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USING THE INFORMATION INSTRUMENT TO LEVERAGE MILITARY FORCE:

A NEED FOR DELIBERATE INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

A GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

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Introduction

The United States Government is racing down the Information Highway but is in danger of missing a critical cloverleaf. The Department of Defense aggressively pursues technology and systems to leverage electronic information for intelligence, operations, logistics functions needed to accomplish the missions of deterrence and defense. The government's information arm, the United States Information Agency, is similarly in pursuit of strategy to apply Information Highway precepts to international communication in support of foreign policy. But we have missed the turn that would allow us to maximize, through advanced technology and improved coordination, the fourth instrument of national power - information itself. Our pursuit of national security, in this new age of great uncertainty, will and must benefit from a renewed emphasis on interagency coordination of information as we continue our ever accelerating advance down the Information Highway.

Futurists have outlined in excruciating detail how much we don't know about the future. Stephen P. Rosen in "U.S. Defense Requirements: After the Cold War, The Gulf War, and the Soviet Union"¹ presents articulate arguments that not only the nature of conflict but also the very essence of military organizations will change, including the intelligence level; technological skill and perhaps even the motivation of the individual soldier. Conflict,

¹Stephen Peter Rosen, "U.S. Defense Requirements: After the Cold War, and the Soviet Union," New Perspectives for a Changing World Order, ed. Eric H. Arnett (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1991) 149-163.

in the not too distant future, will require the U.S. Government to manage an indescribably complex net of information interaction.

Information is crucial to the formulation, planning and execution of foreign policy goals. This information complex includes tactical, operational, and strategic military information, information gleaned through national intelligence systems including communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, human intelligence and measurement intelligence; economic, financial and demographic data; public opinion and public communication data. There must be central nodes for analysis and synthesis of this information. In the future, nodes will be so highly developed and complex that acquisition, analysis, dissemination and management of all contributing information will take on a coequal importance to the fighting system itself.

Information can influence behavior. Victory lies in the skillful use of information to influence an opponent and cause behavior favorable to achievement of one's own goals. This skill will grow in importance as defense resources dwindle and force multipliers become more crucial. Currently strategists, not recognizing the profound contribution skillfully managed information can have, are not meeting this challenge. Communicating the right information to obtain the desired favorable behavioral response is key to our national survival.

Focus

No modern military strategist discounts the contribution that effective communication with allies, neutrals and the enemy populace and forces can make to victory. The U.S. military's principles of joint warfare state explicitly that the "informational effort is crucial to the success of any contemporary military operation, because it involves the support of the American people, allies, and friendly nations and the morale of the opposing side."² Despite this acknowledgement of the importance of information, however, the United States has entered its last several conflicts with an ad hoc approach to information in all categories: the strategic, the operational, the tactical, and in consolidation of military gains.

The U.S. government has specifically failed to establish effective mechanisms to insure that military and nonmilitary practitioners get maximum "bang" out of the resources devoted to informational efforts during war, conflicts short of war and peacetime. This failure is particularly noteworthy since at least the military has specified coordination as crucial. Joint Pub 3, for example, tasks Joint Force Commanders to "ensure that their joint operations are synchronized in time, space, and purpose with the actions of other military forces (multilateral operations) and nonmilitary organizations..., nongovernmental

U.S. Government, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 1: Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces (Washington, D.C., 11 November 1991) 39.

organizations..., international agencies..."³ The mechanisms for coordination, however, have in practice been developed after conflicts began -- sometimes during planning in Washington but more often only in the field.

This paper analyzes the institutional culture and practices of the two actors most often involved in the application of the informational instrument abroad, the U.S. Army's 4th Psychological Operations Group and the United States Information Agency. It surveys how these two agencies planned and coordinated their activities during two recent conflicts, the Gulf War and the UNITAF intervention in Somalia, pointing out problems that plagued those operations which could have been avoided. Finally, it proposes solutions to ensure better inter-agency planning before deployment and better coordinated exercise of the informational instrument during operations.

Lack of Coordination: A Failure of Planning

In our analysis of the Persian Gulf and Somalia we observed that the agencies involved most often worked out methods of coordinating disparate missions and methodologies during the conflict rather than resolving problems by deliberate, pre-conflict interagency planning. The fact that the information effort was nevertheless to some extent successful under these circumstances is a testimony to the professionalism of the

³U.S. Government, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-0: "Doctrine for Joint Operations (Washington, D.C. 9 September 1993), II-5.

officers on the ground. It is no credit to the planning "at higher levels" that satisfied formal joint planning requirements but failed to provide needed details or to answer any of the practical questions. This failure in planning resulted in a inefficient use of physical resources, unclear lines of authority, an increased chance of interagency tensions, and less than an optimal contribution to the overall mission.

The case studies laid out below suggest that there are three general reasons for this lack of planning for effective coordination. First, despite recognition of the need for coordination at the strategic level during peace and war of the informational instrument, the standing organs necessary for that coordination have received little attention since the Reagan Administration first called for a more effective use of the informational instrument.⁴ The recommendations which conclude this paper, therefore, address the lack of coordination on the strategic as well as the operational level.

Second, on the operational level, both the military and USIA experience problems integrating their own tactical plans with overall mission planning. PSYOP planners believe PSYOP often receives a low priority in JTF planning, while USIA is convinced that State's policy-makers pay little attention to the information aspect of crises during the planning stage. Both

⁴For a more thorough treatment of the history of various administrations' attempts to coordinate information policy on the strategic level see the unpublished National War College paper by Mary Ellen Connell, "Coordinating the Information Instrument of National Security Strategy," April 1992.

agencies note that information is seen as an "add on" function to the main effort. It is, therefore, accorded insufficient attention in the mission plan. Practitioners of the informational instrument almost unanimously echo the plea of President Kennedy's USIA director Edward R. Murrow who asked "to be in on the take-offs, not just the crash-landings." In addition, the case studies demonstrate an institutional bias in both agencies against including officers with practical field experience in the initial high-level planning or that the planners also be involved in the implementation of their plans.

