

We can conclude that the first Gulf War and later bombardments of Bosnia and Yugoslavia existed for the Western audience mostly in the form of a videogame or reality show, while, early 21 century conflicts for an unprepared mind seemed to look more like a nightmare with all sides committing gruesome atrocities.

The contemporary communication system is becoming more and more centered around Web 2.0, i.e. web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web, rather than television. It is a two-way street, frequented by individuals, and characterized by interactive communication.

The information environment does not stay external to armies and militant groups any longer. It is flooding the social hierarchy from the bottom up, enabling new forms of networked organizations. Soldiers as well as civilians armed with access to the web and digital cameras have become reporters and experts. They tend to be eager to share their experiences over blogs, social networks, file - swapping or file – sharing networks. According to Baudrillard “there is no longer the need for embedded journalists because soldiers themselves are immersed in the image – thanks to digital technology, the images are definitively integrated into the war” [2]. Never before has a war been so immediately documented. This fact can fool many viewers into thinking they now have a true sense of what is happening in the conflict.

In the 90-s many researchers hoped that the Internet, by providing unrestricted access to information, would disperse the fog of war, i.e. make it impossible to conceal and manipulate facts. On the one hand, the Web makes available dozens of alternative view points on every event; the Internet is virtually uncensored that is why unsuitable for TV due to its content footage can easily be found on the net. At the same time people see more war but experience less because the human mind, daily bombarded by thousands of disturbing images, is unable to preserve a high degree of perception when it comes to empathy. Amateur combat footage, e.g. IED attacks or insurgents being blown up by an Apache gunship, civilian casualties or execution of hostages, have all become just another noteworthy type of video to be reposted on social networks and shared with friends in the same manner as amusing videos.

In contemporary society information can not be controlled so it has become impossible to conceal the dreadful reality of war. However, unlike Vietnam war that shocked the world and became a source of social, cultural and political change contemporary conflicts seem to be of little consequence for civilian matters. General public keeps perceiving war as a reality show with a thrilling bloody trivia.

Bibliography

1. Baudrillard J. The Gulf War Did Not Take Place. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.