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The informational element of power may be the most elusive for the U.S. Government to wield, but its importance is proportional to its difficulty. With the rise in global terrorist networks and a precipitous decline in world opinion of America's foreign policy, Perception Management is more critical now than at any time in America's history. This paper attempts to answer the question of why, in this time of conflict, it is so difficult for the U.S. Government to effectively leverage the informational element of power. It explores three friction-inducing elements that afflict the U.S. Government, including the military. The U.S. Government's politics & personalities, bureaucracy, and aversion to the use of mass media, even in time of war, have precluded an integrated Perception Management campaign.

A historical review of Perception Management strategies since World War I reveals that this difficulty is based largely on individual personalities, an ever-growing bureaucracy, and an historical American concern about the perceived manipulation of the media by its government. To solve this problem, the President must clearly define lines of authority regarding the Government's Perception Management strategy. He must also give that authority to a strong leader capable of coordinating the disparate efforts of numerous Government agencies. Finally, the U.S. Government must take a more proactive approach to media engagement as part of an integrated strategic Perception Management campaign.

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JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL

REGAINING THE HIGH GROUND: THE CHALLENGES OF PERCEPTION
MANAGEMENT IN NATIONAL STRATEGY AND MILITARY OPERATIONS

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced War Fighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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17 June 2007

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Abstract

The informational element of power may be the most elusive for the U.S. Government to wield, but its importance is proportional to its difficulty. With the rise in global terrorist networks and a precipitous decline in world opinion of America's foreign policy, Perception Management is more critical now than at any time in America's history. This paper attempts to answer the question of why, in this time of conflict, it is so difficult for the U.S. Government to effectively leverage the informational element of power. It explores three friction-inducing elements that afflict the U.S. Government, including the military. The U.S. Government's politics & personalities, bureaucracy, and aversion to the use of mass media, even in time of war, have precluded an integrated Perception Management campaign.

A historical review of Perception Management strategies since World War I reveals that this difficulty is based largely on individual personalities, an ever-growing bureaucracy, and an historical American concern about the perceived manipulation of the media by its government. To solve this problem, the President must clearly define lines of authority regarding the Government's Perception Management strategy. He must also give that authority to a strong leader capable of coordinating the disparate efforts of numerous Government agencies. Finally, the U.S. Government must take a more proactive approach to media engagement as part of an integrated strategic Perception Management campaign.

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Introduction

The U.S. Government has not set a clear national direction or policy in the area of Strategic Communication, also known as Perception Management. This lack of direction is being made painfully clear in the "Long War" against a militant anti-American ideology. America's strategic direction has weaknesses in terms of both the war of ideology and its Perception Management policies in that war. The author's thesis is that the U.S. Government's politics & personalities, bureaucracy, and aversion to the use of mass media, even in time of war, have precluded an integrated Perception Management campaign. This paper will explore these three friction-inducing elements that afflict the U.S. Government, including the military. In doing so, it will attempt to answer the question of why, in this time of conflict, it is so difficult for the U.S. Government to effectively leverage the informational element of power. These elements of friction have reduced the Government's Perception Management campaign to a series of tactical and short-term reactions to events in the "Long War."

To solve this problem, the President must clearly define lines of authority regarding the Government's Perception Management strategy. He must also give that authority to a strong leader capable of coordinating the disparate efforts of numerous Government agencies. Finally, the U.S. Government must concentrate its interagency planning effort on long-term *strategic* Perception Management if it is to turn the tide against those determined to destroy the U.S. and the principles on which it stands.

After a definition of terms and an explanation of the problem, this paper will review past government attempts to manage the informational element of power. The

review reveals that it is extremely difficult, but not impossible, to synergize a cohesive interagency Perception Management campaign. This difficulty is based largely on individual personalities, an ever-growing bureaucracy, and an historical American aversion to the perceived manipulation of the media by its government.

The paper then analyzes U.S. Government Perception Management efforts since September 11th, 2001. It follows with a review of the problem by three specific reports, originating from three separate areas of the US Government. These reports, while distinct in their viewpoint and recommendations, all agree that a partial solution lies in a presidential-level direction to refocus the efforts of the interagency community with respect to the national Perception Management strategy.

The paper recommends a solution based on the importance of personality and position. History shows that the employment the information element of National power is an enduring problem not easily solved. The creation of a Cabinet-level Director of Information would focus the disparate efforts of the interagency community in the Perception Management realm. Focused and powerful leadership, applying a long-term strategic vision, should be able to create an enduring Perception Management campaign to which military combatant commanders could contribute at an operational level.

Chapter 1: Definition of Terms & Problem Description

Definitions

A comprehensive list of terms associated with the informational element of

national power could become a separate volume in itself, and is beyond the scope of this

paper. It is important, however, to define key terms and in doing so, explore some of the

historical and modern baggage associated with these terms.

First, the terms Strategic Communication and Perception Management have

begun to appear with increasing regularity in both government publications and scholarly

journals. Joint doctrine documents define Strategic Communication as:

> Focused United States Government (USG) efforts to understand and engage key
> audiences in order to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to the
> advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives through the use of
> coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with
> the actions of all elements of national power.[1]

In addition to appearing in multiple Joint publications, Strategic Communication is a key

component of the most recent Quadrennial Defense Review. The Secretary of Defense

elevated Strategic Communication to an area of particular emphasis deserving of its own

roadmap, and concluded by declaring that "Victory in the Long War ultimately depends

on Strategic Communication by the US and its international partners."[2]

A poignant example of Strategic Communication during a different "Long War"

is President Ronald Reagan's remarks at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate in 1987. The speech

is best known for its famous edict: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." This powerful

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[1] Joint Pub 3-0, *Joint Operations*, I-6; Joint Pub 3-13, *Information Operations*, GL-12.
[2] In the 2006 QDR, Secretary Rumsfeld highlighted five areas of "particular emphasis" to be further
assessed and improved, each with its own roadmap of execution and timeline for development.
Quadrennial Defense Review (February 6, 2006); 2, 91-92.

speech of less than 3000 words is a comprehensive illustration of a 50-year Cold War campaign encompassing all elements of national power used in concert to achieve a single aim: the defeat of Communism and the advance of freedom for all people. Everything about this significant speech was orchestrated to maximize its effect. The location was significant beyond the obvious symbolism of the wall: Reagan spoke in the very place where the power of American military and economic resolve was first demonstrated in the form of the Berlin Airlift. The timing, too, was not by accident. In his remarks, Reagan referenced the Marshall plan, begun 40 years ago to the month of his speech. As he spoke of the economic miracle of West Germany rising from the ashes of World War II, the city of West Berlin itself provided the physical backdrop for his platform and lent an irrefutable credibility to his words.

There were other Strategic Communication elements beyond the symbolic. First, the speech was targeted not only to the West German audience in front of him – President Reagan knew that his speech could be heard live in the walled city behind him. While he addressed the issue of the wall directly to Gorbachev, his choice of words directed at the East Berliners was meant to put additional pressure on the Soviet Union by rallying the people themselves. Reagan was keenly aware of the changing political climate and felt the time was right for a strategic nudge in the new environment. While he pulled from the west side, he essentially called over the wall for those on the other side to push.[3]

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[3] Reagan said "Our gathering today is being broadcast throughout Western Europe and North America. I understand that it is being seen and heard as well in the East. To those listening throughout Eastern Europe, a special word: Although I cannot be with you, I address my remarks to you just as surely as to those standing here before me. For I join you, as I join your fellow countrymen in the West, in this firm, this unalterable belief: Es gibt nur ein Berlin [There is only one Berlin.]" Excerpt taken from President Reagan's remarks at the Brandenburg Gate, June 12, 1987, accessed at http://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan/speeches/wall.asp 10 February 2007.

Second, by addressing his Soviet counterpart directly and making several specific proposals from nuclear arms reduction to student exchanges, Reagan used the speech as a diplomatic as well as an informational tool. Reagan realized, of course, that he was not speaking to Berliners and the Soviet leadership alone. He was, in fact, delivering America's message in a Strategic Communication to the world. The speech itself was a manifestation of the informational component of Strategic Communication. Within the contents of the speech, however, one can find reference to all the elements of U.S. Strategic Communication during the 40-plus years of the Cold War.

Public Diplomacy is conceptually linked to Strategic Communication. Public Diplomacy constitutes "those overt international public information activities of the United States Government…" and is synonymous with the official functions of the State Department. [4] However, as author William P. Kiehl argues, Public Diplomacy is not an overseas version of Public Affairs. The Public Affairs function deals principally with the media and is essentially reactive and informative. The Public Affairs time line is usually measured in minutes to a few days. Public Diplomacy is pro-active and addresses the whole spectrum of society. It can take from a few hours to several decades to achieve success.[5] Examples of Public Diplomacy range from the publication of magazines and the hosting of American speakers at American cultural centers in foreign cities to the funding of Fulbright scholarships which promote foreign understanding of American values by sending bright young Americans to live and study overseas.

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[4] Joint Pub 1-02, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 8 August 2006.
[5] William P. Kiehl, "Can Humpty Dumpty Be Saved?" *American Diplomacy.org* (Nov 13, 2003), accessed at http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2003_10-12/kiehl_humpty/kiehl_humpty.html 12 November 2006.

From this stems the more recent concept of Defense Support to Public Diplomacy, which is "Those activities and measures taken by the Department of Defense components to support and facilitate public diplomacy efforts of the United States Government."[6] Public Diplomacy and its DoD counterpart are highlighted in recent government reports citing the Government's Strategic Communication difficulties and warrant analysis in Chapter Four.

This paper, however, argues for the use of the term Perception Management as the most important way to describe and develop the informational element of National power. Perception Management has been brought forth in recent academic discourse by contemporary authors.[7] Current Joint doctrine does not currently include Perception Management in any of the key documents related to Information Operations.[8] However, the DoD Dictionary defines Perception Management as:

> Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator's objectives. In various ways, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations.[9]

The term is not new to the lexicon of Government language. For years the FBI has listed foreign Perception Management as one of eight "key issue threats" to national security, including it with terrorism, attacks on critical U.S. infrastructure, and weapons

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[6] Joint Pub 1-02, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 8 August 2006.
[7] See P.M. Taylor, A. Garfield, and R. Brown's extensive writings on Perception Management in the *Journal of Information Warfare*.
[8] The term does not appear in either JP 3-13, *Information Operations*; JP 3-13.4, *Military Deception*; JP 3-61, *Public Affairs*; or JP 2.0, *Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*.
[9] Joint Pub 1-02, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 8 August 2006.

proliferation among others.[10] The FBI clearly recognizes it as a threat when it is directed

at the U.S. by foreign governments. If it is a critical vulnerability of the United States, it

should also be a critical vulnerability or even a center of gravity of the enemy.

   The simplest way to describe the term is to rephrase it as a pair of questions

every U.S. actor on the international stage (from the President in the White House to the

corporal in Baghdad) should constantly ask. The questions are, "What is it that the

audience will take away from the action I'm about to undertake?" and "What is it that I

want the audience to perceive?" An application of Perception Management at the

strategic level might include a careful review of the language used in Presidential

speeches, with an eye toward cultural sensitivities and the powerful meaning of certain

words. The fallout from the oft-cited use of the word 'crusade' in President Bush's early

speeches after 9/11 is an example of an unintended negative consequence due to a failure

to understand the power of perception. At the tactical level, Perception Management can

be as simple as a soldier understanding the cultural mores and political climate enough to

remove his sunglasses when interacting with local civilians, thus countering the

perception that American soldiers are soulless robots to be kept at a distance.

The term Perception Management refines the concept of Strategic

Communication and brings it into the realm of action that can be undertaken by soldiers,

statesmen, and government organizations at all levels. "Perception Management is not

propaganda," argues author Andrew Garfield. "It is the articulation of our message in a

form that a target audience will understand and that is intended to change their point-of-

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[10] J. Michael Waller, "Losing a battle for hearts and minds: the same bureaucracy that is so deftly managing the military in the war on terrorism is severely mishandling information campaigns needed to discredit terrorists," *Insight on the News* (April 22, 2002). accessed at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1571, 12 February 2007.

view to one that is more favorable to our own position."[11] Clearly, the terms Strategic

Communication and Perception Management are not synonymous. In this paper,

Perception Management will serve as the single term to refer to the combined operations

of the U.S. Government at all levels and across all agencies to manage the informational

element of national power. In addition to focusing on a *foreign* audience, Perception

Management better focuses the American soldier or statesman on how his actions affect

the emotions, motives, and *objective reasoning* of the target audience. That is,

Perception Management as a term - more so than Strategic Communication - focuses on

the *effects* of the message rather than the message itself or the mechanics of its delivery.

The message, in this case, is not limited to just words transmitted via the media – it is the

combination of words and actions (kinetic or otherwise) that transmit intent and form

perceptions in the mind of a cognitive recipient.