Third, despite clear doctrinal recognition by both agencies that circumstances often require the U.S. to employ both political and military instruments simultaneously, thus requiring close coordination, both the military and nonmilitary act as though political and military activities can be separated. USIA, for example, is basically unwilling to be seen to be involved in a military operation. This institutional bias is partly due to a misreading of USIA's legal mandate. It is, however, more the legacy of lessons "learned" during the Vietnam War. This anti-military bias has been exacerbated by USIA's belief that the "two-way communication model" on which it bases its current practice differs from the U.S. Army PSYOP doctrine. This misconception has a negative impact on field operations as well as discouraging interagency planning.

For its part, U.S. military leadership displays an instinctive preference for "conventional" military PSYOP which

can be insulated from political considerations. Planning assumes inaccurately that military PSYOP (operational and tactical) will take place in an almost exclusively military context, i.e. on the battlefield. This assumption is, of course, counter to modern U.S. military doctrine and contradicts today's complex reality. The problem emerges during planning, when military leadership resists integrating a comprehensive PSYOP/public affairs/civil affairs plan. It is also evident on the ground when, during the friction of conflict, the military see "political" demands as a distraction from the "real" military mission.

U.S. military doctrine recognizes the complexities of the real world. For example, Joint Pub 3-53 notes in passing that states of war and peace can coexist:

Although the following discussion of PSYOP applicability to the three general states within the continuum (peace, conflict, and war) describes each in discrete terms, in actual circumstance there may not be a precise boundary where a particular state ends and another begins.⁵

In fact, the informational instrument is almost never bounded by space or time. Information supplied to an enemy, for example, almost inevitably is also available outside of the conflict zone to the home audience and to the allies and neutrals not involved in the conflict. All such activities, therefore, by their nature, affect U.S. informational activities outside of the area of conflict and influence U.S. domestic opinion. USIA has the

U.S. Government, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-53: "Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations" (Washington, D.C., 30 July 1993), V-1.

resources and missions to evaluate how our actions in the conflict are "playing" with allies, key neutral, or possible adversaries outside the conflict area and to provide these potential actors information that supports U.S. objectives. information. For this reason, Joint Pub 3-53's requirement that "military PSYOP with potential strategic impact must be coordinated with national efforts"⁶ in practice means that all PSYOP activities, with the possible exception of local loudspeaker broadcasts, must be coordinated.

Experience in the past several conflicts, as well as a look to the probable types of future conflicts, suggests that U.S. military operations will only occasionally be against an opposing nation-state belligerent. Peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, or counter-insurgency will often occur within the boundaries of a state with which the U.S. maintains diplomatic relations. The Bottom-up Review flags informational activities as critical in these operations:

There are some forces and capabilities that are particularly well suited for intervention operations -- for example, special operations forces, including psychological operations and civil affairs units.⁷

In these interventions, military operations -- including informational operations -- are likely to take place in countries in which a U.S. Embassy with a United States Information Agency

⁶Joint Pub 3-53, I, 1-2.

⁷U.S. Government, Office of the Secretary of Defense, The Bottom-up Review: Forces for a New Era" (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1993) II, 9.

USIS is fully functioning and within the context of a political bilateral relationship. In these cases the concern will not be only that information cannot be contained within the zone of conflict but that any military information effort must be part of the more general in-country information program. For both of these reasons -- the splashback of the informational weapon and the coexistence of military and political considerations within the area of operations -- interagency planning for the application of the informational instrument is crucial.

Pre-Vietnam History and Methodology

Both USIA and military psychological operations are successors to information organizations created as part of the United States' World War II and Korean War efforts. Since creation in 1953, USIA's mission statement has swung back and forth between an emphasis on "informing" foreign publics of U.S. national interests and societal values and attempting to "influence" those publics to adopt or at least respect those values. Not surprisingly, USIA cooperated most closely with the U.S. military when more activist administrations which looked to the agency to influence countries to reject Soviet or other communist propaganda were in office.

The United States military has employed psychological operations since the first crude handbills decrying British atrocities during the American revolution. The origins of our national attitude that such measures are unfair, unsportsman-

like or just plain "dirty tricks" probably stems from World War I and from the Nazi and Japanese use of propaganda to justify their heinous acts. Although the U.S. used simplistic psychological operations in virtually all its wars from the Revolutionary War through World War II, they were elemental, ad hoc and had only local, if any, effect. Still the stigma associated with psychological operations remains. Worse, it has carried over into the decision-making institutions of our armed forces as something to be discounted, shunned or, at best, added on.

Until World War II, psychological operations had as their primary focus support to the battlefield commander or what is today called tactical PSYOP. In World War II, this focus expanded to include actions supporting strategic objectives under the general supervision of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Still the primary focus of U.S. military psychological operations has been to support the battlefield commander by causing a behavioral change in the enemy which favors accomplishment of the U.S. mission. The efforts to effect desired enemy behavior have taken the form of appeals to surrender, appeals to avoid fighting, and announcements to demoralize or deceive the enemy. As the size of the target audience increased to entire corps or armies, the psychological operation took on a theater or operational nature. The next larger category is strategic. An example is the late World War II campaign which through radio broadcasts and leaflets addressed to the entire Japanese population encouraged the entire Japanese population to

surrender. The conclusion of World War II found the United States governing the occupants and territory of both liberated areas and vanquished foes. From the requirement to elicit cooperation in these populations came a fourth type of psychological operation called consolidation. These operations were woven into reconstruction, rehabilitation and reeducation programs with the aim of producing, over the long term, self-reliant allies against communism.

Under President Truman, the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs carried out foreign informational activities under the Department of State. The President called for a campaign to spread the "Truth" against communist propaganda as part of the containment effort. The State Department, however, suspicious of non-traditional diplomacy, restricted OIC to relaying the message that "America and its institutions were friendly and honorable." There was little effort to see how effective this approach was.⁸

Military psychological operations in the Korean War followed the same operational concepts as in World War II. In both wars the military apparatus for psychological operations, then called PSYWAR, was quickly dismantled after the end of the conflict. When the U.S. entered the Korean War, the Defense Department asked the information agency to work with U.S. forces. The result was less than inspiring. As one author comments:

⁸Robert E. Elder, The Information Machine (Syracuse:Syracuse University Press, 1968) 21.

