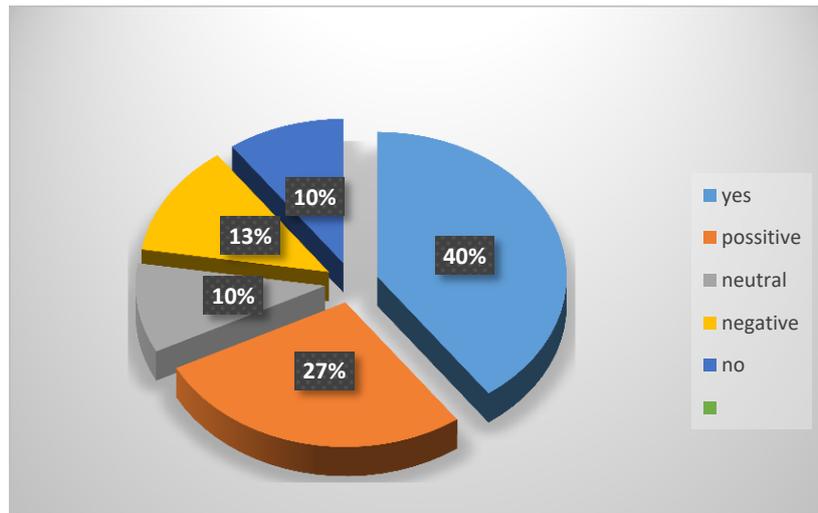


Figure 39 The journalist to be warned not to file post or broadcast the sensitive info.

Majority 39 % is positive if a reporter is warned not to broadcast the sensitive information, 34% consider that the footage should be erased (that practice is established during the Iraqi operation from the American military police), 39% suggest the footage should be taken form the military (the measure is applied in Israel)

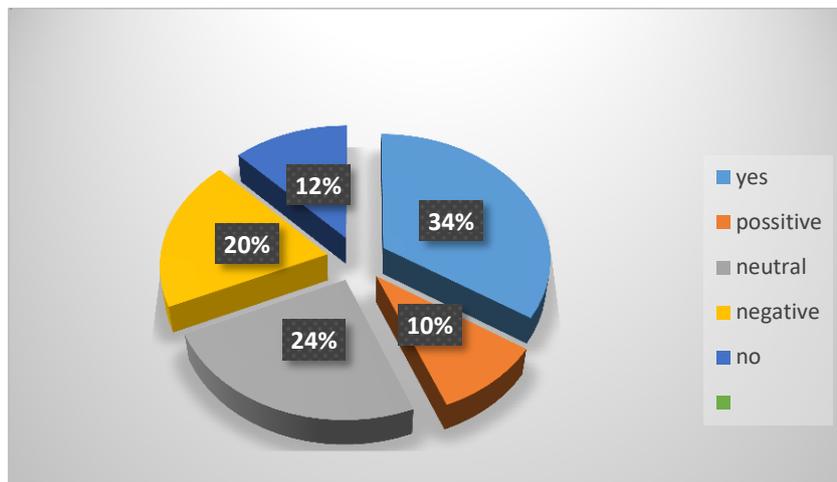


Figure 40 The footage should be erased

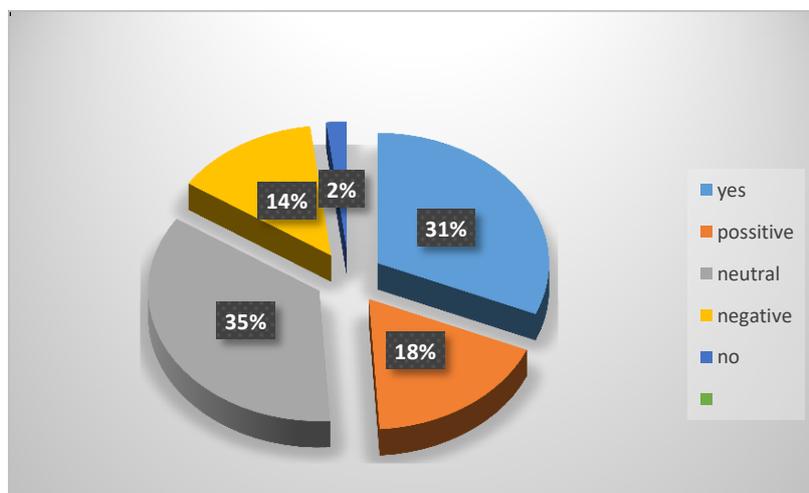


Figure 41 The footage should be confiscated.

