Using the United States Information Agency Methods in the Twenty-First Century

A Monograph
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Abstract

Using the United States Information Agency Methods in the Twenty-First Century by MAJ Jason A Mead, Army, 36 pages.

The U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was founded in 1952 to coordinate communication with the international community during the Cold War. Since being disbanded in 1999 many government officials have realized that the ability to communicate globally has diminished. By examining the methods the USIA used to communicate internationally, applications can be found to guide the United States Government toward similar methods in the twenty first century. One of the most successful methods of communication was establishing overseas American libraries. Another method the USIA used was addressing the issue of propaganda and how it could affect the strategic communication to other countries. Propaganda, the USIA determined, could be harmful only if it deliberately and consistently misled a populace. Another method of communicating effectively was with consistent interaction with other government departments. In its time, the USIA was an integral collaborator with the State Department and the DOD, and accomplished significant achievements when utilizing interagency cooperation. Similar integration between government components is necessary to achieve a comprehensive and coordinated level of strategic communication in the twenty first century. More effective communication can be achieved in the future by understanding how it was achieved in the past.

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INTRODUCTION

> We are miserable at communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and a culture, about freedom and democracy, about our policies and our goals. It is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the internet than America.[1]
>
> Secretary of Defense Robert Gates
> Landon Lecture, Kansas State University

To paraphrase Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, the United States Government (USG) does not use Information as an element of national power effectively.[2] Secretary Gates is not the only government official that believes the USG has lost much of its communicating capability in the twenty-first century.[3] Colleen Graffy, State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, stated in her 2007 Chatham House speech that, in regard to communicating, "we used to be good at it, at least to one part of Europe, and then we became less good" and that "U.S. public diplomacy went through a decline at the end of the Cold War."[4] While the disbanding of the US Information Agency (USIA) played a role in the decline in the ability to communicate, much of that ability may still be within the USG. The United States, with arguably the greatest array of communication technology and capability of any nation and commercial expertise on the use of Information, finds itself in the frustrating position of not communicating effectively to the world audiences. Even more frustrating is that this occurs less

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[1] Robert Gates, Landon Lecture speech at the Kansas State University, 26 November 2007. DOD Defenselink website, http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199. (accessed 8 January 2008).

[2] "Information" with a capital "I" refers to the use of Information as a national power, i.e. used to achieve national objectives. If the word "information" is used elsewhere without the capitalization, it is meant solely as communication of facts, figures, and data from a source to a receiver.

[3] Gates, Landon Lecture speech.

[4] Colleen Graffy, speech at Chatham House, "What is the US Doing to Improve its Image Abroad?" 1 November 2007. US Department of State website, http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/94487.htm, (accessed 5 Dec 2007).

than ten years after the USG had effectively used Information against the Soviet Union for decades. As Secretary Gates quoted one foreign diplomat: "How has one man in a cave managed to out-communicate the world's greatest communication society?"[5]

How can we gain that ability back? One way is to look at the past, to see what other communication institutions did that was successful. What methods did the USIA use that made it effective against the Soviet Union? What insights can be gained by examining these communication methods? Will a review of those methods assist the USG in its use of Information in the Global War on Terror (GWOT)? What were the successes and failures of twentieth century Information organizations that are directly applicable to the current US military use of Information?

This monograph will examine methods that the USIA used that may provide means for Department of Defense (DOD) to become a better strategic communicator in the twenty-first century. Critical to understanding the problem is to examine the current methods and means of strategic communication. Chapter one will examine how the USG defines key words relating to strategic communication in order to ascertain if there are potential issues that could hinder cooperation and understanding with other organizations. This chapter will also identify various Information organizations within the Department of State (DOS) and DOD to analyze if "the pieces are all there" to conduct strategic communications. Chapter two will examine the methods the USIA used. Critical to understanding the methods used to communicate is to consider how the USIA addressed the issue of propaganda. Then the chapter will review the use and success of overseas libraries, and finally examine how the USIA and DOS were able to cooperate throughout the years.

Among other methods, the analysis chapter will review how the USIA dealt with the issue of propaganda, concluding that the USIA never definitively resolved the issue. Throughout

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[5] Gates, Landon Lecture speech.

its lifetime, the USIA continued to grapple with whether the USIA should inform communities or attempt to influence audiences. Continual discourse between the USIA, DOS, and Congress kept this issue on the forefront. The only general principal agreed upon by most (but not all) members engaged in this discussion was that being by being as often as possible was the best course. As a strategic communicator, DOD will also continue to wrestle with the same questions, and will have to realize that, like the USIA, it may never resolve the issue. Analysis will also show that the USIA had enormous success with its overseas library program before it dissolved with the USIA in 1999. Even during the large budget cuts of the 1990s toward perceived "Cold War" institutions, the library program never came under attack. Additionally, libraries achieved several DOS goals that are still desirable objectives today. First it was a location where international audiences could get accurate information about the United States. Second, it was a location that taught English – a goal the DOS still is attempting to achieve. Third, by dealing with American librarians and library staff, the USIA was establishing personal, two-way communications with their target audiences. With its nation building mission and capability, the DOD could incorporate the establishment of American-style libraries, along with schools, water stations, and other reconstruction projects.

Next, analysis will evaluate the ability of DOS and DOD to cooperate in using Information to accomplish USG objectives. Compared to how the USIA and DOS interacted in the twentieth century there are several similarities and methods that could directly apply to that goal. One of the largest challenges the USIA faced was coordinating with the DOS. When it worked, it was through low-level, informal, and continuous communication among mid-level managers of the institutions. One method to increase coordination is for the DOD is to establish similar relationships among Information organizations between their respective institutions.

For research into previous Information organization, several books detail the mission, issues, and successes of the USIA during the Cold War. Some books give a comprehensive picture on the use of Information during the twentieth century. *The Strategy of Truth* by Wilson

P. Dizard, published in 1961, reviews the USIA's mission and challenges in the formative years after it was founded. Dizard states that the use of Information is not a "fix-all" for public diplomacy and stresses the importance of a clear idea of America and Americans to the international community.[6] Ronald L. Rubin published *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency* in 1968 and documented the mission and challenges of the USIA that Dizard had highlighted in 1961. Among other issues, Rubin highlighted the debate on whether the USIA should be an information or propaganda agency. While he recommends that the USIA steers away from the propaganda element to maintain legitimacy, he advocated not going so far into the information-only category as to put the USIA "in the position that the Associated Press and United Press International now occupy."[7]

Also in 1968 Robert E. Elder wrote *The Information Machine: The United States Information Agency and American Foreign Policy*. Elder's work was primarily descriptive of the USIA organization. His recommendations were focused on how to improve the USIA at the time and, while informative, do not contribute to the USIA's use of strategic communication. However, Elder records how the Agency's purpose changed from one of mutual understanding between America and foreign nations to a one-way political communications and counterinsurgency. With this change, Elder suggested that the USIA traded strategic communication for propaganda, and that there is no clear-cut answer if that choice was the right one.[8] Following on the heels of Elder, John W. Henderson wrote *The United States Information Agency* in 1969. Henderson gave a comprehensive overview of how Information was used in the twentieth century, not only during the USIA's time, but beginning in World War I. His primary

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[6] Wilson P. Dizard, *The Strategy of Truth: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Washington D.C: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 18-20.