There was little to boast about.... Part of the problem was the paucity of seasoned personnel in the agency.... Many were hired too hastily and trained too slowly, and confusion followed both in Washington and overseas. Additionally, America's professional soldiers, like its career diplomats, disdained the doings of psychological warriors, either in or out of uniform.'

The same problems and disdainful attitudes were to be repeated during the Vietnam War.

President Eisenhower's administration provided the first mission statement for the United States Information Agency. This mission statement was modest, reflecting President Eisenhower's distaste for propaganda and his lack of respect for psychological operations. Those agency employees who emerged from managing Nazi reeducation and reorientation programs in Germany were comfortable with a mission that emphasized long-term education and cultural familiarization as the way to spread U.S. values. Others in the agency, however, set out to push a simplistic, stridently anti-communist line.¹⁰ This effort reflected the belief, current in the U.S. at the time, that propaganda could function as a "projectile", bombarding targets until they capitulated and accepted the message sent. This belief was encouraged by exaggerated reports of the success of Nazi propaganda and of North Korean brainwashing, as well as the unsubstantiated claims for the efficacy of U.S. product

⁹Fitzhugh Green, *American Propaganda Abroad* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988) 26.

¹⁰Hans N. Tuch, Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas (New York: St. Martins' Press, 1990) 21-22.

advertising.

The Kennedy Administration, when it came into office, strongly encouraged USIA to adopt this second approach of actively fighting communism, but tried to make its information programs more sophisticated and focussed in application. "In January 1963, the Kennedy administration issued a new presidential statement for USIA that altered the agency's mission significantly. Whereas USIA had been tasked by the Eisenhower Administration with merely informing foreign audiences and explaining U.S. objectives, the new mission... was 'to help achieve United States foreign policy objectives by... influencing public attitudes in other nations.'"¹¹ USIA also began to work closely with the military under both Kennedy and Johnson, functioning as part of the overall counterinsurgency effort.

During the Dominican intervention in 1965, USIA's associate director headed up a task force in Santo Domingo of ten USIA officers and a contingent of the Army's 1st Psychological Warfare Group, specifically authorized by the President to work on the task force. Their operation was judged to have been extremely effective in calming Dominican fears and explaining the intervention to other Caribbean and Latin nations.¹²

The Vietnam Crucible

This Dominican Republic model of USIA counter-insurgency cooperation with the military was drawn upon in setting up the

¹¹Tuch, 26-27.

¹²Green, 148-9.

Vietnam information effort. President Johnson assigned "all responsibility for the American psychological activities in Vietnam to the director of USIA."¹³ A USIA Associate Director was made the chairman of the interagency psychological operations working group in 1965 which spawned the Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), headed by USIA officer Barry Zorthian and staffed by USIA, State, DOD, AID and CIA officers. Zorthian served as the U.S. media spokesman, managed a traditional USIA cultural and informational program, oversaw psychological warfare against enemy troops, and was responsible for managing the Vietnamese government's information program. In fact, the program was "Vietnamese" only by courtesy. It was planned and implemented at every level by American JUSPAO officers.¹⁴

The war in Vietnam saw the creation and employment of two US Army Psychological Operations Groups, (one in Vietnam and one on Okinawa), encompassing a force of over 3,000 soldiers, DA Civilians and local employees. The Psychological Operations (then called PSYOP) Group deployed in Vietnam received its operating guidance from JUSPAO via the Military Assistance Command - Vietnam (MACV) J-3. Psychological Operations in Vietnam covered a spectrum from tactical leaflets and loudspeaker operations to sophisticated defection campaigns and covert assassinations. Activities were undertaken by the US

¹³Green, 149.

¹⁴Tuch 30.

Army, the US Marine Corps with army support, the CIA and the government of South Vietnam.

By 1967, 12 to 14 percent of all USIA foreign service officers were serving in Vietnam and the agency's resources for missions in other parts of the world were severely stretched.¹⁵ As the U.S. effort faltered, after the Tet offensive, morale among JUSPAO suffered the same decline as that of other U.S. participants. The negative attitude of non-PSYOP military personnel in Vietnam to the entire informational effort exacerbated the disillusionment. At the same time, officers carrying out other missions resented the priority given to Vietnam.

For all its success the US information effort in Vietnam was like the combat effort... the enemy never beat us in any single engagement and it didn't matter, they won just the same. When the war ended and the several elements of JUSPAO were returned to their home agencies, no unified attempt was made to draw those lessons relevant to an interagency information effort which could be learned from the Vietnam JUSPAO episode.¹⁶ Instead, each U.S. Government agency carried out their own official and unofficial after-action post-mortems, in many cases pushing the blame for failure onto others.

USIA officers interviewed for this paper almost unanimously believed that USIA's involvement in Vietnam led to a worldwide

¹⁵Elder 20.

¹⁶Green 157.

loss of credibility, and thus of USIA's ability to encourage the spread of U.S. values or to advocate U.S. policies. They were specifically critical of USIA's collaboration with the CIA and USIA officers' use of "crude" military techniques -- loud-speaker activities and leaflet drops. Other officers pointed out that the rapid expansion of the program in Vietnam led to the abandonment of USIA's usual insistence that officers serving at a post abroad be conversant in the local language and customs, and ascribed the failure in Vietnam in part at least to this cause. In almost every case the implied verdict was that USIA had been seduced into engaging in information activities outside its normal sphere of competency and that USIA officers had been corrupted by the lower standards of credibility of those with whom USIA officers went to war.