There is also practice to take the accreditation and send back the reporter, this has been done during Iraqi

Freedom in 2003 with a representative of FOX Network, because of broadcasting live and announcing the exact location of the American forces. Sending back the reporter is considered to be extreme measure by Bulgarian military 9.7% approve the taking of accreditation. 12.1 % consider appropriate to send the reporter home if there is violation of the ground rules. The same share of the responders supports the opposite opinion 12.1%. 34% consider sending back the reporter as unpopular and undesired outcome.

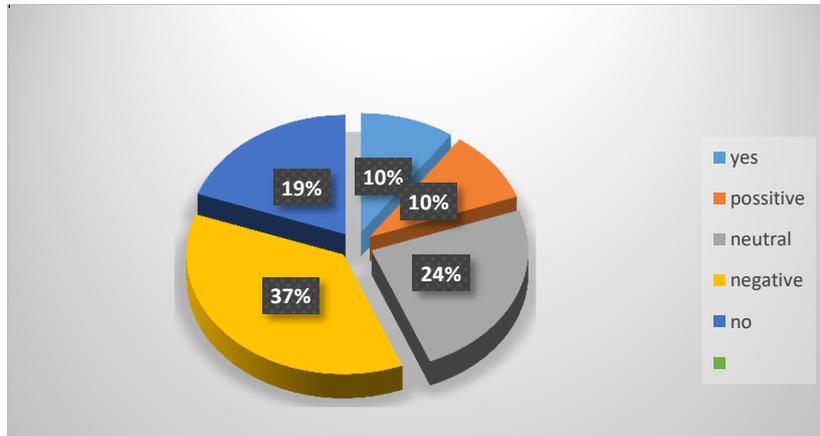


Figure 42 The reporter must be left without accreditation.

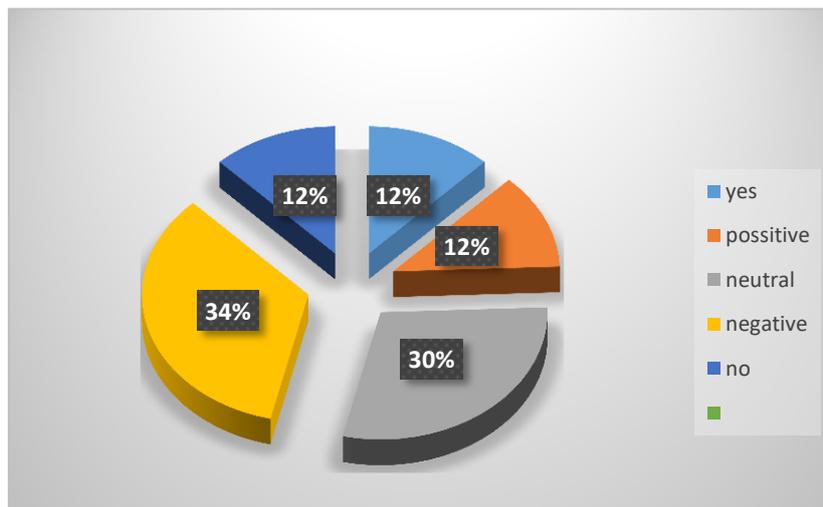


Figure 43 The reporter must be send back in his country.

5 CONCLUSION

Hypothesis 1, in which we assume, that there should be created a number of guide books, operational procedures, strategies and doctrines that could systemize the practical knowledge, collected during missioned abroad has been confirmed.

The positive trend is that such training has to be conducted periodically so that the positive experience could be extended and the negative to be unlearned during the upcoming missions and operations.

This is very useful method to update the media operations with the pace of the technological development and abandoning practices which haven't proven their effectiveness.

The necessity to determine the procedures when journalist shares and broadcasts sensitive information is very important. The cases should be viewed carefully and the measures in each of the hypothesis have to be determined as tailored solution so it doesn't lead to allegations of censorship. The media has to be introduced to the ground rules in advance, before embed.