[7] Ronald L. Rubin, *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1966), 221.

[8] Robert E. Elder *The Information Machine: The United States Information Agency and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1969), 329.

argument was that, regardless of what it is called, "some form of psychological activity by government is an essential element in national security."[9] Providing a comprehensive work of the USIA itself, *Warriors of Disinformation* by Alvin A. Snyder captures the overall mission, accomplishments, and challenges of the USIA as it stood in 1996. Written four years before the disbanding of the USIA, it is a portrayal of an organization that was once the premier communicator in the world, but currently on the decline. Snyder was well aware of how information competed directly with entertainment for the world's attention, and had an admiration for showmen that could capture that attention. Snyder recognized how influential visual media could be, and remarked on the use of satellite television to propagandize to communist countries. Snyder recommended that the USIA (along with the Voice of America and Worldnet) be combined with the Public Broadcasting Service, National Public Radio, and American Public Radio, and the resulting conglomeration be privatized.[10] While that may have resulted in the first truly international multimedia entity at the time, it is no longer applicable in the twenty-first century. With the popularity of the Internet and instant communications within the last decade, other private mediums have closed this small window of opportunity for the USG to be the frontrunner in international communication.

Perhaps the most influential book on using Information (among other tools) as elements of national power is Joseph S. Nye, Jr.'s *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.* Nye contends that the world-wide, record-high anti-American sentiment is directly contributed to the decline of American soft power due to its foreign policies. Nye describes soft power as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments."[11] Nye uses the

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[9] John W. Henderson *The United States Information Agency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1969), ix.

[10] Alvin A. Snyder, Warriors of Disinformation: America Propaganda, Soviet Lies, and the Winning of the Cold War (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995), 272.

[11] Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), ix.

term "Public Diplomacy" (a term originally coined by USIA officials) instead of Information to describe the USG's Information-based soft power.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In order for the USG to use Information effectively, most of the major institutions within the USG must get involved. Yet in order to efficiently work together, those agencies must have a common vocabulary to understand the roles, requirements, and capabilities that each organization can contribute. While this monograph will not recommend definitions for either DOD or DOS, it will point out areas of contention that, if not understood, could cause needless inefficiency during interagency cooperation.

Once a common understanding is framed through understood definitions, examining the best method of interagency cooperation could eliminate potential disagreement. The USIA had issues with interagency cooperation and managed to overcome many of those issues. By examining how departments and agencies are organized within both the DOS and DOD that share somewhat common goals and objectives may provide opportunities for increased coordination.

Definitions, Roles, and Responsibilities

There is no current, official definition of Information as an element of national power. Consequently, the DOD and DOS have a different understanding of what Information is and how to use it.

There are many methods for using Information as an element of national power; far too many to cover in a single monograph. While the DOD conducts actions it calls "military information operations," those operations are focused towards adversaries in order to accomplish military objectives – geared more toward psychological operations than information-based communication. While Information organizations of the twentieth century certainly engaged in

some forms of "psychological warfare" against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Information in this refers to communicating with global audiences, what some communicators are calling strategic communications (SC).

The DOD definition for SC provides a basis to evaluate what the Information organizations of the twentieth century were attempting to accomplish. The DOD definition of SC is:

> Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.[12]

The two departments and their communications components use the same words to describe the use of Information, such as strategic communication, statecraft , public affairs, and public diplomacy, but these terms may have different definitions, meanings, and understandings between the two departments. SC came the closest to a common definition within the USG; however, like most definitions, the DOS and DOD definitions differ. The DOS definition of SC is:

> The coordination of Statecraft, Public Affairs, Public Diplomacy, [Military] Information Operations and other activities, reinforced by political, economic and military actions, in a synchronized and coordinated manner.[13]

This DOS definition of SC has four elements – statecraft, public affairs, public diplomacy, and military information operations – three of which (statecraft, public affairs, and public diplomacy) are squarely under the purview of the DOS, and are therefore sub-elements of diplomacy. The fourth, military information operations (IO), may not belong within the DOS's definition of SC.

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[12] Department of Defense, JP 1-02 *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* (Washington: Office of the Chairman, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 12 April 2001), 515.

[13] Richard J. Josten, "Strategic Communication: Key Enabler for Elements of National Power," *Iosphere: Joint Information Operation Center* (Summer 2006): 17.

According to DOD, IO is a capability – primarily electronic – directed against an adversary, which is significantly different then the dissemination of information to foreign audiences or media outlets.[14] Military action, if used, includes IO, but is not a separate and distinctive element in and of itself. The definition does not state that SC is reinforced by *diplomatic* action, which is significantly different than political action. To the DOS, SC (and therefore Information) is a subset of diplomacy. While the two definitions are comparable, some elements of each definition are missing. The DOS definition specifically includes statecraft, public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations within its definition, where DOD does not. DOD, on the other hand, states that SC must be in advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives – a condition missing in the DOS definition. The difference is that DOS defines *how* SC should be used (through statecraft, public affairs, public diplomacy, and military information operation efforts) while the DOD states *why* it should be used (achieve USG interest, policies, and objectives). Both agree that coordination and focused efforts are required.

The DOS and DOD definitions are not the only ones available. In his article "Strategic Communications" Jeffrey Jones defines SC as:

> the synchronized coordination of statecraft, public affairs, public diplomacy, military information operations, and other activities, reinforced by political, economic, military, and other actions, to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.[15]

Jeffrey Jones's definition combines both the DOD *why* and DOS *how* of SC. Therefore if Information includes the elements of statescraft, public affairs, public diplomacy, and military information operations, than strategic communication is the process of coordinating these elements to achieve national objectives. DOD personnel must understand their own definitions and realize that they could be different from what DOS personnel realize. Understanding what

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[14] Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 261.

[15] Jeffrey Jones, "Strategic Communication: A Mandate for the United States," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (October 2005): 108-109.

DOD means when it says “information operations” and what the DOS means when it says “strategic communications” may prevent unnecessary difficulty during interagency operations.

Interagency Organizations

With the disbanding of the USIA in 1999 the DOS assumed the primary responsibility of using Information as an element of national power. The 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) dedicates a paragraph to public diplomacy, saying that an effort will be made to “reorient the Department of State towards transformational diplomacy” to include “strengthening our public diplomacy, so that we advocate the policies and values of the United States in a clear, accurate, and persuasive way to a watching and listening world.”[16] The 2006 NSS does not direct the use of any other elements of Information (public information, public affairs, or strategic communication, for example). By directing only one Information effort, and that effort subset under the DOS, with no overt directive to coordinate with other organizations, the 2006 NSS clearly indicates that the DOS has the preponderance of responsibility in using Information.