Several other terms warrant definition as they illustrate the complex history of

America's struggle with the messages it sends in the course of conducting international

relations. Information Operations (IO) describes the military's role in the broadest

possible construct. IO is defined as:

> The integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare,
> computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and
> operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities,
> to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision
> making while protecting our own.[12]

The term IO itself is so broadly defined that it has become quite useless for

academic analysis. It simply means far too many things to different people. For

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[11] Andrew Garfield, "The Offence of Strategic Influence: Making the Case for Perception Management
Operations," *Journal of Information Warfare* 1, no. 3 (2002), 32.
[12] Ibid.

example, some have questioned why the tactical application of Electronic Warfare, exemplified by a fighter aircraft jamming the tracking radar of an inbound enemy missile, belongs in the same category as psychological operations against a target population.[13] Enough conceptual divergence exists in the current sub-categories of IO to warrant independent intellectual and doctrinal development. The result of the current problem of "IO generalization" is that it slows the deeper process of developing tactics and strategies for each of the IO core and supporting capabilities. For example, it is currently too easy for commanders to develop a minimally staffed and ill-defined "IO cell" and then expect it to produce products ranging from communications satellite coverage matrices and computer network attack plans to Public Affairs talking points. Nevertheless, Perception Management, while not one of the five doctrinal capabilities of IO, is defined by the DoD Dictionary as combining several of the core and supporting capabilities of IO to influence adversary decision making. Most importantly, Perception Management is important as a term because its use drives individuals to consider consequences or effects.

Perception Management incorporates both kinetic and non-kinetic actions. The modern lumping of Perception Management activities under the Information Operations umbrella tends to steer operators toward purely non-kinetic solutions, where sometimes conventional kinetic actions can have profound Perception Management or informational effects. Take, for example, a successful operation that was conceived at the strategic level in Washington, implemented at the tactical level, and supported the overall Perception Management campaign against the Nazis in WWII:

> Then as now, some of the most effective propaganda projects were the simplest. One was the brain child of author Leo Rosten, who was serving a stint with OWI

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[13] Christopher J. Lamb, "Information Operations as a Core Competency," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 36 (2005): 90.

[Office of War Information] in Washington. He was asked to come up with a propaganda scheme for January 30, 1943, which was the tenth anniversary of Hitler's accession to power and Roosevelt's birthday. The war was still running in Germany's favor, and Hitler and Goebbels were certain to make the most of the anniversary.

When it appeared likely that Hitler would broadcast to the world at 11:00 A.M., the hour before he became Chancellor, Rosten proposed that the RAF bomb Berlin at that precise moment and knock the Nazi radio off the air while the world listened. The project went off without a hitch. With perfect timing, RAF Mosquito bombers hit Berlin a few seconds after 11 o'clock. Hitler had a sore throat, but Hermann Goering spoke in his place. A few seconds after the fat *Reichsmarschall* began speaking, explosions were heard in the background. Shouts and sounds of confusion followed, then Radio Berlin went off the air. Germany was not invincible, after all.[14]

The Berlin Airlift serves as a complementary example that reinforces the notion of the "propaganda of action." The U.S.-led airlift clearly affected the perceptions of the weakened states of Europe with its demonstration of capability and resolve in the face of Soviet oppression. The action was enhanced by a concerted information campaign to influence the perceptions of people all over the world with regard to American aims. The Voice of America and the U.S. Information Service broadcast the results of the successful airlift in the form of newsreels, interviews, and images of hungry German children being fed.[15] As former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Edward Barrett artfully asks,

> What better demonstration could there be that the great free nations were determined not to let down beleaguered free peoples anywhere? What better reflection could there be of the potential might of free nations? And what better demonstration could there be of the inhumane, short-sighted tactics of the Kremlin rulers?[16]

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[14] Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 16-17.

[15] Edward W. Barrett, *Truth is our Weapon* (Funk & Wagnalls: New York, 1953), 65-66.

[16] Ibid., 66.

Another important distinction must be made between Perception Management and Psychological Operations (PSYOP). Much of the DoD Dictionary definition of PSYOP is identical to that of Perception Management, but it does not include the important phrase "to influence…intelligence systems and leaders at all levels."[17] Traditional examples of PSYOP include leaflets or radio broadcasts to demoralize an enemy or encourage surrender.[18] The definition of Perception Management, on the other hand, incorporates PSYOP along with truth projection, operations security, cover and deception to make it a more far-reaching and all-encompassing informational concept. Given both its scope and focus on effects, Perception Management is the term best suited to frame a coordinated interagency approach at all levels of international relations.

The scholar P.M. Taylor wrote that, "Perception Management may well be another pseudonym for propaganda."[19] Propaganda is a term fraught with historic baggage. The vilification of the Germans during World War I demonstrated the power of negative propaganda.[20] World War II, in turn, offered further examples of propaganda's negative side. The Nazi Propaganda Ministry's anti-Semitic writings and the visually disturbing caricatures of both Japanese and American acts of atrocity (produced by both sides) serve as powerful examples of the negative uses of the practice to spread hate and

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[17] The DoD definition for PSYOP is "Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives." Joint Pub 1-02, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 8 August 2006.

[18] See Carl Berger, *An Introduction to Wartime Leaflets* (Special Operations Research Office, American University, 1959), for a concise history on the use and effectiveness of leaflets in military operations. Berger argues that along with loudspeakers, leaflets have formed the core of Army Psychological operations. Although this was written in 1959, not much has changed in Army PSYOP doctrine regarding the use of leaflets and loudspeakers in the conduct of PSYOP.

[19] P.M. Taylor, "Perception Management and the 'War' Against Terrorism," *Journal of Information Warfare* 1, no. 3 (2002): 25.

distrust.[21] It was Hitler's Propaganda Minister, Dr. Josef Goebbels, who was largely

responsible for the enduring negativity associated with the word. "Propaganda," he

argued, "has only one object – to conquer the masses."[22]

For many, the association of the term propaganda with evil intent has clouded the

term with a negativity that is not part of its definition. Taylor argues that propaganda is a

value-neutral term, and one that simply defines a "process of persuasion designed to

benefit its originator."[23] In fact, the Latin origin of the word meaning "to propagate or

spread" was formalized by the 17th century Catholic *Collegium de Propaganda* to spread

the faith.[24] The DoD Dictionary supports Taylor's value-neutral assertion, defining

propaganda as: "Any form of communication in support of national objectives designed

to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit

the sponsor, either directly or indirectly."[25] It ought to be considered as value neutral, he

contends, because to dismiss it as a negative force prevents the understanding of its

effectiveness as a force for good. "If the intention is to promote democratic values,

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[20] For an expansion of this concept and other examples of the negative side of propaganda see Andrew Garfield, "The Offence of Strategic Influence: Making the Case for Perception Management Operations," *Journal of Information Warfare* 1, no. 3 (2002):30-39.

[21] For an understanding of the "cultural myth" created by the Nazis and specifically the framing of the war by Hitler and Goebbels as Aryan against Jew, see Jay W. Baird, *The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda, 1939-1945* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1974). For a comprehensive look at the negative side of wartime propaganda, including the use of racism, sexism, and the most denigrating stereotypes of the enemy to evoke specific readers' emotions, see Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion: WWII* (Chelsea House Publishers, NY, 1976).

[22] Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (New York, Harper & Row, 1968), 9.

[23] P.M. Taylor, "Perception Management and the 'War' Against Terrorism," *Journal of Information Warfare* (2002), 28.

[24] For more on the origins of the word propaganda see Erwin W. Fellows, "'Propaganda:' History of a Word", *American Speech* 34, no. 3 (October 1959), 182-189.

[25] Joint Pub 1-02, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 8 August 2006.

which survive on the altar of the will of the people," he argues, "then democracies need not fight shy of the word."[26]

Nevertheless, history has shown - and current events continue to confirm - that due to an association with the negative aspects of propaganda, most U.S. Government attempts to manage its message meet with general distrust and condemnation. As Garfield astutely observes, "It is a paradox of our time that both the public and politicians are prepared to tolerate the use of bombs and bullets, but shy away from the use of information as a weapon of war."[27]

Finally, the term Perception Management allows a broader discussion and better frames the issue of scope. In the interconnected information society that permeates almost all corners of the globe, tactical military actions no longer have only tactical effects.

Prior to the explosive growth of information technology in the last several decades, the DoD historically viewed the bulk of Information Operations in tactical or perhaps operational terms. Doctrinal changes to military operations have been slow in leveraging the new information environment. Even today, DoD efforts focus on the tactical use of Special Operations, PSYOP and civil affairs personnel to win the "hearts and minds" of the enemy to achieve operational ends.[28] In the modern paradigm of a "Long War" or a "Global War on Terror," however, military commanders at all levels

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[26] P.M. Taylor, "Perception Management and the 'War' Against Terrorism," *Journal of Information Warfare* (2002), 28.
[27] Andrew Garfield, "The Offence of Strategic Influence: Making the Case for Perception Management Operations," *Journal of Information Warfare* 1, no. 3 (2002), 31.
[28] Joint Pub 3-53, *Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations,* (5 Sep 2003), I-3 and Joint Pub 3-57, *Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations* (8 Feb 2001), II-7.

must plan and execute military operations with an eye toward multiple audiences'

cognitive perception of their actions.

PSYOP has remained a tactical tool in the hands of a small cadre of specialists.[29]

The concept of Perception Management asks commanders and corporals alike to consider

the effect of their actions on the immediate enemy, regional observers, and the world

audience all at once. The U.S. military, therefore, must look beyond leaflets and

loudspeakers to realize its critical role in the nation's larger strategic Perception

Management campaign.

Other than driving one to consider its effects, why is Perception Management so

important? It is simply this: No element of the U.S. Government can afford to ignore the

strategic elements of the modern information environment. The President and NSC, as

the strategic nexus of U.S. foreign policy, must frame the Perception Management

campaign in its rightful context: that of an integrated, cohesive, and nested campaign

enacted by all agencies of the Government using all the elements of national power.

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[29] The U.S. Army is working to grow its PSYOP forces, but the vast majority of its current capability resides in a single unit – the 4th Psychological Operations Group at Ft. Bragg, N.C. Similarly, the entire U.S. Air Force contribution to the PSYOP effort is the 193rd Special Operations Wing, a reserve unit that flies the EC-130E COMMANDO SOLO aircraft – a platform that can, among other things, deliver radio and television broadcasts over denied territory.

Problem Description

How can a man in a cave out-communicate the world's leading communications society?

- Richard Holbrooke[30]

With the 9/11 attacks and a series of public statements, Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda defined the conflict in their terms. Six years later, the enemy still holds the Perception Management high ground.

The reasons are complex, but can be distilled into four key areas. First, the enemy is small, agile, and unencumbered by the bureaucracy that prevents the U.S. Government from reacting. This is the classic David and Goliath match up that an asymmetric enemy hopes to exploit when fighting a conventionally superior foe like the United States. Four men with a knife and a video camera can have a video of a beheading, complete with political message, on the internet within minutes. Within hours, DVD copies flood the street markets and play repeatedly in shop windows throughout Baghdad. The extent of their staffing actions may be a few well-timed cell phone calls and perhaps a quick meeting over tea. The timeline for the U.S. government, on the other hand, to respond with an equivalent media product must sometimes be measured in months, rather than hours or days.

Second, the enemy is not encumbered by the ethical or cultural mores that prevent the US and its allies from responding in kind. Two recent examples illustrate this point. Disinformation is nothing new in warfare, but communications technology has allowed it to become a much more effective strategic tool, particularly when the employer is not bound by ethical considerations. During the Israeli air attacks into Lebanon in September

2006, the Lebanese Hezbollah organization was able to achieve profound psychological

effects by allegedly posing dead women and children at the site of a previously struck

military target, claiming that the innocents were purposely targeted by Israeli warplanes.

By manipulating complicit media to broadcast footage of the allegedly staged event,

Hezbollah was able to use the global media as a combat multiplier, resulting in

worldwide questioning (if not condemnation) of Israeli air attacks.[31]

A second example from the same conflict shows how technology, even when

separated from intent, can have greater effects on the perceptions of multiple audiences.

Technological advancements such as image manipulation software (Adobe Photoshop,

for instance) now make it extremely easy for anyone to fabricate an image that can

achieve almost instant effects on a battlefield and on the world stage. In an example of

photojournalism blurring into "photoeditorialism," freelance photographer Adnan Hajj

was dropped by the Reuters news agency after it was revealed that he had digitally

manipulated photos he took of Israeli air attacks on a Beirut building in August of 2006.

Hajj had digitally embellished the smoke to give the appearance of greater damage and,

in a separate image, had added flares to the image of an Israeli jet flying overhead.[32]

Again, the manipulation of information is nothing new in warfare - it is the

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[30] Richard Holbrooke, "Get the Message Out," *Washington Post* (Oct 28, 2001), B7.

[31] Numerous internet web logs ("blogs") and several reputable news agencies covered allegations of "staged" deaths at the scene of Israeli attacks in Qana, Lebanon. They argue that inconsistencies in the photographs' time stamps and the appearance of the same individual holding a dead child appeared in multiple locations, leading to suspicions that scenes may have been staged. For a representative sample see "Qana Attack Stirs Worldwide Outcry," *CNN On Line* (30 July 2006), accessed at http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/30/qana.reaction/, 4 February 2007; Yaakov Lapin, "Hizbollah 'Milked' Qana Attacks," *YNet News On Line* (1 August 2006), accessed at http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3284546,00.html, 4 February 2007; and for a collection of news articles and blogs on the topic see Wikipedia, "2006 Israel-Lebanon Conflict Photograph Controversies," accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Israel-Lebanon_conflict_photographs_controversies, 4 February 2007.

[32] BBC News, "Reuters drops Beirut Photographer," (8 August 2006), accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5254838.stm, 4 February 2007.

information environment itself that has changed so dramatically. It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. In today's telecommunications environment, an image transmitted to millions in seconds is worth an exponentially greater amount. One needs only to consider the Abu Ghurayb prisoner abuse scandal to realize how the current information environment has enabled *tactical* actions to have devastating *strategic* effects, particularly in terms of international perceptions.