The military at least officially was less parochial in its analysis of the failure. A former commander of the US Army 4th Psychological Operations Group in Vietnam, COL Taro Katagiri, summed up his observations on reasons for psychological operation's failure to maximize its potential as follows:

1. Decision makers and operators themselves considered psychological operations as separate and distinct; unrelated to other functions especially in non-military situations.
2. Interagency coordination was a major problem in Vietnam despite the JUSPAO. Interagency coordination was further complicated when host nation issues were involved. "Moreover, the Vietnam experience suggests that the systems for coordinating and unifying the PSYOP effort should be established at all levels, ranging from national to local."
3. All agencies failed to fully consider the entire PSYOP cycle, (the length of time required to go from a product

concept to a completed product). An error at one stage of the cycle sometimes negated the most careful planning at other stages.¹⁷

A final lesson from Vietnam, which we as a nation have not learned to its fullest extent, is that "information war" perhaps more so than any other type of war, must be fought internationally and that the capability to win must be just as carefully and objectively evaluated. The United States fought the information war in Vietnam, primarily IN Vietnam. While our successes were military ones in-country, many of our failures were political and informational ones in other countries and in our own. U.S. political and military leaders did not realize that world public opinion as well as U.S. public opinion would be more decisive in determining the outcome of Vietnam than any other factor.

Had USIA posts outside of Vietnam not been stretched so thin and had their independence in reporting to Washington foreign public opinion not been compromised, USIA could perhaps have provided strong early warnings of the negative impact military actions were having on key foreign audiences. With more attention to such warnings, U.S. policies might have been crafted to "sell" better. In the event, however, USIA was told to "make the bad opinions go away" -- an assignment "impossible". USIA had no chance of countering the stories in the foreign press coming out of Vietnam or being taken from U.S. media. U.S.

¹⁷U.S. Government, DA PAM 525-7-1, Psychological Operations in Vietnam, Case Studies, Vol 1 (GPO, Washington D.C. 1976) 142.

heedlessness even more than Soviet assistance allowed the North Vietnamese to defeat the U.S. in detail, in the information war, both domestically and in the world forum of public opinion.

The Information Instrument after Vietnam

In the aftermath of Vietnam, USIA was forbidden by legislation from serving as cover for CIA operatives. It also began an excruciating, internal and external process of evaluating its range of activities and the basic theory which underpinned them. It had the leisure for this reevaluation. The Nixon Administration under the direction of Kissinger evinced little interest in the informational instrument in foreign policy. Meanwhile, Congress set out to discover how to fix the informational instrument by a series of studies and commissions.

USIA policymakers turned to the current communications theorists for insights into how and to what extent foreign publics could be influenced. They discovered that the projectile theory had been widely discredited. "Scholars in the field had long pointed out that the transfer of information involves both a sender and a receiver and that the behavior of the latter is critical to the process."¹⁸ In addition, the power of any amount of propaganda to change deeply held opinions had been discounted by studies based on more rigorous scientific methods than those in the 1950's. According to the new research, information can only work "on the margins", it can merely influence the opinions

¹⁸Gifford D. Malone, Political Advocacy and Cultural Communication (New York: University Press of America, 1988) 56.

or those who have none or slightly modify opinions not deeply held. Information is also decreasingly credible the further removed the source is from the recipient. Domestic propaganda by definition is more credible than foreign propaganda. If domestic information is discredited as unreliable the most usual audience response is not to believe foreign information as credible but to disbelieve all information from whatever source.

The implications of this research for USIA operations were revolutionary. It was no longer a question of whether USIA would undertake to change foreign opinion, modern theory suggested such an influence was impossible. When the Carter Administration took office its natural predilections to learn from others as well as to teach were reinforced by the new thinking in USIA.¹⁹ Under Carter the agency was reorganized, in part along the lines suggested by the various commissions, and renamed the U.S. International Communication Agency to stress the new two-way nature of its mission.

USIA gained responsibility for all cultural exchanges (some had been previously housed in the State Department) and was given a "Second Mandate". U.S. foreign public information activities were to be an attempt to engage foreign audiences in a dialogue by which both sides would learn to value the other. The President's memorandum on USIA instructed its information officers to:

¹⁹Malone 56.

observe the following guidelines:

-- Since all the Agency's activities bear a relationship to our foreign policies and interests you will seek guidance from the Secretary of State.

-- You will be responsible for maintaining the scholarly integrity and nonpolitical character of the exchange program... and for maintaining the independence of the Voice of America news broadcasts....

-- The Agency will undertake no... covert manipulative or propagandistic [activities]

... [It] can assume... that a great and free society is its own best witness, and can put its faith in the power of ideas.²⁰

Not surprisingly Congress was skeptical about the hard-cash value of this approach and budget cuts became regular during the Carter Administration.

Under Reagan the pendulum swung sharply back to the original USIA mission of "Telling America's Story to the World." The Administration had legislation passed which changed the name of the Agency back to its original one, USIA. Despite urging from the top to be more hard-hitting and less concerned about foreign cultural-sensibilities, most USIA officers, however, continued to be convinced that limitations of influence were real and that the recipient of a message had to be engaged in a sophisticated dialogue, not merely bombarded by information products however glitzy. While many USIA officers were pleased to have a more active role to play in countering Soviet disinformation and providing proof of Communist misdeeds and deceptions, they were less pleased with a return to more simplistic, and in their opinion less effective, media messages.

Early in the Administration, USIA Director Charles Z. Wick mobilized all possible resources to counter Soviet intervention in Poland and produced a television extravaganza, "Let Poland Be Poland." This product of USIA's television and film division took full advantage of the President's and USIA Director Wick's Hollywood contacts, but most USIA officers overseas did not discern a change in the world's opinion of Soviet intervention. They believed instead that USIA was perceived more and more not to be "serious" in its approach to world issues.

The Reagan Administration remained convinced that the information instrument could be used more proactively in countering the worldwide communist threat. Director Wick announced that the agency would embark on "Project Truth," the name, of course, echoed the Truman campaign. The Reagan Administration provided increased funding for USIA and brought it into the television and computer age, introducing television press conferences on a special USIA network connected to Posts worldwide by satellite dishes and making policy statements available via computer hook-ups to these dishes.