The DOS currently splits responsibility for using Information between the Undersecretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and the Bureau of International Information Programs. Since only eight years have passed it is too early to truly evaluate how well the DOS has assumed its Information responsibilities since the USIA itself took almost three decades before it was a viable and effective agency, even with the resources the USG poured into it over time. Like the USIA, the DOS and DOD must learn how to use Information during a time of war. In other words, the USG must learn to conduct strategic communications. To do this, cooperation and coordination between institutions is critical. In an attempt to accomplish this, the DOS has enabled two more strategic communication initiatives. The first is the Rapid Response Unit who’s

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[16] U.S. National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: Government Printing Office, March 2006), 44-45.

mission is to monitor what the global media is saying about America .[17] The second is the Interagency Counterterrorism Communication Center (CTCC), which has military manpower assigned to it, and is designed to share information about terrorism between DOD and DOS.[18]

DOD has also created communication organizations. Brigadier General Eder Mari writes in his *Military Review* article "Toward Strategic Communication," that "recognizing the importance of applying strategy to communication, DOD created the position of deputy assistant secretary of defense (joint communication) (DASD[JC]) in December 2005 to 'shape DOD-wide processes, policy, doctrine, organization and training of the primary communication-supporting capabilities of the Department.' These include public affairs, defense support for public diplomacy, visual information, and information operations including psychological operations."[19]

Most of these efforts of Information and its sub-sets have been towards foreign audiences. The primary method of communicating with the American public is through public affairs activities, which one definition states as "the study of issues involving the interrelationships between the public and major institutions such as government."[20] The DOS's Bureau of Public Affairs, for example, "carries out the Secretary's mandate to help Americans understand the importance of foreign affairs."[21] DOD, on the other hand, does not communicate on domestic affairs, whereas the White House has several offices for public communication. The White House Office of Political Affairs, for example, "ensures that the executive branch and the President are aware of the concerns of the American citizen," and the Communications Office is

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[17] Brigadier General Eder Mari, "Towards Strategic Communication," *Military Review* (July-August 2007): 63.

[18] U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, *Strategic Communication and Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism*, 110th Cong., 4th sess., November 15, 2007, 10.

[19] Mari, "Towards Strategic Communication," 64.

[20] Microsoft Network, Dictionary, "Public Affairs Definition,"Encarta Website. http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861736071/public_affairs.html, (accessed 10 December 2007).

responsible for "the planning and production of the President's media events." The President attempted to establish an Office of Strategic Communications in 2003, but, as Richard Hollaran states in his *Parameters* article "Strategic Communication," that the office "soon faded into the background as a minor office within the national security staff."[22] Halloran further noted that the effort under the Office of the Undersecretary of Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy was "less than effective," before highlighting the CTCC as an organization with the mission to "provide leadership and coordination for interagency efforts in the war of ideas, and to integrate and enhance the US government's diverse public diplomacy counterterrorism efforts."[23] These agencies have neither the authority to direct the use of SC nor the directive to coordinate SC (The CTCC, for example, only shares information on counterterrorism between institutions). Even with several offices, bureaus, and undersecretaries attempting to use Information within the DOS and White House, "there is little evidence of cooperation, coordination, or even appreciation for the impact of strategic communication."[24] In other words, no single organization is coordinating all of the Information used by the USG. No organization uses strategic communications.

In 2006 former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that the USG was currently losing the war of ideas against extremists. Secretary Rumsfeld stated that if he were grading the USG's use of Information, that the USG would "deserve a 'D' or a 'D-plus' as a country as to how well we're doing in the battle of ideas that's taking place in the world today."[25] The current Secretary of Defense Robert Gates agreed with his predecessor during a speech in 2007. Citing

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[21] Department of State "Bureau of Public Affairs," Department of State website http://www.state.gov/r/pa/, (accessed 10 December 2007).

[22] Richard Halloran, "Strategic Communications," *Parameters* (August 2007): 5.

[23] Ibid., 5.

[24] Jones, "Strategic Communications," 110.

[25] Donald Rumsfeld, speech at the United States Army War College, 27 March 2006. DOD Defenselink website, http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=22, (accessed 22 April 2008).

the need for "soft power," Secretary Gates referred to the USIA as a key institution in the Cold War, and called its disbanding even more shortsighted than the reductions of the military, the CIA, and the decrease in foreign affairs officers that also occurred at the time. Secretary Gates acknowledged that the USG was "miserable at communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and a culture, about freedom and democracy, about our policies and our goals." While going on to state that "it is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the internet than America," Secretary Gates acknowledged that recreating the USIA was probably not the answer.[26] Instead, Secretary Gates recommended that "new institutions are needed for the 21st century, new organizations with a 21st century mind-set."[27] A new organization is what retired Air Force Major Richard J. Josten recommended in a 2006 *Iosphere* article titled "Elements of National Power: Need for a Capabilities Compendium." Although referring only to an organization dedicated to defeating terrorism (much like the CTCC), Josten stated that "if you evaluate informational power against negative international media reports concerning the GWOT, we are losing that former advantage of global prestige won during the Cold War."[28] Franklin D. Kramer, Larry Wentz, and Stuart Starr argue in their article "I-Power: The Information Revolution and Stability Operations" that the first priority in overcoming this gap is by forming an Information strategy and "that the effort has to be truly interagency – and, most importantly, it must be accepted as a key element by both the DOD and Department of State."[29]

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[26] Robert Gates Landon Speech.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Richard Josten, "Elements of National Power: Need for a Capabilities Compendium," *Iosphere: Joint Information Operations Center* (Winter 2006): 38.

[29] Franklin D. Kramer, Larry Wentz, and Stuart Starr, "I-Power: The Information Revolution and Stability Operations" *Defense Horizons* (February 2007): 3-4.

Another advocate for organizational change comes from former Director for Strategic Communications and Information on the National Security Council, Jeffrey Jones, who states in an article in *Joint Forces Quarterly* that "national assets for communication, information, and education around the globe have degraded."[30] Jones continues to say that "there is little evidence of cooperation, coordination, or even appreciation for the impact of strategic communication" among the agencies of the USG, and that "there is a need for a permanent mechanism to coordinate as well as implement and monitor all interagency information efforts."[31] US Congress Representative Mac Thornberry attempted to create such an mechanism when he submitted House Resolution 1869, *The Strategic Communication Act of 2005*, calling for a non-partisan and non-profit Center for Strategic Communication (CSC). Privately ran, the CSC would primarily be a coordination and advisory center for all elements of national power, enabling key decision-makers within the USG to share a common operating picture.[32] While the thought may be a noble attempt to integrate Information within the USG, it is only a first step. Wielding and integrating Information throughout the USG, across the various departments and agencies, and with long-term objectives will be difficult without giving an organization adequate, long-term funding, an achievable mission with correlating objectives, and the authority to implement them.

While not sharing the perceived necessity to create another Information organization, senior personnel from the DOS recognize the inability of the USG to wield Information as an element of national power. Colleen Graffy, Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for European and Eurasian Affairs, stated in a November 1, 2007, speech that "U.S. public diplomacy went through a decline at the end of the Cold War," and hinted that the drop was due to the disbanding of the

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[30] Jones, "Strategic Communication," 110.

[31] Ibid., 110.