The third reason the enemy currently holds the Perception Management high ground is the "CNN effect." Leaving aside for a moment the larger discussion of the relationship of the US media and the government, the "CNN effect" issue revolves around the inherent need for news media to focus on controversy or tragedy to sell newspapers or commercial air time. Simply put, bad news sells. The advent of the 24-hour news cycle necessarily amplifies the need for news footage to fill space. Particularly in the visual media, scenes of violence, destruction, and especially grand acts of terrorism lend themselves to television air time. Stated another way, the greater the competition between a growing number of media outlets, the greater the effect of terrorist actions around the world. The phenomenon of the "CNN effect" currently favors the enemy in the "Long War," and its use as a force multiplier is not lost on those with intent to harm the U.S. and its interests.

The fourth reason is the modern historical legacy of mutual distrust between the U.S. government (particularly the military) and the media. Before the historical efforts of the government in the realm of Perception Management are analyzed, it is important to understand the cultural context that frames the issue of the relationship among the American people, the media, and their government. That relationship has changed over

time and has spanned a spectrum from complicit collusion to violent opposition.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the American media are sensitive to any perceived

attempts by the Government to steer the flow of information to the American public. A

simple internet search reveals 1.24 million entries regarding "Government

disinformation."[33] While many can be attributed to individual conspiracy theorists on the

fringes of society, a significant number of credible media outlets have linked government

information efforts with disinformation.[34] The nearly immediate collapse of the

Pentagon's Office of Strategic Influence in 2002, discussed in Chapter Three, serves as

an example of the power of the American press to affect government operations by

raising the issue of the threat of media manipulation.

What caused this current environment? For one reason, return for a moment to

the maxim that bad news sells. The sort of incidents on which the news media thrive –

individual acts of atrocity like rape and murder - are a rare but unfortunately inevitable

consequence of sustained warfare.[35] As former Secretary of the Navy and member of the

9/11 Commission John Lehman argues, the U.S. military executed more than 300

Americans for crimes and depredations against civilians in World War II. "The

difference between World War II and today," he claims, "is that the media did not

publicize those crimes in World War II, because such publicity obviously gave aid,

comfort, and encouragement to the enemy, which such publicity is clearly doing

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[33] An Internet Google© search for the term "Government disinformation" conducted on 2 February 2006 revealed about 1,240,000 hits in 1.25 seconds.

[34] This phenomenon is reported on at length by Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a national media watch group based in New York. For an example see the article "MEDIA ADVISORY: Pentagon Propaganda Plan Is Undemocratic, Possibly Illegal," F.A.I.R. web site (19 February 2002), accessed at http://www.fair.org/activism/osi-propaganda.html, 10 February 2006.

[35] John Lehman, "Five Years Later: Are We Any Safer?" *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 132, no. 9 (2006): 21.

today."[36] This paper will not dive into the ethical debate on the roles and responsibilities

of the media in war – that is a topic for an entirely different study. It is an important

matter of fact, however, that post-World War II administrations and militaries have found

themselves with an increasingly less complicit press corps in times of conflict.

Despite the great progress in recent years that has been made at the tactical level

with media embedding, the historical baggage of the Vietnam War still plagues military-

media relations.[37] In fact, as author Jason Holm argues, the military-media relationship

has shown marked regression.[38] This strained relationship and its effect on the

government (particularly the military) is perhaps most famously tied to the Vietnam era.

As Holm observed:

> Although many grow weary of discussing the Vietnam-era military-media tango,
> it remains the crux of the dispute and warrants examination. Specifically, the
> subject matter is so toxic and the differences so great that the resentment has
> outlived the players. Current military leaders were not filling sandbags in Da
> Nang during the conflict; they were filling diapers in Kansas City. Yet, the
> military's hatred for the media has been passed down like crew drills-as if
> despising the media is an obligation rather than a choice.[39]

Despite a number of operations since Vietnam that have demonstrated positive

steps, Holm argues that the Vietnam experience continues to frame the strained media-

military relationship. The strain, he says, has resulted in the military's self-protective,

reclusive nature with regard to the media.[40] In military terms, the consequence of this

reclusive aversion to media engagement is nothing less than the ceding of the initiative

and the giving up of key [informational] terrain to the enemy. New York Times

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[36] Ibid., 22.
[37] Jason D. Holm, "Get Over It! Repairing the Military's Adversarial Relationship With the Press," *Military Review* 82, no.1 (2002): 59.
[38] Ibid., 59.
[39] Ibid., 63.
[40] Ibid., 66.

journalist Richard Halloran explains, "If military officers refuse to respond to the press, they are in effect abandoning the field to critics of the armed forces. That would serve neither the nation nor the military services."[41] One can logically extend this argument to the broader U.S. Government and its efforts in the "Long War." With its lack of a Perception Management campaign that incorporates a proactive and aggressive relationship with the media, the U.S. Government has abandoned the informational field and given the enemy free reign.

In addition to the changing military-media relationship in wartime, peacetime events have soured the relationship between the U.S. Government and the American press. Numerous government scandals from Watergate to Iran-Contra have resulted in a general distrust on both sides. Add to this mix the inherently divisive nature of a two-party system with Congressional elections every two years, and the media become a forum for the airing and exposure of the "evils" of the American system. In the post-modern information age, every bit of national "dirty laundry" is aired not only to domestic spectators, but to an ever-interested international audience as well.

The checking and balancing functions of the media are a healthy part of a democratic system. They can, however, introduce a heavy dose of Clausewitzian friction in a time of war when the informational element of national power is largely dependent on an entity that is <u>not</u> one of the branches of government. This friction, combined with a lack of proactive media engagement, has resulted in the government ceding the informational high ground to the enemy.

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[41] Richard Halloran, "Soldiers and Scribblers Revisited: Working with the Media," *Parameters* (Spring 1991): 11.

Finally, in a description of the problem, the question of relevance must be asked: why is this concept of Perception Management so important? The answer lies in the modern paradigm of a "globalized" and interdependent world.[42] This modern interdependence across economic, socio-cultural, and political lines is the very reason international Perception Management is so important for the world's remaining superpower. Stated simply, globalization <u>requires</u> an increased attention to international Perception Management. Today, because of the near instantaneous propagation of both information and analysis via modern communications networks, even the most remote populations <u>have the opportunity</u> to be fed an exponentially greater understanding of individual, military, and interstate actions that affect them. The post-industrial information revolution now means that actors ranging from nation-states to individuals can shape information in order to affect the <u>understanding</u> of the audience. The proverbial information "pipe" is not only big enough to handle the basic information (i.e. the U.S. has invaded Iraq), it is also able to handle the additive layers of amplifying information (i.e. the U.S. invaded in order to…and this is good for you because…).

Another way to understand the globalizing effect on Perception Management is to look at historic parallels. In Thomas Jefferson's time, Public Diplomacy or Strategic Perception Management may have been largely a matter between political elites. Jefferson would sit down, write a letter to the president of another country, and, if it was urgent, receive a written response six weeks later. The privileged communication between two heads of state constituted the bulk of international diplomacy, with their respective publics being none the wiser. In Ronald Reagan's time, he spoke not only to

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[42] Notable authors who furthered the theory of globalization include Thomas Freidman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2006) and (earlier) Theodore Levitt,

Gorbachev but also to an audience of East Berliners yearning for encouragement and simultaneously to a global audience concerned about nuclear confrontation between two superpowers. In that context, the Westphalian nation-state construct was still dominant, but leaders could not help but include - and leverage - the public in the information environment. In George W. Bush's time, individual actors and non-governmental organizations are shaping global perceptions. A message or idea put out by Osama Bin Laden or Al Qaeda, for example, has as much informational capital as that propagated by a sovereign nation-state. This is the new environment in which our government must now operate. The question, then, is: Are the elements of the U.S. Government postured correctly to operate in this new environment?

The concept of Perception Management is critical because all of America's important national security objectives and altruistic ends (and the impressive military might used to achieve them) will be for naught if the message it is trying to convey falls on deaf ears or if it is twisted or supplanted by a contrary message.

As author P.M. Taylor asserts, it is essential for the eventual victor to win the moral high ground in the public domain on a global scale.[43] The current scorecard does not favor the United States. The enemy currently is able to win tactical PM battles by rapidly recognizing and exploiting advantages like highlighting (or fabricating) the deaths of innocent civilians at the hands of coalition forces. Islamic extremist organizations like Al Qaeda and Hezbollah are able to rapidly exploit relatively minor tactical terrorist actions like kidnappings or explosions through the use of simple video technology and

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The marketing imagination (New York: The Free Press, 1986).
[43] P.M. Taylor, *Perception Management and the 'War' Against Terrorism*, Journal of Information Warfare (2002), 1:3, 16.

the internet. Here they have been quite effective in elevating tactical actions to

operational and even strategic importance.

Clausewitz argued that military conflict is simply an extension of politics meant

to compel one's adversary to do one's will. He also argued that if war is to be

undertaken, it is to be undertaken to the extreme – in a total or absolute war using all

means available to bring about a favorable outcome.[44] President George W. Bush has, on

numerous occasions, defined the "Long War" as a war of ideas, a war that spans the

globe, and a war without immediate end.[45] If one accepts the argument that the GWOT

is a war of ideology on a global scale; and if one accepts the premise that the world is

truly interconnected and globalized like never before, then it is imperative that the

"National Will" be effectively communicated to all audiences through a cohesive

Perception Management campaign.

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[44] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 77.

[45] George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 2002.

Chapter 2: Historical Review of National Perception Management Strategy

The US Government has historically struggled with its role as an influencer. Since World War I, the U.S. Government has created over 30 offices, departments, bureaus, and agencies to deal with the creation and propagation of the "American message." This message has been managed with varied levels of success, depending on both the personalities of leaders and the institutional structures of their agencies.

This brief review will illustrate individual instances of both success and failure in the U.S. Government's Perception Management efforts in times of relative peace and conflict. The review reinforces the three overarching reasons for the difficulty in leveraging the information element of National power: politics & personality, bureaucracy, and a legacy of mistrust between the media and government. If nothing else, the laundry-list of government agencies and offices that have been created, dissolved, and re-created reveals the Government's historic struggle with the concept of Perception Management.

World War I

World War I ushered in an era of strong personalities and relatively aggressive policies in the Perception Management arena. In 1916, the State Department began small-scale operations to influence public opinion against the Central Powers, but not until the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917 did U.S. Army and Navy intelligence organizations receive infusions of personnel and money for the purposes of a concerted

Perception Management campaign. The most significant advance for U.S. intelligence during the war was the establishment of a permanent communications intelligence agency in the Army, which was the forerunner of the National Security Agency.[46] It is interesting to note that in these early wartime years and for a significant period beyond, the role of Perception Management fell to the government intelligence agencies. The American public today would view this merging of Perception Management with intelligence collection (or even the mere proximity of the two) as a clear conflict of interest and a threat to the propagation of truth in media.

More importantly, this blending of Perception Management and intelligence brought about a marriage of the previously disparate government functions of action and analysis. The ability to act and then analyze the effects of that action was a key tenet of the success of the United States Information Agency (USIA), discussed later in the chapter.

In 1917, the U.S. Committee of Public Information (CPI) was created by President Wilson one week after US entered the war. Headed by the journalist George Creel, it was designed to be a committee represented by the Secretaries of State, Navy, and War, but it held only one meeting and George Creel operated essentially on his own for most of its existence. The reason Creel was able to not only operate on his own but also manage an effective Perception Management campaign was that he was a close personal confidant of Woodrow Wilson and he had free, easy, and regular access to the President.[47] Rather than arbitrate between powerful but often opposing departmental

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[46] CIA web site, accessed at https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/facttell/intel_overview.html, 8 October 2006.

[47] Daugherty argues that Creel "Did not wait for the policy makers to announce a policy decision, instead he helped them make it and to announce it at such times and in such phraseology that would most

secretaries, Creel opted to chart his own path. His organization clearly targeted the U.S. domestic audience, rather than a foreign one. The rest of Europe was already embroiled in war and needed no convincing –it was the domestic audience that the administration recognized as the Perception Management center of gravity.

Creel was an intense man who sold the war with religious fervor. He employed an army of artists, cartoonists, choirs, social clubs and religious organizations to promote support for the war effort. He recruited an estimated 75,000 "four minute men," who spoke for four minutes (believed to be an average person's attention span) in various public venues extolling the virtues of American involvement in the war.[48] Reminiscent of the "freedom fries" sold in the U.S. Capitol cafeteria during the 2003 Iraq war, under George Creel Sauerkraut became "liberty Cabbage" and hamburger became "Salisbury steak."[49]

The CPI lasted only one year. Creel's overselling of a forced propaganda message left a bad taste in Americans' mouths, and contributed to the uneasiness and even fear that Americans felt toward propaganda during the interwar period.[50] Despite the retrospective negativity associated with his operations after the war's end, Creel's tactics were effective. The Government's World War I Perception Management efforts were based largely on his singular efforts.[51]

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effectively aid his propaganda effort." William E. Daugherty and Morris Janowitz, *A Psychological Warfare Casebook,* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958), 276.
[48] George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 7.
[49] While Creel himself did not rename dishes, Author Allan Winkler asserts that the CPI "helped stir up the hysteria" that led to these actions. More on this and the religious nature of the CPI campaigns can be found in Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda* (Yale University Press, 1978), 3.
[50] Ibid., 4.