The Administration also undertook to improve the inter-agency coordination of the information instrument through a series of reforms. As a first step, it set up a new committee chaired by USIA which brought together USIA and their opposite numbers from other foreign affairs agencies (including the Department of Defense) to discuss specific information policy

problems.²¹ In addition, public diplomacy staffs were established at the National Security Council and the Department of Defense. USIA officers were assigned to both of these staffs as well as to the White House. One result of the closer USIA-Department of Defense cooperation was the distribution abroad of the annual publication, Soviet Military Power, conferences overseas to explain the Soviet threat, and international television press conferences with the Secretary of Defense.²²

On January 1983, NSDD-77, "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security," further institutionalized interagency coordination. This directive created a Special Planning Group within the National Security Council chaired by the NSC Director. Reporting to this body were four other committees, including the International Political Committee, chaired by State and the International Information Committee, chaired by USIA. These committees included representatives from the NSC, State, USIA, DOD and AID, and the Assistant to the President for Communications. This superstructure functioned throughout the Reagan Administration. One writer says:

NSDD-77 also both legitimized and regularized the participation of agencies of government, in addition to USIA, in various aspects of public diplomacy. For the Department of Defense, which in the absence of such an arrangement might have been inclined to pursue its own course, it also provided a kind of oversight that was probably

²¹Malone 65.

²²Malone 71-2.

needed.⁴⁷

One result of this increased coordination was a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Defense and USIA. The Memorandum arranged for an exchange of officers, one of which was to head a public diplomacy team in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense.⁴⁸

As the Reagan Administration mellowed and the Bush Administration followed, USIA lost its special attraction for White House policymakers and lost prestige within the foreign affairs community. The Reagan Administration's interest in public diplomacy, which tended to blur the distinction enshrined in U.S. law between foreign and domestic information programs, was seen as a contributing factor to the Iran-Contra illegal actions. Under Bush, the NSC did not assign any staffer to work information policy issues full time. Both State and the Department of Defense abolished positions which had been encumbered by senior USIA officers. USIA for its part concentrated on carrying out its traditional programs of credible personal interaction with elites, using face-to-face diplomacy, the distribution of materials, up-to-date policy statements and information in the Wireless File delivered daily to all Embassies, and television and radio broadcasts. It also continued to run the Fulbright and other cultural or academic exchange

⁴⁷Malone 75.

⁴⁸Connell 5.

programs. The higher profile under the Reagan period came to be seen both within and without the agency as a distraction from the agency's real work and a temptation to possibly illegal or at least embarrassing activism.

To date, under the Clinton Administration, USIA has endured the same budget and position cuts as other foreign affairs entities. It has accommodated these cuts by eliminating programs that were designed to be primarily useful for communicating with audiences in repressive communist countries -- large exhibits and in-house produced magazines. It also chose to save by not staffing positions in other agencies and departments. For example, the position at Fort Bragg which coordinated with the PSYOP and Civil Affairs units there was not filled when the last officer left. Having limited funding of its own, it began to serve in some Eastern European countries and elsewhere as a subcontractor for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), implementing democratization and academic programs using funding provided by Congress to that agency.

The Legacy of the Past for Institutional Cultures

Throughout its history then, USIA was ambivalent about the efficacy or wisdom of actively trying to influence its audiences rather than accepting a more passive, more diplomatic profile. Its memories of cooperating with the military are generally negative: neither the Vietnam nor the Reagan periods are periods to which current Agency officers would wish to return.

In addition, USIA officers are evangelic about the truth of

the teachings of modern communication research. They operate on the principle that an outside force can influence behavior only on the margins, by providing information on subjects about which the audience is uninformed or does not hold strong opinions. They jealously guard their credibility and are proud of their ability to get their message through a foreign cultural prism. These beliefs lead USIA officers to be extremely sensitive to the cultural environment in which they work, to value personal and small-group contacts over mass communications, and to rely on a range of activities to establish credibility and promote interaction, melding press relations, exchanges of people, programs explaining cultural differences, and material distribution.

Many USIA officers believe that the military are exclusively preoccupied with short-term tactical operations. They fear that cooperating with the military will diminish their credibility; they do not want to be associated with any organization involved in "psychological operations." USIA officers, therefore, that have taken assignments coordinating with the military have been seen by their agency as outside the mainstream and have suffered in consequence in receiving promotions. As a result such positions have been traditionally "hard-to-fill" openings.

On the military side, until Operation Just Cause in Panama, and the CINC, GEN Maxwell Thurman's intelligent use of available PSYOP assets, psychological operations were intentionally excluded from major army training exercises, school

curricula and most conventional operational planning. Army officers generally were advised to avoid assignment in psychological operations as it was "career detrimental". Because the types of things PSYOP officers do are not "main line" army things (e.g. they must learn foreign languages, earn masters degrees, plan campaigns dealing with intangible variables like morale, etc.), and because doing these things requires time spent away from conventional army units, PSYOP officers achievements are not recognized by promotion boards. As a result, PSYOP officers suffer historically from low promotion rates and the cyclical self fulfilling prophecy continues. Further due to the institutional bias previously mentioned required staff officer billets at headquarters from corps to theater are not established or manned. As a result, the supporting informational or PSYOP efforts do not occur.

Emerging Army doctrine acknowledges the potential of PSYOP and military information, but the personnel system has not kept pace with the doctrine. In general, today's army still disdains PSYOP because it:

- * doesn't understand how PSYOP works.
- * fears successful use of battlefield PSYOP will contribute to conventional force reductions
- * believes that assignments to PSYOP ruins officers careers.

The operational faults occurring in Vietnam cited earlier did provide valuable lessons and some were heeded in the conduct of military PSYOP to defeat Iraq. A share of the credit for this success must go to the provisions of National Security Decision Directive 77 (NSDD 77) which created the Special Planning Group. This group contained authorities from the National Security Council, Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and from USIA. The creation of this group set the precedent for high level group coordination of national information policy in support of national security. NSDD 77 was further noteworthy as it required a Memorandum of Understanding between USIA and DOD outlining how these agencies would cooperate and coordinate at high levels. This is the first national level, interagency agreement on international information operations. A later directive, NSDD 130, established the foundation for significant expansion and modernization of military PSYOP capability which had been neglected since the end of the Vietnam conflict.