[32] *Strategic Communication Act of 2005,* HR 1869, 109th Cong., GovTrack.us, http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h109-1869, (accessed 22 April 2008): H 109

USIA. She lauded the improvements the DOS has made in recent years in using Information, but continued on to demonstrate how those improvements have only been within the DOS, with incremental advancements towards using Information. While these changes are broad and productive, DAS Graffy does not mention any effort to coordinate with other elements of the USG, nor does she state any need to do so.[33] Eventually, however, interagency cooperation will need to occur if the USG is going to communicate effectively with the world. The USIA faced similar challenges at the beginning of the Cold War, and overcame many of them. By analyzing how the USIA used Information perhaps there are some methods that may enable the USG to improve its ability to conduct strategic communications.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION DURING THE COLD WAR

The Question of Propaganda

The issue of propaganda is addressed in almost every book about the USIA, and almost every book about propaganda in the twentieth century specifically mentions the First World War's Committee on Public Information (CPI), the Second World War's Office of War Information (OWI), and the Cold War's USIA. The consensus among the authors is that, despite the negative connotation of the word, propaganda is the core competency of any Information agency.[34] George Creel - the first (and only) chairman for the CPI - wrote in his book *How We Advertised America* how the CPI addressed propaganda. Creel wrote the CPI was unapologetic about the CPI's "patriotic" propaganda efforts, both within America and overseas, only bristling at the accusation that the CPI was an agent of forced censorship.[35] Twenty years later James R.

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[33] Colleen Graffy, speech at Chatham House.

[34] Propaganda simply defined as "using information to influence others."

[35] George Creel, *How We Advertised America: International Propaganda and Communication* (NY: Arno Press, 1920), 4. Creel did admit censorship occurred, but that it was voluntary.

Mock and Cedric Larson wrote *Words That Won The War*, which examined the CPI on the eve of World War II. Mock and Larson state that:

> Contrary to naïve opinion, conscription of wealth would not decrease the need for propaganda of the "fight or Buy Bonds" variety. As Goebbels and his colleagues demonstrate, the "hammer and anvil of propaganda" must be pounded even more noisily to gain popular acquiescence in policies imposed from above. Whatever change might come over out state in a new war, a "propaganda ministry" would hold a vital place in the government.[36]

A counter-point in pre-WWII America was Frederick E. Lumley's book, *The Propaganda Menace*. As the title suggests, Lumley concluded that propaganda was omnipresent and a bane to men, because it subtly influenced people's perceptions and opinions through suggestion and innuendo rather than logic and facts.[37]

Mock and Larson's "propaganda ministry" was created in the form of the OWI in 1942, as the United States became more entangled in World War II. While the USG understood the necessity for an overseas propaganda agency, the US Congress could not – and did not – tolerate the domestic branch of the OWI.[38] The political issue of how much the USG should be able to control domestic information, began by the CPI and championed as late as 1939, became a friction point during the OWI's brief time. As Hixon stated in *Parting the Curtain* "opposition to the (OWI's) overseas program also materialized in the State Department, already resentful of Roosevelt for bypassing regular diplomatic channels. The Foreign Service professionals believed in elite diplomacy, rather than appealing to the masses, and viewed OWI propaganda as a disruptive force in the nation's foreign policy."[39] Ninkovich stated the attitudes toward the OWI

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[36] James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words That Won the War* (Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1939), 340.

[37] Frederick E. Lumley, *The Propaganda Menace*, (NY: the Century Company, 1933), vii. Lumley defines propaganda as "promotion which is veiled in one way or another as to (1) its origins or sources, (2) the interests involved, (3) the methods employed, (4) the content spear, and (5) the results accruing to the victims."

[38] Holly Cowan Shulman, *The Voice of America: Propaganda and Democracy, 1941-1945* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 32-33.

[39] Hixson, Parting the Curtain, 2.

more simply in his book *The Diplomacy of Ideas:* "Of all the wartime agencies, the OWI was perhaps the least popular among legislators increasingly fed up with the New Deal and its liberal-bureaucratic tendencies."[40] Henderson states that "from its beginnings, OWI was plagued by a legacy of congressional, military, and other distrust it had inherited from the Creel committee."[41]

After World War II there was no perceived need for a separate domestic or foreign information agency, though President Truman did direct that various overseas information programs continue, resulting in the creation of the United States Information Service (USIS) under the DOS.[42] As the Cold War began, recognizing the growing need for strategic communication, the US Congress looked for ways to counter Soviet propaganda. Included in this search were Senators H. Alexander Smith and Karl E. Mundt. Their report to the US Congress in 1948 warned that the Soviet Union had begun engagement of a war of words in Europe, with a dedicated campaign bent on vilification of the United States. Smith and Mundt urged that the US Congress take proactive steps to counter the Soviet's overt actions.[43]

Noting that "government propaganda and information programs (were) controversial even in wartime," Walter Hixson continued on to state that "a consensus emerged in 1947 to establish a postwar propaganda effort as a result of the onset of the Cold War in the Soviet Union."[44] But how could the USG establish such an effort during peace and avoid the problems the CPI and OWI faced concerning domestic propaganda? The compromised solution, while not perfect, served to ease a number of minds. The Information and Education Exchange Act of 1948 (known as the Smith-Mundt Act) directed the creation of an information organization (the basis

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[40] Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. foreign policy and cultural relations, 1938-1950*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 121.

[41] Henderson, *The U.S. Information Agency*, 33.

[42] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 15. See also: Henderson, *The USIA*, 35, and Dizard, *The Strategy of Truth*, 36.

[43] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 10. See also: Dizard, *Strategy of Truth*, 37.

for the USIA), but that organization could not distribute anything domestically it created for overseas dissemination. In effect, the legislation slammed shut any ability for the organization to propagandize at home.

Smith and Mundt successfully argued for a robust, fully funded information program, reporting "that hundreds of millions of dollars were being spent by the Russians for propaganda and noted that even the United Kingdom, although heavily in debt, was supporting an information service three times the size of the USIS program."[45] The influx of immediate funds that agents of communication were to receive, however, carried with them a price. By 1952 almost half of the funds and personnel within the Department of State were for information and exchange programs, which caused envy and infighting within the organization.[46] Even beyond internal bickering of the use of funds, the communication agents within the DOS themselves were bent towards more aggressive roles. An advisory committee warned the US Congress that there was transmitting less of a fair and impartial picture of the United States to foreign countries, and more outright propaganda, with emphasis on influencing people rather than informing them.[47] The US Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act in 1948, which formed the basic charter for the USG's overseas information program, which Dizard justifies in his book *The Strategy of Truth* by saying that "an information program is an integral part of the conduct of American foreign affairs."[48] The Smith-Mundt act was an uneasy compromise between the necessity of countering Soviet anti-American propaganda and promoting American values overseas, yet prevented the USG from having a propaganda machine that it could be used against Americans. The tension was evident in the language the US Congress included in the Smith-Mundt Act language to ensure,

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[44] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain* , 4-5. Hixson defines propaganda as "the attempt to influence behavior by shaping the attitudes of masses of people."

[45] Henderson, *The USIA*, 41.

[46] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 17.

[47] Henderson, *The USIA,* 46.

among other things, that the USG did not broadcast propaganda messages intended for foreign audiences to people within the United States itself.[49] As with all organizations with the mission to communicate a government's messages, the fear of the USG propagandizing to the American people would always be present.