The Interwar Years

Two factors worked against a unified National Perception Management campaign in the interwar years. The first was the aforementioned uneasiness with which the public and its government treated Perception Management. The second was the personality of President Roosevelt himself. Roosevelt was notorious for creating new agencies rather than reforming or restructuring existing ones. His New Deal government was marked with a surge of new, additive, and often overlapping agencies. While this loosely structured "adhocratic" approach to government attracted bold and imaginative people, it added much friction to the already large and unwieldy bureaucratic machine.[52] Roosevelt, comfortable with creating numerous organizations with clearly overlapping areas of interest, was content to watch these new agencies fight out their issues and intervene only when he felt necessary. While it may have proven effective in bypassing the stagnation of existing bureaucracies, Roosevelt's unique approach in structuring his government hampered the formation of a unified, coherent Perception Management program.[53]

Between 1939 and 1944, President Roosevelt created or restructured no less than twelve entities to manage the Perception Management campaign. The first of many of Roosevelt's Perception Management-related creations was the Office of Government Reports (OGR). It was formed in 1939 as a clearinghouse for public requests for government materials. Due to its dual charter to provide information and report public reaction to government problems to the administration, it came under attack by

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[51] Ibid., 2.

[52] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal* (Riverside Press, 1958), 533-535.

[53] Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda* (Yale University Press, 1978), 21.

Republican legislators. These critics feared it would become a propaganda machine for the Roosevelt administration, but their fears were never realized as the OGR never developed as an effective organization. The Division of Information of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), however, was more effective. It was created in March of 1941 to be the primary source of information about the government's defense activities.

Several months earlier, in August of 1940, Roosevelt had created the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) to manage the development of commercial and cultural relations between the U.S. and Latin America. It was headed by Nelson Rockefeller, who used the position to counter Nazi propaganda by strengthening good hemispheric relations.[54] The CIAA was an independent organization of the U.S. Government, but Rockefeller was supported by the State Department in this endeavor.[55] It lasted until 1945, at which time it was subsumed by other organizations.

Also in 1941, President Roosevelt created the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) - the country's first peacetime civilian intelligence agency. He appointed Retired US Army Colonel William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan to lead it. As he built the COI, Donovan was largely influenced by his observations of the British Political Warfare Executive (PWE) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) as well as the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), which was able to coordinate intelligence collection activities with psychological warfare and special operations.[56] As with the aforementioned U.S. Army's communications intelligence agency in World War I (the

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[54] Ibid., 25.
[55] Ibid., 25.

precursor to the NSA), the strength Donovan noted (and intended to build into his COI office) was the complete feedback loop the British model afforded strategists and decision makers. For the second time in U.S. Government history, the operations arm of the government was brought into close functionality with the intelligence collection and analytical arm. The incorporation of both the *operational* side (kinetic and non-kinetic action) and the *intelligence* side (collection and analysis) allowed a single government agency to both focus its efforts and receive feedback on the results of those efforts. Donovan recognized the value of a single agency to synergize the disparate intelligence efforts in Washington, and proposed such a model to the President.

Donovan, however, was a strong personality and immediately drew the ire of many people in government departments and agencies. The COI drew concern from the State Department because its "free-wheeling" activities contrasted with its slow diplomatic processes, and the War Department criticized it as a "Fly-by-night civilian outfit headed up by a wild man who was trying to horn in on the war."[57] Despite his initial enthusiasm for a single integrated agency to act as the clearinghouse for all intelligence, Perception Management and "special" operations, President Roosevelt quickly began to diversify and expand the number and type of agencies responsible for Perception Management.

Belying the centrality of the COI, Roosevelt formed three other government entities for managing Perception Management in the months that followed. At its inception, The Foreign Information Service (FIS) was part of the COI but headed

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[56] For a more detailed discussion of Donovan and the origins of the COI, see Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941-1952: Origins of a "Special Warfare" Capability for the United States Army* (U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 1979), 7-10.

[57] Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda* (Yale University Press, 1978), 26.

separately by Robert Sherwood. It essentially became the propaganda arm of the COI. It

was an outwardly-focused office with a mandate to tell the rest of the world about the

aims and objectives of the American Government and the American people. Author

William F. Daugherty wrote that the FIS "undertook to spread the gospel of

Democracy…and to explain the objectives of the United States throughout the world

except in Latin America."[58] As Wilson Dizard argues, "The FIS was the first

acknowledgment by the Roosevelt administration that public ideological operations

required a worldwide approach…"[59] It was this office that created the long-standing

radio broadcast entity Voice of America (VOA).

Donovan and Sherwood were opposed in their views on nature of Perception

Management, and their differing views underscore the core debate that still rages today.

According to Donovan's biographer, "Colonel Donovan believed that, once a state of war

existed, the propaganda arm should be exploited as a weapon of deception and

subversion, and should be under military supervision," while Sherwood "held that

broadcasts should stick scrupulously to the facts, and let the truth eventually prevail."[60]

Sherwood wanted to merge FIS with the newly formed OWI, but Donovan (supported by

the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff) wanted to keep his propaganda arm under COI. The

disagreement turned into personal animosity between the two men, and Roosevelt's

solution was to separate the two organizations.[61] Sherwood's FIS became part of the new

Office of War Information (OWI) in June of 1942, while Donovan's office of the COI

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[58] *William F. Daugherty and Morris Janowitz, A Psychological Warfare Casebook* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), 127.

[59] Wilson P. Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency*, Boulder, Lynne Reinner, 2004), 11.

[60] Corey Ford, *Donovan of OSS* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 125.

[61] Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda* (Yale University Press, 1978), 31.

grew into a larger and more diversified intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic

Services (the precursor to the CIA). Former Deputy Director of the U.S. Information

Agency Thomas Sorensen wrote that it took nine months after the OWI's creation to

define and divide foreign propaganda responsibilities between the OWI and OSS, and the

two organizations spent almost as much time fighting each other as fighting the enemy.[62]

The second new organization created that year was the Office of Facts and

Figures (OFF). Formed out of New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's Office of Civilian

Defense (OCD), the OFF was created, in President Roosevelt's words, "To facilitate a

widespread and accurate understanding of the status and progress of the national defense

effort…and activities of the Government."[63] Typical of the other agencies created in the

Roosevelt administration, it was superimposed on the existing structure and did not

replace any of the other related organizations.

World War II

By early 1942, the myriad Perception Management agencies had clearly reached a

critical mass, and getting any sort of unified or consistent message or information theme

from the government was extremely difficult. Even the press began to favor some sort of

central agency to provide accurate facts and articulate the government's central message.

As journalist A.H. Feller observed, "It all seemed to boil down to three bitter complaints:

first, that there was too much information; second, that there wasn't enough of it; and

third, that in any event it was confusing and inconsistent."[64]

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[62] Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (New York, Harper & Row, 1968), 11.

[63] Ibid, 23. (further cited in records of the OWI)

[64] A.H. Feller, "OWI on the Home Front," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (July 1943): 55.

As America prepared to enter the war**,** the Office of War Information (OWI) was established by executive order "In recognition of the right of the American people and of all other peoples opposing the Axis oppressors to be truthfully informed about the common war effort."[65] It merged and subsumed the Office of Government Reports, the OEM's Division of Information, the Office of Facts and Figures, and the Foreign Information Service of the Office of the Coordinator of Information. It was headed by Elmer Davis, a journalist, author, and extremely popular radio commentator.

Davis struggled with the apparent dichotomy in his charter – he was to provide truthful information to the American public but he was also charged with developing campaigns to secure certain actions from that public, including the campaign to push war bonds or promote salvage.[66] He was to "formulate and carry out…information programs designed to facilitate the development of an intelligent and informed understanding, at home and abroad…of the war policies, activities, and aims of the government."[67] Roosevelt, however, his memory fresh from the experience with the powers of the Creel Committee (i.e., the singular powers of Creel himself), purposely structured the OWI so that it would not have the power of its predecessor.[68] The individual federal departments all still maintained their own information elements, and the OWI could only coordinate, not direct.[69]

Davis was frustrated with the conflict he found between the various agencies. Analyzing the government's Perception Management effort prior to his selection as head

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[65] U.S. President, Executive Order, "Consolidating Certain War Information Functions into an Office of War Information," Executive Order 9182, *Federal Register* 7 FR 4468, (16 June 1942), accessed at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16273, 8 November 2006.
[66] Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda* (Yale University Press, 1978), 35 (further cited in records of the OWI).
[67] Ibid., 34.
[68] Ibid., 34.

of the OWI, he had complained in a radio commentary that "Under one head, with real power, they might get somewhere…Objection has been made that it might be hard to pick the man to head them. But almost anybody would be better than half a dozen heads."[70] Even though the OWI itself was a consolidation of many agencies, Davis was still not able to corral the remaining disparate entities of the federal government to produce a truly effective, unified Perception Management campaign to his satisfaction. Additionally, Davis did not enjoy the support of, or access to, the President as did George Creel in World War I.[71] The enormity of Davis's tasks begs comparison to those of the current administration's Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the current "Long War" (discussed later in Chapter Three).

Nevertheless, Davis proved to be a powerful personality who overcame many of the bureaucratic challenges facing his position. Davis faced very public resignations within his office and an increasingly hostile Republican Congress.[72] Through compromise and skillful politics, Davis was able to move the OWI in a direction that was more closely aligned with the real American aims in the war, and, in turn, furthered the effect of the informational element of National power.[73]

With the rapid advances in communications technology, largely spurred by American ingenuity, the U.S. should be much more able to wield the information weapon today than it did 60 years ago. Two wartime instances, separated not by importance but only by time, prove that to be false.

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[69] Ibid., 35.

[70] Roger Burlingame, *Don't let them scare you: The Life and Times of Elmer Davis* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincot Co. 1961), 186.

[71] Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda* (Yale University Press, 1978), 36.

[72] Ibid., 64-72.

[73] Ibid., 37.

On August 10th, 1945, Japan offered to discuss surrender terms with the Allies. The Japanese government, however, was careful to keep the news of surrender discussions from the Japanese people. The government believed that by hiding the news, it could keep the people fighting which would allow it to bargain from a more advantageous position and back out from negotiations at any time. If, on the other hand, the Japanese population knew of the government's surrender offer, their will to fight would be severely diminished and defeat would come more quickly.

Recognizing this strategic opportunity, specialists in the State Department and Davis's Office of War Information made a joint recommendation to influence the Japanese people and force the Japanese government's hand by spreading the news of the surrender talks. Thirty minutes after the Secretary of State briefed the President on the plan, OWI was given approval to execute. Voice of America started broadcasting immediately. A massive interagency effort produced the theme, message, and delivery means in a few hours. Over 13,000 miles away and less than twenty hours after the proposal was first made in Washington, U.S. military planes dropped three million informational leaflets over Tokyo and seven other Japanese cities. The surrender became official two days later. Months later, Japanese officials confirmed that the leaflets had in fact forced them to accept the surrender on the Allied terms.[74]

Juxtaposing that feat with American efforts today against radicalized Islamic propaganda, one would expect to see an even more efficient operation measured perhaps in minutes rather than hours. After all, with digital communications and televisions prevalent throughout the world, the need for slow paper printing presses and leaflet cutters has long since passed. Ironically, the situation is far from better.

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[74] Edward W. Barrett, *Truth is our Weapon* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1953), 13-14.

In a remarkable show of self-destructive ineptitude, the U.S. government mishandled its response to tactical events like prisoner abuse at Abu Ghurayb or false reports of desecrations of the Koran at the Guantanamo prison. In May of 2005, the reports of a Koran being flushed down a toilet were proven to be false and Newsweek retracted its story with apologies, but not before at least 15 people were killed in anti-U.S. riots in several countries.[75]   Other than promise an investigation, the U.S. Government did nothing to immediately counteract the violently negative perceptions created by the false story. Its lassiez-faire attitude was summarized by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld when he told reporters "People are dead, and that's unfortunate. People need to be very careful about what they say just as people need to be careful about what they do."[76] It is interesting that the according to the FBI's National Security Threat List, the U.S. Government considers foreign power-sponsored activity "…which involves…false information or propagating deceptive information…" a grave threat and pursues it vigorously, but when American media entities do it, the U.S. Government simply accepts their apology.[77]

What the government was able to do in twenty hours sixty years ago does not seem possible to do in a year today. Not every tactical action requires an instant government response. However, timeliness is a key component of an effective Perception Management campaign. While significant bureaucratic parallels exist between Davis's struggles as head of OWI and today's Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, the sense of urgency

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[75] BBC News On-Line, "Koran Desecration Report 'Wrong,'" (16 May 2005) accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4549933.stm 4 February 2007.
[76] CNN.Com "Newsweek Retracts Quran Story" (16 May 2005), accessed at http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/05/16/newsweek.quran/ 4 February 2007.
[77] J. Michael Waller, "Losing a battle for hearts and minds: the same bureaucracy that is so deftly managing the military in the war on terrorism is severely mishandling information campaigns needed to

evident in the bureaucracy of America's World War II government seemed stronger than that of today.

A Post-War Rethinking of Perception Management

In September 1945, President Truman realigned the remnants of the OWI into the new Interim International Information Service (IIIS) and placed it under a low level of the State Department.[78] The IIIS languished for three years as an unloved, under-funded, and often ignored element of the State Department until it was infused with new life upon the passing of the Smith-Mundt Act into law in January of 1948.[79] Approved as Public Law 80-402, it became the impetus for increased emphasis on influence operations in Cold War Europe. The Act notably increased funding of the Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcasts. More importantly, it recognized the need to link a strong information campaign with the economic recovery plan for post-war Europe that would later become known as the Marshall Plan. The State Department at the time recognized and capitalized on the synergistic benefits of linking actions (diplomatic, economic, and military) to the informational messages that accompanied them. This mutually reinforcing construct of action and message contributed to the Marshall Plan's overall success.[80]

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discredit terrorists," *Insight on the News* (April 22, 2002) accessed at
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1571 12 February 2007.