A conceptual descendant of the Special Planning Group is the Public Diplomacy Coordinating Committee (PDCC). With membership similar to the Special Planning Group, it possessed the potential to be the guide for thorough national level coordination and application of information as a weapon in the Persian Gulf.

The two National Security Decision Directives and the resultant revitalization of military PSYOP provided the appropriate foundation for the success of interagency information

efforts in the war with Iraq. But for all the available potential, national level information coordination, even by the PDCC, was invisible. The PDCC, as a result of its two meetings, assigned two actions to the US Army 4th Psychological Operations Group at Ft. Bragg, NC. These were the creation of two mass media products designed to inform the Iraqi leadership of the resolve of the international coalition against them. The 4th PSYOP Group, through its chain of command, submitted a strategic, interagency information campaign to the PDCC for approval. According to then LTC Jeff Jones, Commander of the PSYOP Battalion supporting CENTCOM, no reply or direction was received regarding the submitted campaign plan.²⁵

In the theater of operations, at Central Command Headquarters, effective coordination occurred even without a national level information campaign plan. An information coordinating committee met weekly at Central Command Headquarters in Riyadh to plan, coordinate and oversee execution of a theater level PSYOP campaign. The campaign targeted the Iraqi frontline soldier, encouraging him through leaflets, loudspeaker and radio to surrender. The campaign appealed to his will to survive and played on his vulnerability to the coalition's military power. It also appealed to his disinclination to fight Arab brothers and guaranteed good treatment once he surrendered. The choice of the PSYOP task force to attack a well-defined and the target's vulnerability to coalition appeals helped ensure the success of

COL Jeffery Jones. 7 March 1994.

the surrender campaign.

Admittedly the tactical element of the overall program was more heavily weighted, but input and cooperation from USIA, even on cultural aspects of the military campaign was forthcoming and highly valued. Representatives of army PSYOP and the USIA, met with CENTCOM staff members from operations, intelligence, future plans, public affairs, and judge advocate staff sections to coordinate theater level information actions. Additionally, the US Embassy in Riyadh sent a liaison to these weekly meetings and Ambassador Freeman was personally briefed on plans and actions. Translation, voice broadcast and product pretest support for military tactical actions were provided by USIA to the PSYOP Battalion.

On the strategic level, in close collaboration with the State Department and DoD, USIA implemented a worldwide program to explain U.S. actions as coalition leader and to encourage participation or contributions to the coalition. USIA provided extensive information daily to all USIS posts, including periodic updates on the contributions, broken down by country, of coalition partners. USIA television broadcast news stories and interactive press conferences with U.S. policymakers for USIS posts to use in-house or to place on local foreign broadcasts. USIA's Voice of America monitored Saddam Hussein's attempts to jam its radio broadcasts and increased coverage to Arabic nations.

In addition, USIA supported U.S. policy goals specific to

each country. It countered local press stories unfavorable to U.S. actions and provided daily summaries to Washington of local news coverage of the war to assist the strategists and analysts. USIS officers throughout the world worked with Defense Attaches to explain locally U.S. military actions, especially those such as overflights or surface transport of war materiel, which might have local impact.

Despite all of these impressive examples of cooperation, there was no formal document specifying what responsibilities USIA and the army would each undertake or even that they would cooperate in the Central Command Theater. The information Coordinating Committee was an ad-hoc body established because individuals from both USIA and DOD saw the need. Its charter, organization and operating procedures, were all created as needed and by consensus. Time and efficiency were the usual victims of this lack of established procedure. It was fortuitous that the coalition had more than five months to prepare their campaign. In the war with Iraq, tremendous loss of life was prevented by the success of the coordinated military PSYOP campaign. If Saddam had decided to invade Saudi Arabia in September or October, both the information campaign and the war would have had a different and more disastrous outcome. It is unlikely we will again have the luxury of an enemy who waits.

The Case of Somalia

In early December 1992 planning began for the U.S.-led

Unified Task Force (UNITAF). Both the videotape "Psychological Operations in Operation Restore Hope," and the report "Psychological Operations in Support of Operation Restore Hope," produced by the Unified Task Force Somalia emphasize the thoroughness of the planning for psychological integration and its integration from the outset in UNITAF planning.

Psychological operations (PSYOP) were a key Battlefield Operating System used extensively to support United Task Force (UNITAF Somali Operations). In order to maximize the PSYOP impact, we established a Joint PSYOP Task Force (JPOTF) under the supervision of the Director of Operations, integrated Psyop into all plans and operations, and limited the PSYOP focus to the operational and tactical levels.²⁶

The joint planning with USIA, however, was less deliberate. The USIA, DOD and AID officers who were working on the group that first monitored the growing crisis in Mogadishu and then worked on the Task Force set up at State decided informally that they needed to get together regularly to coordinate information themes and activities that would be used in Somalia. At their own initiative they met once a week to discuss their respective agencies plans. In this way a draft copy of the JPOTF's plans was circulated privately among the group. USIA made some comments which were considered by the military planners. None of this vital coordination was officially prescribed.

According to a USIA participant in these meetings, the

²⁶U.S. Government, Unified Task Force Somalia, "Psychological Operations in Support of Operation Restore Hope" (4 May 1993) 1.

sessions were useful, especially to the military participants who made it clear that their expertise was battlefield preparation and not the kind of civilian communications this unique mission would require. Another value of this meeting was that it prevented USAID from going forward with a plan before the deployment which would have threatened force to those who tried to interfere with the Non-Governmental Organizations' attempts to feed Somalis. USAID was seriously considering preparing and posting handbills showing Rambo threatening those who interfered with feeding. It was only with difficulty that USIA and DOD stopped this campaign which could have had the effect of "challenging" Somali clansmen to fight it out with Americans.

USIA, meanwhile, appointed two officers to accompany the U.S. Special Envoy Ambassador Robert Oakley. One of these, Robert Gosende, had had extensive experience as a junior officer years before in Somalia. The other, Frank Strovas, had just completed a tour at Fort Bragg where he had worked with and taught the same PSYOP personnel with whom he was to cooperate in Mogadishu. His contacts from his time at Ft. Bragg proved to be a vital asset to the subsequent cooperative effort. Unfortunately, both of the USIA officers were on other assignments before joining Oakley in Somalia. They did not, therefore, participate significantly in predeployment inter-agency planning.