President Eisenhower created the USIA on August 2, 1953. This was partly due to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's desire to "bring about a separation of the information and educational exchange functions from the Department of State to free the Department from operational responsibilities and enable it to concentrate solely on foreign policy and diplomacy."[50] The USIA had thirteen directors between 1953 and 1999, several of them notable news and businessmen, as well as distinguished politicians. Theodore Striebert, its first director, "had made a reputation in the broadcasting industry as a tough, pragmatic, and skillful manager."[51] George V. Allen was the former assistant secretary for public affairs, and was recalled as Ambassador from Greece, where he was serving at the time, to take over the USIA in 1957. "Ambassador Allen brought to the Agency a needed period of tranquility and an era of good feeling with Congress lasting more than three years."[52] Edward R. Murrow - perhaps its most famous director - served from 1961 to 1964 during the Kennedy administration, and "brought to his job immense prestige and a close association with John F. Kennedy." Henderson quotes a 1962 Advisory Commission report to Congress that states "The new Director is a professional in mass communication. He has been consulted in the formation and articulation of foreign policy."[53]

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[48] Dizard, *Strategy of Truth*, 37.

[49] Voice of America official website. Last accessed on 11 December 2007. Available at http://www.voanews.com/english/about/OnlinePressKit.cfm

[50] Henderson, *The U.S. Information Agency*, 51.

[51] Ibid., 53.

[52] Ibid., 55.

[53] Henderson, *The U.S. Information Agency*, 57.

The last Cold War director, and longest serving UISA director, chairing the agency from 1981 to 1989, was Charles Wick, appointed by Ronald Reagan. Neither a newsman or politician, Wick was a self-made millionaire who brought the use of propaganda by a government agency once again into full view.[54] In his book *Warriors of Disinformation,* Snyder, who served as Wick's director of USIA's Television and Film Service, stated that during Wick's tenure "propagandizing means advocating a point of view favorable to one's own position, and that's precisely what we at the USIA did."[55] He continued on to say that the USIA, under Wick's tenure, had no problem with practicing advocacy journalism, transmitting "good" propaganda (even if known to be exaggerated truth), and that they had "become unknowing warriors of disinformation, and then we became knowing ones."[56] The USIA, under Wick, was doing everything in its power to persuade foreign audiences, not to simply inform them, which hit at the heart of the propaganda issue.

The overriding question most of these directors faced for the USIAs forty-six year history was whether the USIA should be an instrument of propaganda. Central to that question was whether the USIA should simply *inform* or actively attempt to *persuade* foreign audiences. If it existed only to inform, how much of the bad news should accompany the good news? As Rubin wrote in1966 in *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency*: "The USIA has failed to determine conclusively whether its purpose is to serve as an information- or propaganda disseminating organization or both of these simultaneously." Rubin continued on to recommend "that the USIA move further in the direction of objective reporting."[57]

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[54] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 1-2.

[55] Ibid., xii-xiv.

[56] Ibid., xiv.

[57] Rubin, *The Objectives of the USIA*, 221.

Henderson makes clear his thoughts on propaganda in his book *The United States Information Agency*, stating that "the most that honest propaganda can do for unpopular policies is to make them understandable. Dishonest propaganda is an alternative that ordinarily does more harm than good by creating false expectations." Henderson quotes Oren Stephens, former USIA policy chief, who warned that when a propagandist's promises fail to reach fruition that "he generates disillusionment, resentment, and opposition." He added that "the open nature of society precludes the use of deliberate falsehood and requires the United States Information Service to spend much of its time clarifying an image distorted by commercial news and other media."[58]

As indicated by its title, *Strategy of Truth*, Dizard wrote that only by providing clear and consistent messages, as well as a defined strategy, would the USIA achieve its strategic communications mission. "Our purpose will be served by explaining as precisely as we can who we are, what we intend to do and how we intend to do."[59] Alvin Snyder, however, counters these assertions of an "honesty-only" policy in his book *Warriors of Disinformation*. Snyder links the term Public Diplomacy directly to propaganda, saying they are one and the same.[60] Snyder claims that blatantly untrue propaganda (what he calls "disinformation") has been "a feature of every administration, even those supposedly unsympathetic to it."[61] Snyder justified these actions most succinctly in the subtitle of his book *Warriors of Disinformation*: *American Propaganda, Soviet Lies, and the Winning of the Cold War.* Whether the USIA won the Cold War through words alone, or how much, if any, did the disinformation effort assist in bringing down the Soviet Union is not the subject of this monograph. It is significant, however, that Snyder argues that propaganda won the Cold War, even more so because of the price the USIA

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[58] Henderson, *The USIA*, 154-155.

[59] Dizard, *Strategy of Truth*, 28.

[60] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation,* 13. The specific quotation is "It was all propaganda, or, as the USIA later preferred to call it, public diplomacy."

[61] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 98.

paid for focusing so intently on the Soviet Union. Snyder believed that, although propaganda won the war, by focusing almost exclusively on defeating communism the USIA lost its justification as a necessary agency when the Cold War ended.

> The Soviet Union was critically important for American propaganda. As U.S. government broadcasters would discover when the Cold War was over, it would be a lot harder to justify their existence when the Soviet Union wasn't there to kick around anymore.[62]

Because it had an anti-communist mission, the perception was that the USIA ceased to be useful when the USSR disintegrated. Snyder contends that the USIA had a decisive impact on the Cold War precisely because it had an aggressive propaganda program and policies. Others have asserted that Information organizations missions should be that of solely informing an audience. As Joseph Nye wrote in *Soft Power,* "the debate over how directly or indirectly the government should try to control its instruments of soft power can never be fully resolved because both sides make valid points."[63]

Overseas Library Program

Many programs ended with the USIA. One such effort, the USIS overseas library program, was one of those quietly successful institutions that failed to make the transition to the twenty-first century. When it existed, the USIS overseas library program was successful enough that Wilson Dizard dedicates an entire chapter from his book *Strategy of Truth* to describing its effectiveness. Dizard cites the "revolution in literacy" as being the source for the popularity of the library program. Documenting the lack of American books in all but the largest overseas cities, especially Asian cities, Dizard chronicles the USIS's efforts to build overseas libraries and their status, as of 1961, ultimately crediting USIS libraries for ensuring that "there is no longer a city of any size in the free world without useful source of American publications either in a

[62] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 166.

[63] Nye, *Soft Power,* 103.

library or in a bookstore."[64] Dizard continues to list the USIS libraries successes, concluding his description by saying that "they are, in my opinion, the most effective single part of our entire information operation." According to Dizard 161 libraries in 65 countries hosted more than 26 million patrons annually. Over eight million American books were loaned out in 1959, giving support to Dizard's claim that "of all the innovations the USIS has introduced overseas this one has been especially popular."[65]

The USG recognized even prior to World War II that overseas educational organizations were useful. Ninkovich, in his book *The Diplomacy of Ideas,* discussed funding of such institutions as the Bibliotheca Benjamin Franklin in Mexico City and the ten Instituto Cultural Argentino Norte Americano in Latin America:

> A few department officials recommended that financial aid to these institutions should become "a long-range propaganda program undertaken by this Government… in order to compete successfully with other leading powers." Besides teaching English, the institutes could be used as "nuclei for pro-United States cultural 'propaganda' in general." But most departmental personnel agreed with Louis Halle that the sole legitimate function of the institutes was "disseminating the truth" about the United States.[66]

The same desire to use educational and informative institutes would last from the 1940s until the end of the century.

In presenting a dispassionate analysis of the USIA's overseas functions Robert Elder does his best to present facts and figures, and reserved judgment on the USIA and its programs. In his book, *The Information Machine*, Elder notes that USIA's libraries numbered at 223 in 1966, grown from Dizard's 161 libraries in 1960. Elder also noted that functions of the libraries were "in addition to providing reading materials, such information centers arrange lectures, seminars,

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[64] Dizard, *Strategy of Truth*, 137.