[78] "Termination of O.W.I. and Disposition of Certain Functions of O.I.A.A.," *Department of State Bulletin* (September 23, 1945), 306.

[79] The act, officially called the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, was named for its two primary sponsors, Senator Alexander Smith (R-New Jersey) and Representative Karl Mundt (R-South Dakota).

[80] The Marshall Plan information program is described in: Harry Bayard Price, *The Marshall Plan and its Meaning* (Ithaca: Cornell university Press, 1953), 242-250.

More broadly and perhaps most importantly, the Smith-Mundt Act established ideological operations as a permanent part of U.S. policy.[81] In doing so, the law also specifically prevented the dissemination of any information intended for a foreign audience from being disseminated to a domestic audience. The language of the law illustrated the inherent concern by lawmakers about the power of government and its ability to manipulate its people. At the same time, it recognized the need to accompany action with information. Senator Smith echoed this concern and described his intentions for the legislation:

> This does not mean boastful propaganda, but simply means telling the truth…There must be a distinct set-up of the so-called informational service, on the one hand, which may conceivably have certain propaganda implications and may even become involved politically; and on the other hand, we must set apart by itself the so-called educational exchange service which, if it is to be truly effective, must be objective, non-political, and above all, have no possible propaganda implications.[82]

An unintended negative consequence of the Smith-Mundt Act, however, was that it essentially kept Americans in the dark about their government's public diplomacy efforts. The Act, which established the basis for America's effective Perception Management efforts overseas, expressly prohibited the domestic use of any of the products it produced. This ban insured that very few Americans knew about the Government's important mission.[83]

The immediate post-war years highlighted the U.S. Government's struggle with the management of the strategic message. In 1946, President Truman also created the

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[81] Wilson P. Dizard, Jr. *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2004), 46.

[82] Ibid., 246.

[83] Stephen Johnson, Helle Dale, and Patrick Cronin, "Strengthening Public Diplomacy Requires Organization, Coordination, and Strategy," *Heritage Foundation Research & Analysis* (August 5, 2005), accessed at http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity /bg1875.cfm 14 Feb 2007.

Office of Information and Cultural Affairs. It was an office within the State Department, and it reflected the administration's shift away from a wartime focus for its Perception Management efforts. The office's main effort was in the management of the over 60 American libraries it inherited from the now defunct OWI.[84] Truman's "Campaign of Truth," he said, was "as important as armed strength or economic aid" in the ideological struggle against communism.[85]

With the onset of the Korean War, the Pentagon and the State Department fought for control of an expanded information service.[86] In 1951 Truman created a compromise organization called the interdepartmental strategy committee, and followed it later in the year with a higher level group called the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB). The PSB was made up of the Undersecretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Director of Central Intelligence. The original strategy committee was not disbanded – it was merely renamed the Psychological Operations Coordinating Committee.[87] The two committees had little impact, Sorensen argued:

> Both were long on ideas but short on power to carry them out. Though members of PSB were high ranking, they were not the heads of their departments, and the departments resisted what they considered encroachments on their preserves. Philosophical abstractions and recommendations on operational tactics were handed down; both were largely ignored.[88]

Just as it is today, a strong central authority was lacking. Without such a directing authority, no other outcome could be reasonably expected.

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[84] Héctor J. Maymí-Sugrañes, "The American Library Association in Latin America: American Librarianship as a "Modern" Model during the Good Neighbor Policy Era," *Libraries & Culture*, no. 37.4 (2002): 318.

[85] Harry S. Truman, "Fight False Propaganda With Truth," Address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C., April 20, 1950. *Vital Speeches of the Day* (May 1, 1950) no. 16: 442-444.

[86] Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 28.

[87] Ibid., 28

[88] Ibid., 28

The executive branch, however, did not have a monopoly on the creation of

agencies and offices to conduct Perception Management. Congress created the U.S.

International Information Administration (USIIA) as a direct response to the North

Korean invasion of South Korea. It was a semi-autonomous unit within the State

Department. Its overseas arm was the United States Information Service (USIS), which

was responsible for the continued broadcasting of Voice of America after the dissolution

of Robert Sherwood's FIS and then the IIS.

While personalities and politics in Washington continued to hamper a unified

Perception Management effort, USIS and other information officers in the field continued

to develop imaginative and effective Perception Management operations that actually

produced positive effects. As Sorensen recalls:

> One of the most imaginative – and most successful [projects] - flowered in the
> Middle East. Annually, many thousands of Muslims travel long distances to
> make the required pilgrimage, or Haj (sic) to Mecca. In the hot summer of 1952,
> several thousand pilgrims were stranded in Beirut when airlines oversold their
> space. At the suggestion of the American Legation and USIS in Beirut, U.S. Air
> Force transports carried 3,318 Hajjis to Saudi Arabia. Although the United States
> was not in good favor in the area because of its support for Israel, Muslims of
> every nationality praised the gesture. Local newspapers published thousands of
> USIS-supplied pictures and words of the airlift, and pamphlets, radio programs,
> and posters were produced to keep the story alive for months.[89]

Despite the politics of Washington, concrete examples of successful Perception

Management operations like this continued to underscore the importance of interagency

coordination at all levels, from the strategic to the tactical.

President Eisenhower was convinced of the utility of a concerted Perception

Management effort by the US government. He spoke often of the importance of a

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[89] Ibid., 29.

peacetime information program, and in 1950 called for a "Marshall Plan of ideas."[90] In

1953, career diplomat and former Ambassador Robert P. Skinner criticized the Voice of

America and the USIS as wastes of money and urged the President to abandon the

programs in favor of more formal diplomatic engagement with countries of interest. The

following letter responding to Skinner's suggestions illustrate Eisenhower's belief in the

power of the government's Perception Management programs:

> You mention that influential contact with the various governments is maintained solely by our diplomatic and consular representatives abroad. That is, of course, quite true. However, those European governments are in the final analysis only the spokesmen for their people--and if the people do not approve their official attitude toward the United States, they will soon make their displeasure felt. It is my feeling that a *good* Information Program would have a tremendous opportunity to do vitally essential work in moulding [sic] a favorable public opinion.
>
> My second point is really a continuation of this thought--and that is, that these efforts are not "ill-considered propaganda," but are in fact *informational* in the most normal and useful sense of the word. The only opportunity some people have to "behold the United States and judge for themselves" is by what they might read and hear through our own informational efforts.[91]

In his letter, Eisenhower recognized a government responsibility to exercise the

informational element of power beyond its current efforts at the time. He identified the

need to move beyond the traditional system of international relations where information

flowed only between diplomatic representatives of recognized governments. The

President wisely advocated that his government push truthful information about America

and let its merits be judged - unfiltered by their own governments - by the people of the

world.

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[90] Ibid., 31.

[91] Dwight D. Eisenhower to Robert P. Skinner, 27 March 1953, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, ed. L. Galambos and D. van Ee, doc. 112. World Wide Web facsimile by The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission of the print edition (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), accessed at http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/first-term/documents/112.cfm, 10 November 2006.

The Cold War and the Height of Perception Management

As tensions between the United States and the USSR grew, a new global paradigm began to take shape. The conflict between the two superpowers was increasingly framed as an ideological battle or a "war of ideas." In this environment, the informational element of National power took on an increasingly important role. It was in this new paradigm that the Government's most significant Perception Management entity, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was born.

The USIIA was disbanded in 1953 with the creation of USIA. The USIA was arguably one of the longest-lasting and most successful agencies for the propagation of the "American message." Except for a five-year period between 1978 and 1982 when the Carter administration reformed it under the name International Communications Agency (ICA), the USIA remained the primary source of strategic message management to foreign audiences until 1999. The USIA's goals were threefold. The first goal was to increase understanding and acceptance of US policies and US society by foreign audiences. Second, it aimed to broaden dialogue between Americans and US institutions and their counterparts overseas. Third, it strove to increase US Government knowledge and understanding of foreign attitudes and their implications for US foreign policy.[92]

The USIA was effective because its programs focused on a human approach to Perception Management. Fulbright scholars, citizen exchanges, and international visits complemented a robust foreign library and literature resource program. The USIA

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[92] Information gathered from the archive of the former USIA web site as it stood in September 1999. The site is now maintained as part of the Electronic Research Collection of historic State Department materials by the federal depository library at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Accessed at http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/, 19 November 2006.

propagated the American message through ordinary citizens as well as diplomats, and its Information Bureau was complemented by a larger Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau.[93]

The USIA was also successful because it had clear two-way channels of communication that provided a constant feedback loop between USIA senior management in Washington and agency operatives in the field. These channels enabled the development and communication of strategic guidance, the focusing of resources, and the reporting of program results, among other advantages.[94] These successes eroded with the integration of the USIA into the State Department in 1999. A confusing new bureaucracy caused the previously effective links between the policy making and policy enacting bodies of the agency to lose their clarity.[95]

Another key element of the USIA's success was the strength of its leadership. Directors of the USIA included men like Edward R. Murrow and Leonard Marks, who were close confidants of the president.[96] Their proximity to the president and the trust he placed in them enabled them to lead and coordinate the government's Perception Management campaigns with great authority.[97]

While Perception Management successes did occur during the Cold War, the personality and bureaucratic frictions hampered strategic leadership and coordination on

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World. *"Changing Minds Winning Peace - A New Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World."* Edward P. Djerejian, Chairman (1 October 2003), 62. accessed at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf, 8 January 2007.

[95] Ibid., 62.

[96] For an excellent discussion on the personal relationship and mutual respect between Edward R. Murrow and President Kennedy, see Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 129.

the Perception Management campaign in Washington. This had ancillary effects on the

strategic and operational level of war as well. During the Korean War, the VOA (then

operated by the State Department) and the Voice of the U.N. Command (operated by the

U.S. Army) showed remarkable inconsistency in their handling of important news.[98] For

example, their two broadcasts were 10 days apart in the announcement that the

Communist Chinese had entered the war. This was due in part to the fact that the two

information organizations had no means of interagency coordination except through a

single liaison between the Army and the State Department back in Washington.

Moreover, neither had means of communication at all with the non-U.S. Broadcasting

Company of Japan, which was also broadcasting conflicting information.[99] In analyzing

this particular case study, researcher William Young concluded that "Inadequate policy

guidance and the lack of operational coordination reduced effectiveness of a propaganda

effort."[100]

   The Cold War Perception Management campaign shared yet another challenge

with the campaign in today's conflict: significant disconnects between the Government's

strategic vision and the operational application of that vision in the field. Much can be

learned from the American experience in the "Long War of ideas" against Communism.

In many ways the struggle was similar to today and many of the tough lessons were

already learned at least once. Former Assistant Secretary of State Edward Barrett shares

a poignant lesson from the height of the Cold War. He relays the remarks of a tired

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[97] Understanding the importance of personalities and the "power of position" in government, the Djerejian Report on Public Diplomacy draws parallels to this relationship between Murrow, Marks, and the President in its recommendations to create a Special Counselor to the President for Public Diplomacy.
[98] Ibid., 174.
[99] William R. Young, "Announcing the Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," in Daugherty and Janowitz (eds.), *A Psychological Warfare Casebook* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), 309-314.

Public Affairs officer called back to Washington from his post in the field to comment on

the American propaganda efforts:

> Just two things. First, tell the big shots of both parties in Washington to quit just
> slapping down Soviet proposals. Sure, we Americans know the proposals are
> phonies, but a lot of leaders out in the Far East don't. The way we've been acting,
> we make the Commies seem like reasonable people and ourselves unreasonable.
>
> Second, you Washington people, from Truman on down, ought to quit prattling so
> much about 'liberty' – at least so far as my area is concerned. What does it mean
> to the mass of people out my way? Not a blooming thing. They are hungry.
> While we talk about liberty and freedom, some Commie agitator comes along and
> says; 'Under Communism you'll have plenty to eat. You'll own the land you now
> farm for somebody else.' The poor little native brightens up and says: 'Oh, so
> that's Communism. Well, I'm a Communist.' It's just as simple as that.[101]

The young officer recognized that what matter are the paradigms and perceptions

of the *audience*, not those of the message sender. This is a lesson being re-learned by

U.S. soldiers and State Department field officers today. While Democracy is a noble and

just concept consistent with the values and structures of the United States and most of its

allies, it is difficult for an understaffed and poorly funded force of action officers to

explain and implement the intricacies of its functions at the tactical level.

While the USIA was perhaps the strongest public diplomacy actor, it was not the

only actor during the latter part of the Cold War. The 1980s ushered in the era of groups

and committees for the management of public diplomacy. This decade, in some ways,

marked a return to the Roosevelt era offices and committees. A key difference was that

the Reagan administration was the first since the Truman administration to take direct

White House control of the Public Diplomacy apparatus.

As illustrated by his Brandenburg Gate speech, President Reagan understood the

comprehensive nature of the information challenge. The Reagan administration

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[100] Ibid., 309.

recognized the necessity for a balanced approach across all the elements of National power. In fact, it was Reagan who first articulated the elements of national power as Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (spurring the use of the acronym ("D.I.M.E.") in his 1982 National Security Strategy document.[102]

Five years prior, President Reagan's 1983 National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 77, entitled "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security," placed responsibility for "overall planning, direction, coordination and monitoring of implementation of public diplomacy activities" under the National Security Council.[103] For this directive and particularly for its effective use of television as a medium to reach multiple audiences, the 2004 Defense Science Board report on Strategic Communication (discussed in detail in Chapter Four) credited the Reagan administration with staking out a central role for Perception Management as a key component of national power during the Cold War.