Frank Strovas, however, telephoned Fort Bragg from his post in South Africa to talk with his old colleague Colonel Layton G. Dunbar, Commander 4th PSYOP Group, about the capabilities the

military would have for PSYOP and Civil Affairs. (For USIA officers the two aspects are seen as inevitably intertwined.) Strovas was told that 300 Civil Affairs personnel had orders for Mogadishu. Later, however, this number was reduced to only 30. U.S. military planners feared that a large civil affairs program would contribute to "mission creep," making it appear that U.S. forces planned to do more than provide protection for the relief effort.

Once in Mogadishu, the USIA element integrated three functions within the Special Envoy's operation (the U.S. Liaison Office - USLO) which were separated on the military side: media relations, civil affairs and public information. Gosende handled press relations for the envoy, coordinating with the Joint Information Bureau. Strovas spent his days with the newspaper and radio staffs deciding how themes could best be presented to the Somali people and assisting in writing the stories. Many of the newspaper local staff and writers who formed a critical core resource were recommended to the PSYOP team by Gosende who knew them from his days of previous service in Somalia.

Both Gosende and Strovas canvassed the military deployed to find units that could take on Civil Affairs missions, thus reinforcing the information theme that the UNITAF forces had come to help the Somali people. Fortunately, a Naval Construction Battalion, the Seabees, was occasionally available and willing to accept constructive assignments, providing of course that they were approved by the UNITAF Commander. In the event, General

Johnston approved the recommendations of the U.S. Special Envoy that the Seabees assist in the reconstruction of sports facilities, water and construction projects at orphanages, and assistance to UNDP's efforts to renovate water and sewer plants in southern Mogadishu. These actions however were ad hoc, at the instigation of USIA, and not part of a larger plan which would have required the systematic application of resources.

Cooperation between USIA and PSYOP on the newspaper continued to be useful for both sides. Both General Johnston and Ambassador Oakley used these media to reach Somali audiences in Mogadishu and other Somali Humanitarian Relief Sectors. this public information role for RAJO was particularly important late in the UNITAF deployment when General Aideed began to propagandize aggressively against the presence of U.S. and U.N. forces.

In the early days of the UNITAF deployment USLO and PSYOP worked out stratagems to secure access to USIA's daily Wireless File. Strovass wanted the File so that the newspaper RAJO could carry more in-depth news about U.S. policies. He believed that these would appeal to the educated Somalis who were emerging from the war ruins and wanted a view at the larger world from which they had been long cut off. Gosende also needed up-to-the-minute policy information, beyond the news articles available from the UNITAF headquarters in the Early Bird to maintain his credibility with the hundreds of U.S. and foreign journalists in Mogadishu. At the two officers' urgings, USIA agreed to supply the satellite

dish and other equipment that would enable USLO to receive and distribute USIA's daily Wireless File. In the interim, before that equipment was delivered, the File was sent from USIA via telephone to Fort Bragg which then uplinked it to PSYOP in Mogadishu which put it on a diskette and sent it by HMMWV to USLO. When the USIA satellite dish arrived the ever-helpful Seabees laid the concrete pad for the dish and assisted the USIA technician with the installation. After USIA's dish was installed the RAJO staff came by USLO every morning to pick up a diskette with the Wireless File. News items from the File, condensed and translated into Somali appeared regularly in RAJO throughout the UNITAF deployment.

Problems in cooperation occurred first with the radio "RAJO". USIA's VOA broadcast into Mogadishu but only for a half hour each day at a unpopular time. USLO explored the possibility of picking up programming by satellite and broadcasting that on the PSYOP medium-wave frequency within Mogadishu and short wave frequency which reached most of Somalia. VOA absolutely forbade Radio Rajo to use any of its programming at any time and with any disclaimers. It claimed that its credibility would be irreparably damaged by having its programming included on the military "propaganda" station. Even after the UNITAF period when RADIO RAJO became a U.N. radio station this prohibition remained. VOA's sensitivity is particularly difficult to understand since it is willing to place its programming on almost any foreign radio station, including stations run by foreign governmental

entities.

The close USLO-military collaboration on newspaper RAJO also declined after Gosende departed and Strovas returned to his post in South Africa. There was a month-long gap before Strovas could be replaced. In the interim, the PSYOP command also changed. By February the RAJO operation had become routinized, with no input from USLO before publication and limited cooperation on themes or treatment. In part this lack of cooperation resulted from restrictions on the movements for USIA officers due to security. The paper was 'put to bed' in the evening when travel between USLO and PSYOP offices was not possible without escort. There was no capability to transmit written text between the two offices. Vital, short messages were passed orally over the MSC, when it worked. Otherwise texts were physically carried back and forth when coordination required, if security permitted.

It was however precisely when physical security was most difficult that political input into RAJO was most important. RAJO became more controversial as conflicts between the UNITAF forces and Warlord General Aideed, who controlled the former Radio Mogadishu and a local paper, spilled over into the airwaves and newsprint. RAJO stories were picked up by the U.S. and foreign media, which from time to time criticized RAJO as unnecessarily confrontational and simplistic in approach.

Problems also emerged in the efforts by both USLO and UNITAF to push the U.N. to be ready to broadcast RADIO RAJO and publish RAJO newspaper. The U.N. sent out a team to look over the

situation. This team unhelpfully proposed waiting until a sophisticated operation could be set in place. USLO and UNITAF warned that without a way to present information to the Somali public the U.N. follow-on effort to UNITAF (UNOSOM II) would be immeasurably harder.