[65] Ibid., 138.

[66] Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 45.

concerts, and exhibits; they also teach English, with more than one million persons regularly attending classes in any given year."[67]

Henderson was more succinct in his evaluation of the USIS libraries in their various forms in his book *The United States Information Agency*:

> In its 1967 report to Congress, the Advisory Commission on Information urged that the USIA "focus more sharply on its binational centers, information centers and libraries," which, it said, were "in many respects the heart of the Agency's overseas operation" and could serve as a coordinating device and outlet for the multimedia programs of the USIA. Often, the report noted, binational centers constituted the first contact with America for residents of foreign countries. USIA Director Marks recently called the work of the centers "the single most important activity" of the Agency.[68]

This single paragraph highlights the importance of overseas libraries, in all of its forms, even as early as 1967. Henderson also says that "the library invariably is one of the biggest USIS attractions."[69]

Henderson made the distinction between USIS libraries and binational centers (which were run by the host nation with American support), noting that "the binational centers are self-supporting, or partly so" but that both are "aimed primarily at youth."[70] Complementing each other rather than competing for participation, these institutions worked towards the common goal of influencing key audiences through educational means. Henderson continued even further in his description of their effectiveness, quoting the Advisory Commission on Information's report to the US Congress. The report noted an interesting measure of effectiveness by detailing the sixty-eight attacks on USIS libraries over the previous twenty years as evidence of their importance. The advisory board cited two reasons for this conclusion: "'First, there would be no point in attacking ineffectual operations. Second, outpourings of deep regret, and in some

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[67] Elder, *The Information Machine*, 10.

[68] Henderson, *The USIA*, 154-155.

[69] Ibid., 153.

[70] Ibid.,154.

instances of financial contributions for building repair and book restoration, testify to the more favorable views of an appreciative and more permanent library clientele'"[71] Dizard also noted this tendency to attack USIS libraries in his second USIA book, *Inventing Public Diplomacy,* where he stated that:

> USIS libraries were usually crowded with students and other readers throughout the day. Attendance was so heavy in many of them that patrons had to reserve a time to be admitted. One of these was the Calcutta library, located near one of the city's major universities. It had large, plate-glass windows facing the street. As with other USIS libraries, the windows were a tempting target for anti-American demonstrations, often led by the very students who were the libraries' patrons. The windows suffered as a result, leading to the wry observation among USIS officer that their libraries were just a stone's throw away from the university.[72]

Even strictly propaganda-centric books, such as Walter Hixson's *Parting the Curtain*, noticed the effects of the USIS overseas library program. Recounting the popularity of USIS libraries in the mid-fifties, Hixson states that "the overseas libraries stocked 2.28 million volumes and accommodated more than 80,000 visitors a day. George V. Allen, named director of USIA in 1957, expressed 'astonishment at the amount of demand overseas for ordinary American textbooks.' Although Dulles rarely supported USIA programs, Allen recalled that the secretary of state was 'enthusiastic about sending books abroad.'" [73] Hixson also noted that the American libraries were the most popular in many Third World cities.[74] In 1992 the number of overseas libraries was 210 – a drop from the 223 libraries operating in 1966, but still an active and viable program.[75]

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[71] Henderson, *The USIA.,* 130.

[72] Wilson P. Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2004), 154.

[73] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 124.

[74] Ibid., 124.

[75] Paul P. Blackburn, "The Post-Cold War Public Diplomacy of the United States" *US Foreign Policy After the Cold War.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1992):196.

USG-sponsored education and information institutions abroad, such as the USIS libraries, did not ruffle any political or cultural feathers. Except for the McCarthy hearings, at no point did the USIS library come under congressional attack for its mission, and McCarthy attacked the USIS libraries mostly on "books considered too subversive for overseas distribution" and not on the overall mission of the libraries.[76] Just as telling, Ronald Rubin's 1966 book, *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency*, is notable because it only mentions the expensive USIS overseas library program in passing. This 230 page "how to fix the USIA" book, full of suggestions of improvements and change, does not take a shot at the overseas library program, despite its cost and Rubin's desire to explain the USIA's $100 million a year budget. Even as Rubin reveals the confusion that the American public, Congress, and USIA itself had over its policies, goals, and objectives, the overseas libraries seemed to be able to contribute overall to whatever objectives the USIA and US Congress ultimately decided on. The only mention of libraries Rubin made in his book was to note that they are one technique in an arsenal the USIA could use according to their "country plans."[77] Rubin went on to note that "the country program is worth retaining," which would include, by association, the use of libraries.[78]

Being the director of Worldnet and very visual-media focused, Snyder focuses on the success of videos in overseas video clubs, especially at reaching younger populations. Snyder argued that the popularity of the overseas video clubs (or "entertainment centers" as he later called them) were a testimony to their ability to reach key audiences. Of particular note was the success of silent films in non-English speaking regions of the world. However, Snyder mentioned that any video that taught English was among the most popular of the clubs (and the

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[76] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 123.

[77] Rubin, *Objectives of the USIA,* 23. The other techniques include: personal contact, radio, book publication and distribution, press, motion pictures, television, exhibits, English-language instruction, and cultural exchange. Worth noting is that all these techniques can be used within a library.

[78] Ibid., 223.

most stolen).[79] While ran as a separate program from overseas libraries, the ability to entertain could be included into an overseas library's mission to educate and inform. Perhaps Wilson Dizard stated it best when he wrote that "we have an obligation to present ourselves to the new tide of literate humanity, and books have pride of place in this task."[80] In the spirit of interagency cooperation, the DOS allowed some of its overseas embassies to be used to test the effectiveness of videos on foreign audiences.[81]

Interagency Cooperation

Overall, the USIA and the US military had good relations during the Cold War. Dizard stated that the DOD,

> had a special impact on the information agency's overseas operations. The department dealt with overseas opinion at many levels, bringing massive resources to the task. During the Cold War, it ran the largest federal program from bringing foreign visitors to the United States, most of them military personnel being trained at defense installations throughout the country.[82]

In 1963, cooperation between the USIA and the DOD allowed for travel grants for 180,000 travel grants for both military and civilian visitors over the previous fifteen-year period, with 18,000 foreigners enrolled in military training programs.[83]

However, the most extensive collaboration between DOD and USIA took place in the 1960s during the Vietnam conflict. The DOD coordinated its six psychological operations battalions in Vietnam with the Vietnam-based USIA and USIS agencies. Working through the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office , this coordination "led to a definite improvement in coordination

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[79] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 144-150.

[80] Dizard, *Strategy of Truth*, 152.

[81] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 144-150.

[82] Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy*, 134.

[83] Ibid., 134.

between the agencies involved, particularly in establish a consistent set of messages among headquarters and field units."[84]

Just as America was beginning to realize that it was in a Cold War with the Soviets, the State Department realized that it was lacking strategic communications capability that it had possessed during World War II. The DOS enlisted the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to evaluate on "the broad problem of how to get information into Russia." The team, coded Project TROY, concluded that due to "bureaucratic infighting and turf guarding among State, Defense, CIA, and other agencies, the study group concluded that 'the parts are there – in separate agencies and departments – but the whole is not there.' Absent a 'coherent relationship under central direction: of the economic, military, diplomatic, and information services, 'our political warfare will lack the striking power it needs today.'"[85] Fifty years later the same tensions between USG institutions still exists.