The guide lines should include the precise case in which military commanders could be quoted. The rule is that everything said is off the record unless it is explicitly underlined that it is on the record. Every quote, still image or video should be announced before broadcasting or posting.

Hypothesis 2 about the different standards and stereotypes about the role of media neutral observer or supportive tool that generates appreciation in the public opinion has also been proven. Military consider the only way media could be covering conflicts is when the crews are embedded with units otherwise they are not willing to talk to press that is not embedded or accredited by the command.

The military prefer to be covered in news stories in special media designated to cover foreign affairs and security and avoid real time coverage, live with options of sharing still images, video, audio stories on multiple platforms as cross media coverage from mighty players in the media market. There is resistance and hesitation about introducing the units to social media platforms and using the net as additional channel of communication. The same is the attitude towards building unit's own video channel on video sharing platforms

The greatest priority is given to the restrictions which have to be imposed due to operational security and the security of the military personnel.

Journalists prefer to have more freedom and independence once they are being briefed in advance what they are permitted to show or not to disclose and afterwards the story to be broadcasted or posted without interference. On the contrary – military in the survey want to control each aspect of the media coverage. From the shooting of raw footage, reviewing the shots and then monitoring of the edited and ready for broadcast video or article.

In terms of hypothesis 3 for leaks of sensitive information the majority of the participants in the survey are not likely to share information on the social media, but most important is that 7% are ready to do it if there is public interest involved.

The interpretation of the results reveals resistance against live media coverage from big cross media outlets, which by default achieves more as media effect than all the other media channels together. The satellite coverage could provide access to wide audience and could be guided by clear messages, trusted experts and information in context without revealing the exact location of the broadcasting. In the same time there is always possibility for leaks of sensitive information in social media or other channels, different than the traditional media.

There should be an agreement with the embedded media what to reveal and what to avoid announcing, how to broadcast so the operation and the military personnel are not jeopardized. These agreements could vary for various types of media and according to the operation (if the operation is underway or in phase of planning, if the operation is by sea, land or air). So it is important to evaluate the media effect when a big cross media is invited so its combined technology for broadcast could reach various audiences with different characteristics, background, demographics, stereotypes and beliefs which could be targeted by precisely tailored messages.

Such powerful media outlet could act as a pool for smaller media outlets which demand quality of information and fair and trustful reporting.

It is quite possible that the military asks for media attention after the mission is concluded. 17% are willing to post and share information related to their mission or operation abroad. This is very important issue regarding the operational procedures in NATO and US forces where is specified what to be shared and how when the mission is over.

So it is necessary to plan and conduct media coverage with long lasting effect that could keep the media attention over the importance of the mission with selection of media various by type reach of audience and scope to create deeper knowledge and provide context for shaping the public opinion about the events that are unfolding in the area of operation or zone of conflict. Bulgarian military tend to avoid censorship technics. Every case of fair and objective reporting should be considered as a positive and successful media planning. And last the relations between media and military are considered to have positive effect and are viewed as friendly and helping by 80 % of the military respondents.

REFERENCE LIST

De Franco, C. *Media Power and the Transformation of War*, Palgrave 2012

Rid Thomas, *War and Media Operations*, 2007, Routledge London and New York

Shaw, M. 2000 г. „Media and Public Sphere without Borders?“ New Coverage and Power from Kurdistan to Kosovo”, *Decision Making in a Glass House. Mass media, Public Opinion, and American and European Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*, B. L. Nacos , R.Y. Shapiro & P. Isernia (eds.) Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield, p.27-40.

Shaw, M. 2005 г. *The New Western Way of War*. Cambridge: Polity, p 75.

Strobel, W. P. 1997 г. *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy: The News Media 's Influence on Peace Operations*. Washington DC; United States Institute of Peace Press.

Seib, P. 1997 г., *Headline Diplomacy: How News Coverage Effects Foreign Policy*. Westport (CT): Praeger.

Seib P., *Beyond The Enemy Lines*, 2004 г., Palgrave MacMillan.

Trainor, B. „The Military and the Media: A Troubled Embrace ” *Parameters* 1990

Virilio, P. 2000 *The Information Bomb*. London Verso