The USIA under the Reagan administration was revitalized as well. The agency's new director, Charles Wick, was a close personal friend of the President and had access to the president like no other director since Edward R. Murrow twenty years earlier.[104] This relationship bore fruit for the USIA in the form of the agency's budget. When Wick resigned in 1989 the agency's annual budget was $882 million, almost double what it was in 1981 when he took over.[105]

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[101] Edward W. Barrett, *Truth is our Weapon* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1953), 139.
[102] Ronald W. Reagan, "National Security Strategy of the United States." *National Security Decision Directive 32,* Washington, D.C., The White house (May 20, 1982), 1.
[103] Ronald W. Reagan, "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security." *National Security Decision Directive 77*. Washington, D.C.: The White House (January 14, 1983), 1.
[104] Wilson P. Dizard, Inventing Public Diplomacy, The Story of the U.S. Information Agency, (Boulder, CO, 2004), 200.

The End of the Cold War – Where To From Here?

The end of the Cold War and the ensuing "peace dividend" brought about an inward-looking focus and lack of American public interest in international affairs. Reductions in both budgets and bureaucratic attention severely reduced the U.S. Government's capacity to both engage the American public and manage foreign perceptions of US foreign policy. The dissolution of the USIA serves as the key example of this sea-change in the government's approach to Perception Management.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the perceived peace that followed, coupled with the fiscal pressures of the 1990s, caused Congress to question the enduring value of an independent USIA. Much to the chagrin of many in the US Diplomatic and Foreign Service, the USIA was disbanded in 1999 and folded into the State Department's Bureau of Public Affairs. The importance of a personal connection with the President became evident when the USIA was placed under the State Department – the critical connection to the president was lost, and strong leadership at the USIA was lost as a result.[106] This not only reinforces the maxim that personalities matter, but also adds the corollary that personalities *and their relative position in the bureaucracy* matter.

The dissolution of the USIA was brought about by the 1998 Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act. Through this Act, Congress attempted to streamline the U.S. Foreign policy apparatus and integrate the policy-making with the policy-enacting arms of U.S. public diplomacy. It was also seen by many as an easy way to cut costs in

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[105] Ibid., 200.

[106] Stephen Johnson, Helle Dale, and Patrick Cronin, "Strengthening Public Diplomacy Requires Organization, Coordination, and Strategy," *Heritage Foundation Research & Analysis* (August 5, 2005), 3, accessed at http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity /bg1875.cfm, 14 February 2007.

what was an increasingly constrained fiscal environment. The independent USIA was

dissolved and its functional elements were dispersed throughout the State Department.

Unfortunately, the efficiencies Congress sought to gain were lost as the

established elements of the State Department bureaucracy scattered and swallowed both

the billets and the budget of the former USIA. Ironically, the very efficiencies Congress

sought to achieve were more evident in the USIA than in any other existing entity. The

agency's strength lay in its ability to leverage the capabilities of the interagency

community. Not only did it have the ability to develop broad and effective PM/IO

strategies and plans, it also leveraged its role as NSC Chair of the International

Information Committee and Vice Chair of the Political Committee. As chair and vice

chair of two NSC committees, the USIA was able to not just coordinate between

disparate agencies, but also to set the overall direction for mutually supporting National

Perception Management campaigns.[107] Additionally, because the USIA had both policy

makers in Washington and operatives in the field around the world, it had the benefit of a

relatively efficient action-reaction cycle. As a result, it achieved a level of effectiveness

shared only by the Office of War Information and the Office of the Coordinator of

Information before it.

The disbanding of the USIA was seen by many as a strategic misstep. Critics of

the restructuring claim the State Department has not managed to coordinate a unified

Perception Management plan as effectively as the old USIA. The 2004 DSB Report on

Strategic Communication argued that "USIA's mission and critical mass gave it a level of

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[107] See Clarence Meade's USAWC strategy research project "The War on Terrorism: U.S. Public
Diplomacy", Mar 2005 for a good analysis of the synergizing role of the USIA. He specifically cites
USIA's unique position to control the ends (firsthand knowledge of national objectives), ways (clear

strength in the execution of public diplomacy that so far has eluded the Department of State."[108]

Another creation of the 1998 Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act was the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). On October 1, 1999, the BBG became the independent federal agency responsible for all U.S. government and government sponsored, non-military, international broadcasting. It has a staff of approximately 3200 employees and a budget of approximately $637 million (FY 2005).[109] The stated mission of the BBG is to promote and sustain freedom and democracy by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information about the United States and the world to audiences overseas. Its status as an independent federal agency and its creation in the same legislation that ended the USIA begs comparison to the former USIA. Most importantly, unlike the former USIA, the BBG enjoys neither the position nor the influence to effectively consolidate and direct the disparate efforts of the myriad interagency components of Perception Management.

Recognizing that the Perception Management apparatus had weakened, the U.S. State Department created the Bureau of Public Affairs in 1999. Its mission statement focused on "carrying out the Secretary's mandate to help *Americans* understand the importance of foreign affairs."[110] However, its charter includes "Strategic and tactical planning to advance the Administration's priority *foreign policy* goals; conducting press briefings for domestic and *foreign* press corps," and it "works with State Department

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understanding of Perception Management employment concepts), and means (properly sized, trained, and resourced staff) in order to achieve national aims.

[108] Defense Science Board. *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, William B. Schneider, Jr., Chairman. 23 Sep 2004. Internet, available from www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/**report**s/2004-09-**Strategic_**Communication.pdf, 61.

[109] U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, *Annual Report* (2005), accessed at http://www.bbg.gov/reports/05anrprt.pdf, 5 March 2007.

public diplomacy offices to coordinate strategic planning for both domestic and *international* audiences [emphasis added]."[111] This duality of mission evokes memories of the struggle faced by George Creel in 1917. For U.S. Government planners, this charter creates an inherent tension between the need to influence foreign audiences and the requirement to protect U.S. citizens from the undue influence of propaganda directed at a foreign audience.

As if to answer this understood concern, the State Department also created the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) in 1999. It, too, was created from the remnants of the former USIA, and it was designed to specifically address foreign audiences.[112] While the Bureau of Public Affairs maintains the American citizenry as part of its target audience (in addition to foreign audiences), the IIP acts as "the principal international strategic communications entity for the foreign affairs community."[113] The IIP "Informs, engages, and influences international audiences about U.S. policy and society to advance America's interests."[114] Interestingly, the IIP is the only office below department or agency level that receives any mention in the interagency section of the DoD Joint Doctrine on Psychological Operations.[115]

President Clinton created an Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in October of 1999 to lead these two bureaus. However, as author Jamie Metzl,

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[110] Official US State Department website, accessed at http://www.state.gov/r/pa/, 10 November 2006.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Official US State Department website, accessed at http://www.state.gov/r/iip/, 1 February 2007.
[113] U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Handbook 10 FAM 300, *Bureau of International Information Programs*, accessed at http://foia.state.gov/masterdocs/10fam/10m0310.pdf, 10 November 2006.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Joint Publication 3-53, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* (5 September 2003), IV-16. The 125 page document devotes less than one page to the topic of "Coordination with other Government Agencies." In addition to describing the functions of the IIP, the doctrine states "PSYOP should be coordinated with other USG agencies, including, but not limited to, the Central Intelligence Agency;

writing for the Council on Foreign Relations, argued, "In the two years since [State Department] reorganization…no new vision has been put forward for American Diplomacy…no long term strategic plan has been adopted…no public diplomacy framework has been established for more systematically reaching out to NGOs and other non-state actors."[116] In fact, some, like Congressman Newt Gingrich, blame the State Department's failings in this area for the rising anti-American sentiment across the globe.[117] While Congress may have achieved its aims of cost savings with the 1999 redistribution of the government's public diplomacy efforts, the Perception Management machine of the US government began to grind ever slower.

"The Era of Peacekeeping" and PDD/NSC 56

U.S. military operations in Haiti, Kosovo, and Somalia stand out as representative of the Clinton administration's struggle with new era of peacekeeping and peace-making operations. While the military struggled to find its footing in this new environment of "complex contingencies" that spanned a spectrum of "operations other than war," the administration struggled with the concepts of interagency coordination. Numerous authors identified these new missions as plagued by excessive friction, particularly in the area of Perception Management.[118] Specifically, during the Kosovo and Haiti missions, the administration empowered no single government agency to manage the Perception

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Broadcasting Board of Governors; Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security, Transportation, Energy, and Justice; Drug Enforcement Administration; and the US Coast Guard."

[116] Jamie F. Metzl, "Can Public Diplomacy Rise From the Ashes," *Council on Foreign Relations* (July/August 2001), 2.

[117] Newt Gingrich, "Rogue State Department," *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2003).

[118] For a representative sample, see University of Leeds professor Phillip M. Taylor's comprehensive web site at http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/index.cfm?outfit=pmt.

Management campaign, and as a result the government expended little effort to sell U.S. policies and counteract bad press overseas.

In May of 1997 President Clinton signed PDD 56, a Presidential Decision Directive entitled "Managing Complex Contingency Operations." The directive called for, among other things, the development and rehearsal of a political-military (or "pol-mil") implementation plan. The intent of the plan was to drive the interagency community to coordinate the various efforts of the government prior to mission execution. The PDD specifically included *public information* as a mission area task to be coordinated.[119] Through this and other PDDs, the Clinton administration created a system of interagency working groups to tackle the problems of disunity among the various government agencies.

The Clinton administration followed PDD/NSC 56 with PDD 68 in April of 1999. The President issued this PDD specifically to address the Perception Management problems identified in the Haiti and Kosovo military missions. PDD 68 ordered the creation of an international Public Information (IPI) system to "influence foreign audiences" in support of US foreign policy and to counteract propaganda by enemies of the United States. The intent was "to enhance U.S. security, bolster America's economic prosperity and to promote democracy abroad."[120] The coordinator of this action was the IPI Core Group (IPIG), made up of top officials from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Commerce, and Treasury as well as the CIA and FBI. The IPIG was chaired by

[119] A.B. Technologies, *White paper on PDD/NSC 56*, accessed at http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm, 4 January 2007.
[120] Ben Barber, "Group Will Battle Propaganda Abroad; Intends to Gain Foreign Support for U.S.," *Washington Times* (July 28, 1999), accessed at Lexis Nexis© Academic [database on-line], 5 March 2007.

the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the State Department.

The Group's charter stated that:

> IPI control over "international military information" is intended to "influence the emotions, motives, objective reasoning and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals." The IPIG will encourage the United Nations and other international organizations to make "effective use of IPI . . . in support of multilateral peacekeeping." According to the IPIG Charter, IPI activities "are overt and address foreign audiences only" while domestic information should be "deconflicted" and "synchronized" to avoid contradictory messages.[121]

In February of 2001, in his first National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-1), newly elected President George W. Bush abolished the Clinton administration's system of interagency working groups and established a new structure of Policy Coordination Committees (PCCs). The effectiveness of the PCCs that deal with Perception Management strategy will be the focus of Chapter Four.

Despite the State Department's creation of the Bureau of Public Affairs and the IIP, a snapshot view of the U.S. government in early 2001 reveals an inward focus and a hesitancy to exert an "information influence" on the broader foreign audience. The government's foreign Perception Management arm, formerly represented by powerful personalities and robust (albeit disparate) organizations, had atrophied to the point of ineffectiveness. Budgets had been slashed and organizations disbanded in an environment of fiscal constraint and perceived international stability. An illustration of this inattention was the vacant position of Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs: nine months after the Bush administration had taken office, the position of head of the Nation's Perception Management strategy and functional

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[121] The quoted excerpts from the charter were first divulged in the Washington Times article cited above. Analysis of PDD 68 in this section derived from Federation of American Scientists web site, accessed at http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-68.htm, 5 March 2007.

apparatus had remained unfilled. In fact, the office was vacant or filled in an acting

capacity for two of the four years of President Bush's first term (2000-2004).[122]

The U.S. Government has clearly struggled with this role as "manager of

international perceptions" and "global influencer." This historical review serves to

illustrate that a coordinated Perception Management strategy was difficult to achieve and

heavily dependent on personalities at the highest levels of government. In addition to

personalities, the natural bureaucratic friction between government agencies limited

progress toward an effective Perception Management apparatus. The natural tension

between a free press and a government with an information agenda added to the

difficulty. All this, coupled with post-Cold War fiscal and political pressures, led to a

government that was not focused on international Perception Management in the years

leading up to 9/11. Despite a renewed sense of purpose after the terrorist attacks, these

same frictional elements rose to hinder government efforts to maximize the informational

element of national power against an agile and perception-aware enemy.

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[122] Defense Science Board. *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, William B. Schneider, Jr., Chairman. 23 Sep 2004. Internet, available from www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/**report**s/2004-09-**Strategic** Communication.pdf, 24.

Chapter 3: Perception Management Strategies since September 11, 2001

"It is not a matter of what is true that counts, but a matter of what is perceived to be true."

- Henry Kissinger

September 11 was a watershed event for U.S. Public Diplomacy and the subsequent rethinking of the role of PM/IO at all levels of government and across all areas of national power. Christopher Ross, a State Department specialist in Middle Eastern affairs, opined, "In the 10 years between the Cold War and September 11, we had forgotten about the outside world."[123] The harsh anti-American rhetoric and images that quickly began to overtake initial responses of international sympathy and support, he said, "showed us what people think of us, and we were shocked." Americans should not have been shocked, however, considering the U.S. retreat from Public Diplomacy and Perception Management over the previous decade. This chapter will review both strategic and operational attempts to refocus the informational element of National power in the post-September 11 era. A review of this era reinforces the three reasons for the Government's inability to leverage the informational element of power: politics and personalities, bureaucracy, and a historical/institutional aversion to the effective use of mass media.