USLO and the military's interest at this point diverged to some extent. The U.S. Army's major concern was not to leave equipment or personnel behind after the UNITAF had returned home, thus lowering the 4th PSYOP Group's readiness for other taskings. USLO's USIA officers, however, were more concerned about the loss of momentum if the U.N. could not be encouraged to get its act together - which seemed highly unlikely. In the event, the U.N. responded partially and brought in equipment, recommended by PSYOP, to run its own radio and newspaper, taking over most of the local staff assembled by PSYOP. The U.N., however, did not have any civil affairs capability and lacked any plan to manage systematically the crucial in-country media or informational program. USIA itself had problems staffing even a minimal informational program within USLO, in part due to bureaucratic delays within USIA's personnel system. USIA's slowness was complicated by restrictions leveled by the NSC and the State Department, which did not think USIA officers were important enough to be included within restrictive personnel limitations.

As a result, UNOSOM II, including the constituent U.S. forces and Rapid Deployment Force, lacked an effective civil affairs, public affairs and public informational component. In

the subsequent efforts to convince the Somali people of UNOSOM II's good intentions and the international media of UNOSOM II's efficacy this lack was a contributing factor to the failures which dissipated the successes achieved by UNITAF. Had military decisionmakers accepted the importance of the informational element of warfare, not just in preparing the battlefield but in reaching out to crucial audiences, they would no more have left U.S. forces without that advantage than they would have left them without ammunition.

This case study shows that despite disparate conceptions of missions and the lack of continuity in staffing professional staffs with some luck can coordinate and work together successfully. Crucial to the initial running start was the prior connection between the USIA officer assigned and the Fourth PSYOP Group. In addition, the initiative of the members of the State Department Task Force in setting up an informal interagency planning mechanism was extremely useful. The less effective cooperation in the latter phases of UNITAF and UNOSOM II, however, due to communication difficulties, U.N. fecklessness, and personnel gaps, was a contributory cause to U.S. losses.

Conclusions

These case studies suggest that cooperation between USIA and the U.S. military is neither institutionalized, prescribed nor

officially established. When cooperation happens, it happens because the military and USIA officers in the planning sessions or on the ground recognize its importance and set up ad-hoc ways of working together. This cooperation, since it is informal, suffers from a lack of communication equipment, a lack of support from personnel systems, and is not always sustained over the life of a mission.

One factor which contributes to the lack of institutionalization of cooperation is the low regard accorded to the informational instrument by the U.S. military and the State Department. The U.S. military undervalues the contribution beyond battlefield preparation which the information instrument can make and the importance of insuring that foreign and U.S. media understand U.S. military process. The military is unfamiliar with the contributions USIA can make to its planning and implementation efforts. USIA, for instance, often has a long history and understanding of the culture in which a military operation will take place. It also has a worldwide capability to explain U.S. security policy and to provide feedback on how that policy is playing to foreign audiences.

USIA for its part underestimates the sophistication of current PSYOP doctrine and methodology and is arrogant in its unwillingness to work with the military on an equal footing. A particular problem is the unwillingness of VOA to work at any level with the U.S. military. This latter problem probably requires Congressional action to remedy.

Recommendations

National Level:

1. The Public Diplomacy Coordinating Committee should be revitalized. It should meet regularly to review, coordinate and oversee contingency planning and on-going information operations especially in conflicts short of war and low-intensity conflicts.
2. Senior officers (O-6 equivalents) should be exchanged as liaison between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the USIA Director's Office to coordinate peacetime information activities.
3. USIA should restore the FO-01 officer (equivalent O-6) to the Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg as the personal representative of the Director of the USIA to the CG, ASOC. This officer would also be designated as the lead USIA officer to coordinate with any contingency JTF.
4. Following the model of USIA PAOs overseas, this latter USIA officer should have efficiency reports written by the CG, ASOC and by the USIA Counselor, with the second reviewed by the Deputy Director.
5. Both USIA and the Department of Defense should survey and upgrade their computer equipment and other communication capabilities. When next generation equipment is procured it should be chosen to permit Army and USIA to communicate text,

voice and data during peacetime and operational deployments.

6. Recognizing the institutional and societal prejudice against the terms propaganda and psychological operations, the DOD should change this reference in all forms to a more acceptable term, for example "military information."

7. To better maximize DOD resources and improve civilian interface, the army should combine psychological operations, civil affairs, public affairs, foreign area officers and perhaps even military police into one new branch - the Civil Military Operations Branch. This reconfiguration would significantly improve operational efficiency, especially in view of future non-traditional missions, with appreciable cost savings.

8. The Army, as DOD-designated lead agency for Psychological Operations, should revitalize the initiatives undertaken by the PSYOP Master Plan of 1985.

9. The Army and USIA, recognizing the ever-increasing importance of joint and interagency information activities in the emerging world order, should adjust their respective doctrine and structure to be mutually supporting in accordance with the most current communication research.

10. The Army must ensure it maintains the trained, active

component cadre of psychological operations personnel to plan, manage and execute DOD responsibilities in interagency information operations. Service school curricula should include instruction on PSYOP at the Senior NCO, Captain and Field grade officer level.

11. USIA should designate a senior officer for the POLAD office of each CINC to coordinate on media, civil affairs and informational activities. In most cases these officers will be a CPAO for whom this tasking will be in addition to other work requirements.

12. DOD should task the US Army to fully staff Psychological Operations Staff Offices at each CINC Headquarters with active component, fully trained personnel to provide continuity and completeness of planning and operational oversight.

Operational:

13. The current interagency MOU between DOD and USIA should be amended as follows:

- A. To agree that information is a key tool in the toolbox of US statecraft and that efficient use of USG resources in the evolving world dictate interagency operations
- B. To call for training exchanges of mid-grade leaders
- C. To specify the composition of liaison cells and other contributions to Joint Task Forces

D. identify the specific roles and missions of each agency when participating in a contingency operation such as UNITAF or Provide Comfort, including the following:

- USIA will provide each JTF with a USIA officer to coordinate on overall public diplomacy direction (In countries where a USIS mission continues to function this officer may be the CPAO.)
- USIA will provide an information officer to work with the military public affairs officer on media relations (This officer may be the USIS IO.)
- These USIA officers would work with the JPOTF commander on a daily basis but would report at their discretion directly to the JTF Commander and to their parent agency. USIA would agree to pay for salaries and per diem costs.

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