Snyder stated that "many diplomats felt that public diplomacy hindered or even subverted their efforts. They perceived it as a provocation and meddlesome, liable to unsettle the private, sensitive diplomatic process." Snyder concluded that "the USIA's effect on foreign policy was in large measure dictated by the personality of its director." Well-respected journalists and diplomats such as Allen, Murrow, and Streidel seemed to be in charge when the waters between the USIA and DOS – while always uneasy – were at their calmest. Other times, more often associated when the USIA was at its height as a propaganda agency – such as happened under Wick's tenure – proved the rockiest of relations between the USIA and DOS. Snyder hints at the ambiguity of what was considered "Public Diplomacy" and the US Congress' conviction that public diplomacy was an increasing element of foreign policy (which, Snyder had stated, is exactly opposite what DOS officials believed). Snyder continued on to quote a 1964

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[84] Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy*, 138.

[85] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 16-17.

Congressional study that "bluntly used the word *propaganda*" and went on to describe the goals of public diplomacy.[86] This obviously would have put the DOS and Congress at odds, with the USIA caught in the middle. Congress wanted the USIA as a propaganda agency while the DOS could not risk losing international credibility by being closely associated with such an agency. The resulting unclear definitions of words such as "public diplomacy," undefined roles and responsibilities, lack of clear strategy, and disagreements over the USIA's ultimate role caused tension between the DOS, the US Congress, and USIA.[87]

Even so, because the USIA's mission was to explain foreign policies, decisions, and actions to overseas audiences the USIA's interaction with the DOS was vital. This did not always occur, however, as evident in Hixson's quote of former USIA head George Allen "that the 'main problem' for USIA remained 'getting guidance from the State Department.'"[88] Hixson went on to state that "despite USIA's growing propaganda activities, the agency 'lacked influence at the policy-making level.' Dulles had little time for USIA and occasionally attacked its activities."[89] It was only through the unwavering support of President Eisenhower that the USIA managed to exist. Despite Eisenhower's enthusiasm for a strategic communications program, however, Secretary of State Dulles "perceived the information programs as a nuisance as well as a potential threat to his own ability to conduct the nation's foreign policy."[90]

Former DOS diplomat and USIA employee Wilson Dizard recognized the tension between the new strategic communications agency and the DOS. In describing the tension, Dizard intimated that the tension between the two was directly linked to DOS's role as foreign

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[86] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 18-19.

[87] Ibid., 18-19.

[88] Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 126.

[89] Ibid.,124.

[90] Ibid., 26.

policy maker, and was suspicious of any increased USIA activities within the National Security Council:

> These advocates of fuller participation by USIA in the decision-making process argue only that the Agency should be a consultant in the process; they do not propose the USIA should be a policy maker. Any move to weaken the State Department's traditional control over the formulation of foreign affairs in the interests of policies dominated by propaganda considerations would be untenable.[91]

Any USG agency wishing to use strategic communications would face similar concerns from the DOS. How much input should an agency engaged in strategic communication have on the formation of foreign policy?

Henderson gave a good account of how USIA-DOS coordination occurred in 1969. Stating that the coordination was "highly developed," Henderson gave credit to lower-level coordination systems and the "many unofficial exchanges daily between various areas of USIA and corresponding elements of the State Department," before adding that "such exchanges have no official standing as policy guidance, but both the Department and the Agency consider them to be, on the whole, helpful."[92] Henderson's noted that the largest concern of an Advisory Commission on Information to the US Congress was that USIA officers were so entrenched in their day-to-day duties that "they do not now have the time to provide adequate staff support for counseling purposes in Washington." The Advisory's warning was not one of lack of coordination between DOS and the USIA, but lack of USIA ability to counsel the DOS.

That the USIA could contribute is undeniable. The amount that it could contribute, however, was dependant on how much the USIA understood, or even knew of, foreign policy decisions. As Snyder observed in *Warriors of Disinformation,* USIA director Edward R. Murrow was fond of the metaphor that if the USIA is to be there during the landings that it should

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[91] Dizard, *Strategy of Truth*, 188.

[92] Henderson, *The USIA*, 200.

also be there for the takeoff.[93] So concerned was Murrow about the USIA's ability to have input into foreign policy decisions that he "insisted on getting a letter from his commander in chief (President Kennedy) stating unequivocally the prominent position of the Agency in the administration's foreign affairs activities." Kennedy complied, directing that all USG departments and agencies would seek council from the USIA concerning any policy or program that would affect public opinion.[94] Arguably the USIA had found its optimal niche in advising on policy but not directing policy decisions. This relationship of the USIA in advising the DOS on foreign policy continued through the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Carter administrations. Though turbulent at times, the relationship was workable.

ANALYSIS

Perhaps the biggest contemporary advocate of Information as an element of national power is Joseph Nye, who used the term "soft power," meaning "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments."[95] Simply informing an audience does not mean using an element of national power. This requires that the USG examine its policies in light of the reaction it will receive in the international community, which requires the USG to do the hardest thing: take a look at itself through the eyes of others. While American policy should not always or even often be made to please the international community (or the American public, for that matter) being able to see the second and third order consequences of policies, as well as advise on mitigation of unpopular actions, policies, or decisions can lessen adverse reactions and statements. How that is done, however, always raises the question of "what to say."

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[93] Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 18.

[94] Ibid., 18.

[95] Nye, *Soft Power*, x

Addressing the Propaganda Question

Perhaps the best argument for how the USG can address the propaganda question comes from Joseph Nye's *Soft Power*:

> In 1963, Edward R. Murrow, the noted broadcaster who was director of USIA in the Kennedy administration, defined public diplomacy as interactions aimed not only at foreign governments but primarily with nongovernmental individuals and organizations, and often presented as a variety of private views in addition to government views. As Mark Leonard, a British expert on public diplomacy, has observed, skeptics who treat the term "public diplomacy" as a mere euphemism for propaganda miss the point. Simple propaganda often lacks credibility and thus is counterproductive as public diplomacy. Nor is public diplomacy merely public relations. Conveying information and selling a positive image is part of it, but public diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling atmosphere for government policies.[96]

Nye's argument hinged on one element: credibility. Every author that referenced the USIA and propaganda operations advocated programs of honesty and facts instead of deeper endeavors into the propaganda realm. From the previous examination of the propaganda question it is impossible to determine how directly or indirectly the USG should use its elements of soft power because, as Nye states, "both sides raise valid points," but the key lesson learned is that credibility is important. Propaganda - no matter what it is called in the twenty-first century - is a matter of creditability. To be effective in interagency operations, it is imperative that the DOD examine these issues, and come up with cornerstone definitions and understandings. The DOD can benefit from future interagency efforts with the DOS by providing a clear and concise a definition of propaganda, as well as outlining its use within the DOD and USG. If the DOD is going to be a strategic communicator, it must realize that its information operations can affect the DOS.

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[96] Nye, *Soft Power*, 107.