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[123] Karen DeYoung, "Bush to Create Formal Office To Shape U.S. Image Abroad," *Washington Post* (30 July 2002), accessed at http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/pr.htm, 9 February 2006.

Strategic Direction

The initial reaction by the White House after the 9/11 attacks was to stand up the temporary Coalition Information Center (CIC). The CIC was very much reactionary, both in the way it was established and in the manner in which it operated. It was established to counter the disinformation put out by the Taliban and Al Qaeda regarding the war in Afghanistan.[124] By its very nature it was on the defensive, acting as the "rapid response team" to address the propaganda put out by the newly identified enemy.[125] It operated as a tactical entity rather than a long-term strategy-making body.

Also in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President Bush appointed Madison Avenue advertising powerhouse Charlotte Beers as the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Moving into the position which had been left vacant for the first nine months of the Bush administration, Ms. Beers approached the problem as an advertising campaign.[126] But, as Safford argued as early as 1953, "Psychological or political propaganda is not the same as advertising."[127] Ms. Beers expectedly drew criticism from those who argued that even an unsophisticated foreign audience would immediately recognize and reject such directed marketing. Reports claim she was

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[124] Kelly Wallace, "White House Office to Counter Anti-U.S. Sentiment," *CNN.com* (30 July 2002), accessed at http://archives.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/07/30/wh.image.office/index.html, 12 November 2006.

[125] Martha Brandt and Stryker McGuire, "Bush's New War Room," *Newsweek* (November 12, 2001), 29.

[126] See Alice Kendrick and Jamie Fullerton, Advertising as Public Diplomacy: Attitude Change Among International Audiences (Southeast Methodist University, Dallas, TX), accessed at http://www.smu.edu/smunews/adamerica/Advertising%20as%20Public%20Diplomacy.pdf, 28 November 2006. They provide a detailed analysis of the "Shared Values" advertising campaign aimed at Islamic population abroad using television commercials. The report cites Charlotte Beers describing her job to communicate American values as "the most elegant brand I've ever had to work with."

[127] Wallace P. Safford, *An Appraisal of Psychological Warfare as an Instrument of National Policy*, (Washington, D.C., 1953), 42.

"shunned by her department," and her tenure lasted only 17 months.[128] The office once again went unfilled by a primary Undersecretary after her abrupt departure in March of 2003.

On 24 July 2002, while the CIC was still reacting to a relatively effective terrorist propaganda machine, the White House created the Combating Terrorism Information Strategy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC). This was followed less than two months later by the creation of the Strategic Communication PCC. These were both NSC-level committees charged with creating a national strategic communications strategy. NSC PCCs, established for the first time by the Bush administration, are responsible for the management of national security policies and are the main day-to-day forums for interagency coordination of national policy. Unfortunately, they wield no authoritative power to direct any one or combination of agencies to act. The Strategic Communications PCC drafted a national communication strategy but never issued it before the organization was dissolved six months later in March 2003.

Still without a national communications strategy 15 months after the 9/11 attacks, the White House office created the Office of Global Communications (OGC) in January of 2003. Created by executive order, the OGC formalized the ad hoc CIC. [129] The order is clear in its mandate:

> The office shall coordinate the formulation among appropriate agencies of messages that reflect the strategic communications framework and priorities of the United States, and shall facilitate the development of a strategy among the appropriate agencies to effectively communicate such messages.[130]

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[128] Stephen Johnson, Helle Dale, and Patrick Cronin, "Strengthening Public Diplomacy Requires Organization, Coordination, and Strategy," *Heritage Foundation Research & Analysis* (August 5, 2005), 3. Internet resource, accessed 14 Feb 2007. http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity /bg1875.cfm
[129] U.S. President. Executive Order. "Establishing the Office of Global Communications." Executive order 13283, Federal Register 68, no. 16 (24 January 2003), 3371-3372.
[130] Ibid., 3371.

Almost four years after it was given this mandate, the OGC has yet to produce a national communications strategy. With previously described historical case studies in mind, it becomes clear that a long-term National Perception Management strategy is critical for the coordination of interagency efforts. Without it, the myriad efforts of multiple government entities work inefficiently at best. At worst, countervailing efforts can lead to "Perception Management fratricide" or even real casualties in the nation's military conflicts.

The newest State Department Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes, continues to head the Department's strategic communication efforts. Her position as a department Undersecretary, however, has not made her effective in the interagency arena. In addition to a relatively small staff, she has no budgetary authority over public diplomacy officers in the department or embassies.[131] Without budgetary authority, her position as undersecretary was crippled from the start. In recognition of the continued gap in interagency coordination, President Bush replaced the Strategic Communication PCC with the newly-created Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication PCC in April 2006 and made Karen Hughes its chairperson.[132] Like the OGC before it (which Hughes is largely credited with creating), this PCC has not yet produced a national communications strategy.

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[131] Stephen Johnson, Helle Dale, and Patrick Cronin, "Strengthening Public Diplomacy Requires Organization, Coordination, and Strategy," *Heritage Foundation Research & Analysis* (August 5, 2005), 3, accessed at http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity /bg1875.cfm, 14 Feb 2007.

[132] The National Security Advisor's memo creating this PCC also names the deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach, Michelle Davis, as Executive Secretary. Stephen Hadley, National Security Advisor, *White House Memorandum establishing the Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication PCC.* Washington, D.C.: White House (8 April 2006), 2.

Review of Operational-Level Perception Management Strategy in the "Long War"

The Department of Defense is by no means immune from the Perception Management struggles faced by the rest of the Government. In fact, the institutional friction between the media and the Government is nowhere more pronounced than in the Defense Department.

In the post-9/11 confusion and amidst a lack of strategic direction and interagency coordination, the Pentagon created the Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) on October 30, 2001. The OSI was doomed to early failure after unsubstantiated accusations were made that it would plant false stories in the foreign press. The OSI was brought down in a barrage of criticism from within by U.S. Government critics and from without by the American media. The "OSI debacle" serves as an example of the power of perceptions. Perceptions, rather than reality, were enough to doom an organization to failure before it even started. The OSI serves as an example of a wartime organization that died from wounds not inflicted by an external enemy, but rather by governmental and non-governmental forces within the United States.

Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith built the OSI to serve as the coordinator of a "strategic information campaign in support of the war on terrorism." The Office "was to develop a full spectrum influence strategy that would result in greater foreign support of U.S. goals and repudiation of terrorists and their methods."[133] It was ostensibly established to provide strategic oversight and coordination to the traditionally tactical application of military Information Operations, namely PSYOP (radio/TV

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[133] James Dao and Eric Schmidt, "Pentagon Readies Efforts to Sway Sentiment Abroad," *The New York Times* (February 19, 2001); Eric Schmidt and James Dao, "A 'Damaged' Information Office is Declared Closed by Rumsfeld," *The New York Times* (February 27, 2002).

broadcast and print operations). However, the OSI came under almost immediate attack by the press as well as public affairs officials in various government departments. Public affairs branches of other government agencies and departments (and even within the DoD PA community) were concerned that, at best, a lack of coordination between them and the OSI could lead to confusing and contradictory messages which would damage the overall government Perception Management effort. At worst, they feared a loss of government PA credibility and negative press coverage based on perceived OSI disinformation efforts.[134]

The immediate and universally negative reaction to the creation of the OSI by the domestic press, however, brought about its disillusion only a week after news of its creation was widely reported. Unfounded accusations were the chum in the water. It was not long before the sharks began to circle, and in four weeks the office was dead. Secretary Rumsfeld announced on February 26, 2002 that the "office has clearly been so damaged that it is pretty clear to me that it could not function effectively."[135] Perceptions became reality, and with no one managing perceptions from within the Pentagon, failure was inevitable. All this happened with no enemy involvement, making this another instance of American Perception Management fratricide.

The OSI debacle illustrates two of the three challenges that form the theme of this paper, that politics & personality and the adversarial government-media relationship hinder an effective Perception Management campaign. A tactical example from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM illustrates the third.

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[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

As a Battalion Commander responsible for sector security in Baghdad in 2005, US Army Lieutenant Colonel Robert Roth had built a relationship with a local leader with known ties to insurgent elements. This relationship was paying dividends for the American battalion in terms of information and enemy understanding (reinforcing the maxim "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer…"). Without his knowledge or prior coordination, forces of another U.S. Government agency snatched this local leader, whom they had listed as an insurgent worthy of capture, in a nighttime raid.

The local Iraqis in Lieutenant Colonel Roth's sector saw him as the face of the American military administration. They were shocked and angered by the nighttime arrest and asked him how the captured leader could be a friend of the Coalition one day and be arrested the next. Despite efforts to contact the U.S. Government agency that arrested the Iraqi leader, Lieutenant Colonel Roth was unable to get any answers. This operation shook up the neighborhood, sent mixed messages to the local population, damaged Lieutenant Colonel Roth's credibility, and eliminated any chance he had in succeeding in his endeavor to gain the trust of the local populace.[136]

This example of tactical Perception Management fratricide is similar the interagency challenges of the Korean War illustrated earlier. Interagency confusion is not unique to this or any war, but in this age of instant communication and more rapid information flow, the need for close coordination to manage perceptions has never been more important.

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[136] LTC Robert Roth, USA, Commander, 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Rgt, 4th Bde, 3rd Infantry Division. Interview with author, 6 March 2007.

At the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, the lack of a unified Perception Management campaign with commonly understood tasks, effects, objectives, and end states, can adversely affect the accomplishment of America's long-term goals.

These examples, from both the strategic and tactical levels of operation, underscore the importance of politics & personality. They also highlight the frictions caused by an adversarial government-media relationship. Finally, they illustrate that bureaucracy is not confined to the Washington, D.C. Beltway – soldiers must battle the Interagency Bureaucracy Leviathan on the streets of Iraq. Despite honest efforts by well-intentioned leaders and government employees, all of these factors continue hinder an effective Perception Management campaign.

Chapter 4: Critical Analysis of the Government's Current Perception Management Campaign – Strategic to Operational

With this compressed history as a backdrop, this chapter will review the Perception Management problem through the lens of three specific reports, originating from three separate areas of the US Government. The reports clearly identify both the difficulty in achieving a coordinated Perception Management strategy and the necessity for it. They have identified the problem of America's strategic direction in terms of both the overall "War of Ideology" and the Perception Management policies in that war.

These three reports, while distinct in their viewpoint and recommendations, all agree that a partial solution lies in a presidential-level direction to refocus the efforts of the interagency community with respect to the national Perception Management strategy. The chapter concludes with a reemphasis that in the arena of Perception Management, operational-level actions are inextricably linked to strategic direction, and operational-level actions can only work when they tightly coordinate with and reinforce the Perception Management campaign.

The reports reveal several consistent themes in their analysis. The first is that the informational element of power receives significantly less attention than other traditional elements of power, and this is severely impacting America's standing in the global community. Second, a unified strategic direction is critical for the successful employment of the informational element of national power, and that direction must come from the White House. Third, current U.S. Government informational efforts are tactical and reactionary and are not producing results. Finally, a Perception Management campaign can only be effective when its tactical and operational application, spread across all

elements of National power, is nested in a series of mutually supporting plans that all tie back to a central, long-term Perception Management strategy.

The 2004 DSB Report on Strategic Communication

In September of 2004, the Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication published its report, which found that U.S. strategic communication "lacks sustained presidential direction, effective interagency coordination, optimal private sector partnerships, and adequate resources."[137] Among its recommendations, the DSB Task Force urged the President to establish a permanent strategic communication structure within the NSC, headed by a Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communication. It also recommended he work with Congress to create legislation and funding for a Strategic Communication Committee within the NSC and an independent, non-profit, non-partisan Center for Strategic Communication.[138] Of these recommendations, only that to create an NSC Strategic Communications Committee has been implemented. This paper has shown, however, that a committee of equals without an authoritative director is a recipe for inaction. The previous analysis of the Strategic Communication Committee reveals that it has yet to deliver the product it was created to produce.

The DSB report argues that "A unifying vision of strategic communication starts with Presidential direction. Only White House leadership, with support from Cabinet

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[137] Defense Science Board. *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, William B. Schneider, Jr., Chairman (23 September 2004), 23; accessed at www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/**report**s/2004-09-**Strategic_**Communication.pdf, 10 October 2006.
[138] Ibid., 6.

secretaries and Congress, can bring about the sweeping reforms that are required."[139] It

shares this finding, that an orchestrated interagency Perception Management campaign

must be led by strong White House direction, with the other two reports cited below.

The DSB Task Force also recognized that the current interagency environment is

large, insular, and heavily dependent on the strength of key personalities. The report

targeted the ineffectiveness of the government structures created in the wake of 9/11, as

described in Chapter Three, when it stated:

> Unlike previous coordinating mechanisms with nominal authority, this Strategic
> Communications Committee should have the authority to assign responsibilities
> and plan the work of departments and agencies in the areas of public diplomacy,
> public affairs, and military information operations; concur in strategic
> communication personnel choices; shape strategic communication budget
> priorities; and provide program and project direction to a new Center for Strategic
> Communication.[140]

Giving an individual or committee the power to direct other government elements

is a necessary step, but it cannot guarantee success. In its references to the success of the

former USIA in its advisory role to the President and NSC, for example, the DSB

conceded that its effectiveness was linked to its proximity to key decision makers. Its

report recognized that "the degree of participation depended almost always on personal

relations between a President and a [USIA] Director."[141] This recommendation harkens

back to the importance of George Creel, Edward R. Murrow, and Charles Wick and their

access to power in the government.