Areas Open for Interagency Cooperation

The DOS has the Office of Undersecretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy, the Bureau of International Information Programs, the Rapid Response Unit, and the Counterterrorism Coordination Center. The DOD has created the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Joint Communication). The White House has the Office of Political Affairs, the Communications Office, and had attempted to create the Office of Strategic Communication. Congressman Mac Thornberry had attempted to create the Center for Strategic Communication. All of these new organizations were an attempt to better use Information as an element of national power. None of these agencies, however, had the authority to coordinate that Information in a way that would allow for strategic communication. Just as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology discovered in Project TROY, all the pieces are present, but the coordination and cooperation are not.

During various times in its existence the USIA had the responsibility of being the USG's strategic communicator. Director Murrow even went so far as to request from President Kennedy a letter requiring other institutions to seek out the USIA for counsel and guidance. Yet even that step did not guarantee that the USIA could successfully coordinate with other agencies. What did guarantee that coordination developed from what Henderson called "lower-level coordination systems" required for the "many unofficial exchanges daily between various areas of the departments," going on to add that "such exchanges have no official standing as policy guidance, but both the Department and the Agency consider them to be, on the whole, helpful."[97] This "lower-level" coordination was one method the USIA used to become a better strategic coordinator.

[97] Henderson, *The USIA*, 200.

Another potential area for interagency cooperation between DOS and DOD is what each could contribute to a revitalized overseas library program, as described in chapter two. One of the DOD's overseas missions is reconstruction. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) states that "the skills needed for counterinsurgency, stabilization and reconstruction, 'military diplomacy' and complex interagency coalition operations are essential."[98] Chapter two demonstrated the success of overseas libraries during the Cold War. Using reconstruction funds to build and run libraries would be one way of developing the skills for stabilization and reconstruction, "military diplomacy," and complex interagency coalition operations. And the DOS has already seen that libraries are effective in strengthening ties with other countries. The U.S. Embassy to Germany has initiated a program called "America@yourlibrary," with the purpose of "showcase[ing] libraries as centers for learning, information and entertainment in their communities."[99]

Another prominent goal of the DOS is to teach English in foreign countries. "English language teaching is a priority program and should be expanded."[100] Former State Department Undersecretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes stated that "we are teaching English to 10,000 young people ages 14-18 in more than 40 Muslim majority countries. I am a big believer in English training – it gives young people an employable skill – and a window to a wider world."[101] One of the functions of the USIS overseas libraries was for instruction on English, whether through live teacher-to-student classes, books on reading and

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[98] Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. (Washington, D.C., 30 September 2001), 83.

[99] US Embassy in Germany, "What's behind America@yourlibrary," US Diplomatic Mission to Germany website, http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/ayl.html," (accessed 29 January 2008).

[100] Strategic Communication and Public Policy Coordinating Committee, US Department of State, "U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication, June 2007." US. Department of State website, www.state.gov/documents/organization/87427.pdf (accessed 29 January 2008).

[101] Karen Hughes, speech titled "Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy: Interagency Coordination" for the DOD Conference on Strategic Communication on 11 July 07. U.S. State Department website, http://www.state.gov/r/us/2007/88630.htm (accessed 29 January 2007).

speaking English, or English-instructional videos and audiotapes that could be played at the library or taken home. As Elder noted, the functions of libraries were "in addition to providing reading materials, such information centers arrange lectures, seminars, concerts, and exhibits; they also teach English, with more than one million persons regularly attending classes in any given year."[102] Karen Hughes' number of 10,000 Muslims learning English is only a fraction of what a strategic communications agency was capable of forty years ago. Considering the advances in technology and education, the United States could export education, knowledge, and information in previously unimagined proportions.

Other Lessons Learned

However the USG decides to use its Information arm, and however much the DOD continues to remain involved in strategic communication and public diplomacy, it would seem expedient to tie USG Information organizations and missions directly to the global war on terror, such as the CTCC is now. This could easily be a mistake. The USIA, according to Snyder, was tied directly to combating Soviet propaganda, and when the USSR fell the USIA could not continue to justify its position. In creating a strategic communications organization, whether inside USG departments or not, bounding those organizations to the GWOT will cause those organizations to lose their relevancy after the war is over, no matter how far in future that may occur, just as the USIA lost its relevancy after the Cold War. SC organizations should have open-ended objectives if they are going to have a chance of avoiding the fate of the USIA and its predecessors.

To the end that the DOS is responsible for the USG's strategic communications effort, the DOD should, with any interagency arrangement, reaffirm that the DOS is the primary strategic communicator and provide any assistance possible to support that responsibility. While

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[102] Elder, *The Information Machine*, 10.

the DOD has public affair officers, it does not conduct public affairs operations according to the DOS definition of strategic communication. DOD does public affairs in support of *military* operations, just as the DOD does public diplomacy in support of national objectives. Public affairs and public diplomacy, then, are not solely military operations, but are also support operations for the DOS. Only by understanding how the DOS views and uses strategic communication can interagency coordination be more efficient.

As demonstrated in the second chapter, part of the tension between DOS and the USIA was over how much influence the USIA should have over the formation of foreign policy. While leaders such as Allen and Murrow continued to reassure their respective Secretaries of State that the USIA had no intention of influencing policy, they did need to understand those policies as well as evaluate their potential impact. While the DOD is carful to remain nonpartisan throughout each administration, the military, as strategic communicators, must wrestle to define the limits the DOD should have in advising or influencing foreign policy, much as it does as the USG's "hard power" component. The same issues of influence versus execution-only of foreign policy will increase as the DOD continues to use "soft power."

CONCLUSION

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said: "What is clear to me is that there is a need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security – diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development."[103] What is just as clear is the need for interagency cooperation. The twentieth century provided clues on how that can be accomplished.

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[103] Gates, Landon Lecture.

The previous agents of strategic communication grappled with how to deal with propaganda, and left definitive opinions on the subject. Some believed in propaganda, some did not, while some merely accepted it as - not an act of deception - but an act of persuasion. Perhaps the greatest danger propaganda presents is not how we understand it, but that we could come to an agreement about propaganda, its place, and its role within the various departments of the USG. It is the debate within the system about how much propaganda is enough, and how much is too much that truly defines those values that others admire about the United States. The issue of how to communicate, what to communicate, and to whom, should never, truly, be definitively answered. Vacillation within a system, a method, or a definition is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as it does not prevent necessary action. A certain amount of uncertainty within means and methods of coordination is good. It keeps organizations honest, dynamic, and constantly ensuring that the lines of coordination, understanding, and communication are always open. Constantly testing and challenging the system is not a bad thing. The most successful relationships in Cold War history, as outlined by this monograph, were due to a moderate degree of uncertainty and the continual need to keep lines of communication open. Agencies continued to challenge themselves and each other on the definition, understanding, and use of certain volatile techniques, like propaganda. Usually the organizations could not answer those challenges themselves, and it continued to enter into the discourse and discussion of the times. Only when an organization seems to definitively answer those questions do those institutions outlive their usefulness when those "answers" no longer apply.

The Departments of State and Defense exist for distinct and definitive reasons. Strategic communications will add another dimension between that department responsible for making foreign policy and those departments charged with enforcing that policy. Besides enforcing policy, the DOD may very well be asked to explain policy to foreign audiences. The key being able to explain policy is that the DOD must first understand that policy, and understanding will require very close coordination and communication with the DOS at many levels.

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