The report also makes a point of emphasizing the importance of long-term

planning, stating that even if all its recommendations are implemented, "we are dealing

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[139] Ibid., 3.
[140] Ibid., 6.
[141] The DSB shares this finding with the Djerejian report. See footnote 24.

with at least a decade to have a significant impact."[142] In a complementary train of thought, the report argues that the highest levels of Perception Management operations in the U.S. Government (i.e. the NSC, the Office of Global Communication and the Undersecretary of State for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy) must get away from tactical actions and focus on long-term strategy.

With respect to the Office of Global Communications (discussed in Chapter Three), the DSB report asserts that despite its charter to develop and coordinate a strategic direction for Perception Management, "the OGC evolved into a second tier organization devoted principally to tactical public affairs coordination. The OGC does not engage in strategic direction, coordination, or evaluation."[143]

This problem is not unique to the OGC. As illustrated by examples in this paper, the speed and complexity of the current informational terrain combined with institutional and individual friction at the highest levels had left the U.S. Government in a reactive, vice proactive stance.

The 2003 Djerejian Report

Representing a comparably diplomacy-centric view, the 2003 Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World - known as the Djerejian report – made a series of recommendations to overhaul what it called an inadequate public diplomacy apparatus. The report made nine major recommendations, supporting a three-part theme of dramatically increased strategic (specifically presidential) focus, increased funding for information programs designed to reach foreign

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[142] Ibid., 5.
[143] Ibid., 25.

(specifically Muslim) audiences, and an increased interagency coordination to support the new strategic direction for U.S. public diplomacy.

Most importantly, the Djerejian report focused on responsibility at the executive level, and it identified the President, specifically through the NSC, as the central coordinator of all Perception Management efforts. Public Diplomacy, the report argues, "Requires a new strategic direction – informed by a seriousness and commitment that matches the gravity of our approach to national defense and traditional state-to-state diplomacy."[144] The report recognized the changing world environment outlined in Chapter One of this paper: the informational element of power is more important than ever before in this globalized and interdependent world. Recognizing that the effort will only succeed if driven from the top, the report recommends the creation of a cabinet-level Counselor to the President.[145] Stating that the current structure is "strictly tactical [and] inadequate to meet the demands of public diplomacy today," the report recommends "a new strategic architecture, headed by an eminently qualified person who has the President's ear."[146]

The Djerejian report also addressed the interagency struggle, and it specifically outlined the challenges of interagency balance in the current overseas effort. "While the State Department is generally considered the lead agency in public diplomacy," the report

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[144] Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World. *"Changing Minds Winning Peace - A New Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World."* Edward P. Djerejian, Chairman (1 October 2003), 8; accessed at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf, 10 November 2006.

[145] The report also recognized that this counselor would be supported by experts in Global Communications and by a reinvigorated Policy Coordinating Committee (Ibid, 14).Currently the closest thing the President has to this function is the Undersecretary of State of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, and she does not have Cabinet-level status.

[146] Ibid., 59.

states, "the Defense Department dominates public diplomacy in Iraq – the most immediate battleground in the struggle for ideas."[147]

In its recognition that the Defense Department has a clear role in public diplomacy due to its obvious and pervasive influence of the populations it directly influences, the commission stated that the Defense Department "Must be more closely tied to the reinforced strategic direction and coordination that we propose."[148] The report reveals an acceptance of the reality that under the current paradigm of the "Long War," the Defense Department is currently the dominant actor in US global engagement. The authors of the report were justifiably concerned that unilateral planning and action by one dominant element of national power prevents the effective synergies that can arise from coordinated interagency operations.

The 2005 GAO Report on Public Diplomacy

The third analysis came from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2005.[149] The GAO report found further evidence of a lack of effective interagency coordination, succinctly summarized in its title: "U.S. Public Diplomacy - Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communication Strategy." It stated that since September 11th, 2001, the creation of additional coordinators and committees at the highest levels of US government did little to coordinate interagency efforts.

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[147] Ibid., 68.

[148] Ibid., 69.

[149] U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies. A report to the Chairman. Prepared by U.S. Government Accountability Office. *U.S. Public Diplomacy - Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communications Strategy*, Report GAO-05-323 (April 2005).

The report identified that the President's executive order creating the Office of Global Communications in 2003 had not yet been implemented fully. It stated that because the Office of Global Communications had not developed a National communication strategy, "Agencies have developed their own roles and missions and coordinated their activities on an ad-hoc basis."[150]

The report echoed the Defense Science Board's 2004 finding that the Office of Global Communications has "evolved into a second-tier organization devoted principally to tactical public affairs coordination," and stated that the Defense Department reports were "an attempt by the department to fill the planning void left by the lack of strategic direction from the White House."[151]

Specifically, the GAO report recommended the full implementation of the role envisioned for the office, including the development of a national communications strategy to guide and coordinate the efforts of the State Department, Defense Department, and other agencies. In its report, the GAO concluded that:

> [The] State [Department] lacks a comprehensive and commonly understood public diplomacy strategy to guide the implementation of…programs…. Furthermore, there is no interagency public diplomacy strategy to guide State's and all federal agencies' consistent messages to overseas audiences and thus achieve mutually reinforcing benefits.[152]

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[150] Ibid., 23.
[151] Ibid., 12.
[152] Ibid., 13.

Consistency of message is paramount in Perception Management, the report

surmised, and without a single national communications strategy, the disparate efforts by

individual agencies and departments could result in Perception Management fratricide.[153]

The report by no means singled out the White House or State Department for

criticism – the Defense Department received equally poor marks. The report directly

addressed the issue described in Chapter One of this paper; that is, that the military

application of informational power has remained at the operational and tactical levels,

predominantly as relatively narrowly defined psychological operations. The report notes

that,

> Historically, DOD has been reluctant to define any of its activities in public
> diplomacy terms, though the department has begun to develop a "defense support
> for public diplomacy" strategy, which acknowledges that the department has a
> role to play in this arena.[154]

When placed along side the two other reports, the GAO report completes the

picture of the current problem: there is still no single individual or office with the power

to control the direction of the National Perception Management campaign.

All three reports offer either an outline of a Perception Management process or

specific elements of a public relations strategy. They offer recommendations that mirror

very closely the process undertaken by any reputable public relations firm or well-run

political campaign. Why, as the Djerejian report asks, can the White House put together

a well-orchestrated campaign to research, enact, and "sell" a domestic program with a

good Perception Management campaign but fail so miserably in a larger international

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[153] These ideas are conveyed by the GAO report, but the terms "consistency of message" and "Perception Management fratricide" are the author's.
[154] *U.S. Public Diplomacy - Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communications Strategy*, US GAO Report GAO-05-323 (April 2005), 12.

Perception Management campaign to dissuade negative public opinions that can lead to violence against the United States?

This question has no easy answer. There are obvious differences from a short-term political campaign. The first is an issue of scope. A Perception Management campaign on a global scale necessarily involves the synchronization of all elements of national power, not to mention coordination among disparate and far-flung elements of government from the strategic to the tactical levels. The second is an issue of time; namely the long-term nature of a national Perception Management campaign. A political campaign, for example, has a definite beginning and end. Even presidencies have a finite timeframe mandated by law. A national Perception Management campaign to change the will of an enemy combatant (at least) and world opinion to be more favorable to the United States (at most) is, on the other hand, a task that may take generations. Nevertheless, the difficulties posed by such a campaign are not a justifiable reason to not undertake the effort.

The three reports are strikingly similar, not only in their recommendations but also in the sense of urgency they convey in the need for solutions. All three reports call for increased presidential-level leadership to elevate the informational element of power to a level commensurate with the other elements of power and appropriate to the current strategic environment. All three call current government efforts tactical and reactionary. All three agree that a partial solution lies in a presidential-level direction to refocus the efforts of the interagency community with respect to the national Perception Management strategy. Two of the three recommend a cabinet-level counselor or advisor for Strategic Communication to the President.

While all three reports focus on the Strategic level of government, it is clear that the implications are far-reaching and affect operational and tactical actions in the "Long War." In the arena of Perception Management, operational-level actions are inextricably linked to strategic direction. Operational-level actions, whether they be military, economic, diplomatic, or informational, can only work when they tightly coordinate with and reinforce the National strategic Perception Management campaign.

Chapter 5: Recommendations & Conclusion

Recommendations

Andrew Garfield's observation bears repeating: "It is a paradox of our time that both the public and politicians are prepared to tolerate the use of bombs and bullets, but shy away from the use of information as a weapon of war."[155] History reveals that previous administrations have used Perception Management campaigns successfully in the past. These successes were, of course, relative and difficult to achieve. They happened despite the ever present and easily recognized frictions of politics & personalities, bureaucracy, and historical/institutional aversion to the effective use of mass media.

America's strategic direction in terms of both the "Long War" and its Perception Management policies in that war shows clear weaknesses. A historical review and analysis of the current environment have shown that American policies and the global perceptions associated with them cannot be separated. Because they are inextricably linked and because Perception Management is so important, the two must be managed together in a unified direction. This direction can only (and must) come from the White House.

The burden lies with the President himself. As chief diplomat of the United States and its military Commander in Chief, he must place a priority on the Perception Management campaign to support the prosecution of the "Long War." As head of the

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[155] Andrew Garfield, "The Offence of Strategic Influence: Making the Case for Perception Management Operations," *Journal of Information Warfare* 1, no. 3 (2002), 31.

executive branch with the authority to designate relationships of authority, he must give

the person he has entrusted with the implementation of the nation's Perception

Management campaign the power and authority to not only coordinate but also direct the

disparate elements of national power. Only then can the national Perception

Management campaign achieve the operational synergy required to be an effective part of

the National Security Strategy.

Personalities and their placement do matter. Today, we have no George Creel, no

Wild Bill Donovan, no Edward R. Murrow. To this end, the administration must

consider the collective recommendations of the reports cited and install a single "Director

of Information" to serve as a cabinet-level direct advisor to the President. The title does

not matter – the position and authority relative to the Government's Departmental

Secretaries does. This individual must have the authority to direct and coordinate the

disparate efforts of the government as they relate to the overall Perception Management

Campaign.

This is not a new idea. In 1953 former Assistant Secretary of State Edward

Barrett argued for a "Persuader in Chief" who would fit the criteria above and provide

authoritative direction to synergize the disparate efforts of the interagency community.[156]

Aside from politics and personalities, institutional bureaucracy is an unavoidable

point of friction in an organization the size of the U.S. government. Each department and

agency pays lip service to interagency coordination in their various strategy documents,

but unless they are held accountable by a single overarching director with budgetary and

policy authority, the Government's Perception Management efforts will remain disjointed

at best and self-defeating at worst. A great deal friction currently stems from individual

agency interpretation of priorities and approaches to Perception Management. While unified executive branch direction will not eliminate inherent interagency friction, a clarified Government Strategic Communication policy for the "Long War" and a unified vision for a National Perception Management campaign will set the conditions for operational success.

With respect to the government's relationship with the media, the Government must take a proactive, vice reactive, stance. The Government and its key institutions (namely the military) must get over its aversion to - and fear of - a media that often operates counter to its aims. It is very possible - and quite necessary - to better engage the media in a legal and truthful manner as a key component of the Government's Perception Management campaign.

It is all too easy to find examples of strained Government (and particularly military) - media relations. Senior leaders and young Public Affairs officers alike fall back on these examples as justification to not engage in a proactive manner. The media establishment will argue that they are not a tool to be "used" to further the government's aims, but that is exactly what must happen. The media are the primary means through which the Government exercises the informational element of power. The government must be willing to use the media to engage foreign audiences as readily as it is willing to deploy military forces to foreign lands. This is not to say that these actions should be done deceitfully or illegally. Truthfulness is the only way to achieve credibility, and credibility is essential for effective Perception Management.

The military principle of Offense has been an enduring principle of war for very good reason – one cannot win by simply defending. One must go on the offensive to

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[156] Edward W. Barrett, *Truth is our Weapon* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1953), 244-246.

win. In the war of ideas, as with conventional war, battles cannot be won by simply

reacting to enemy attacks. This is what the U.S. Government has done since 9/11, and it

is one reason American "soft power" has declined in recent years.

Conclusion

Violent Islamic extremists and those bent on combating U.S. interests with

terrorist tactics currently hold the Perception Management high ground. There are four

reasons, none of which lend themselves to easy or immediate solutions. First, the enemy

is small, agile, and unencumbered by the governmental bureaucracy of a large nation-

state. Second, it is not bound by the ethical and cultural mores that prevent the U.S. from

responding in kind. Third, the nature of modern commercial mass media gives a

disproportionate advantage to those who use acts of spectacular violence as a means to

get their message across. Finally, a recent historical legacy of mutual distrust exists

between the U.S. government (particularly the military) and the media. This has resulted

in a Government abrogation of sorts on the use of the press as a medium to combat the

negative effects of the campaign waged by violent Islamic extremists.

To an observer of current events, these problems may seem insurmountable. The

recommendations in this paper, too, may seem to some as simply another Government

restructuring to deal with the latest problem. A review of history, however, reveals that it

is possible to have moments of interagency coordination, clear strategic direction, and

nested, integrated, and effective Perception Management operations in support of a larger

unified Perception Management campaign. World War I, World War II, and the Cold

War all offer examples, however fleeting, of such successes.

The informational element of power may be the most elusive for the Government to wield, but its importance is proportional to its difficulty.   Perception Management is more critical now than at any time in America's history. The current administration and all who serve in the U.S. Government must strive to synergize their efforts so that America can once again regain the Perception Management high ground.

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