PUBLIC AFFAIRS: INFORM, EDUCATE, AND INFLUENCE

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JEFFREY SCOTT POOL, Major, USMC
B.A., University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 1995

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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As operations in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate, America's adversaries are capable of manipulating domestic and international media with lies, distortion and propaganda disseminated via the internet or media outlets. The U.S. military's inability to dominate the global information environment, as it does on conventional battlefields, represents a strategic and operational weakness that must be addressed.

This study investigates the roles and responsibilities of deployed military public affairs officers as they pertain to influencing selected target audiences in order to gain and maintain popular support. Current and past doctrine is examined, along with marketing and advertising practices to determine military applicability. The research explores mass communication theories and techniques to improve public affairs officers' ability to influence these key audiences. This study concludes that influencing audiences, to include the U.S. domestic audience is the primary role and responsibility of military public affairs officers. Recommendations in this study include altering Public Affairs Joint and Service doctrine to reflect the responsibility for public affairs officers to influence their audiences and change public affairs training to teach mass communication theories that are designed to influence their audiences.

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Name of Candidate: Major Jeffrey S. Pool

Thesis Title: Public Affairs: Inform, Educate and Influence

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Brian J. Gerling, M.A.

_____, Member
John N. Cary, M.A.

_____, Member
Scott R. Borderud, Th.D.

Accepted this 12th day of June 2009 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

PUBLIC AFFAIRS: INFORM, EDUCATE, AND INFLUENCE, by Major Jeffrey S. Pool, 113 pages.

As operations in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate, America's adversaries are capable of manipulating domestic and international media with lies, distortion and propaganda disseminated via the internet or media outlets. The U.S. military's inability to dominate the global information environment, as it does on conventional battlefields, represents a strategic and operational weakness that must be addressed.

This study investigates the roles and responsibilities of deployed military public affairs officers as they pertain to influencing selected target audiences in order to gain and maintain popular support. Current and past doctrine is examined, along with marketing and advertising practices to determine military applicability. The research explores mass communication theories and techniques to improve public affairs officers' ability to influence these key audiences. This study concludes that influencing audiences, to include the U.S. domestic audience is the primary role and responsibility of military public affairs officers. Recommendations in this study include altering Public Affairs Joint and Service doctrine to reflect the responsibility for public affairs officers to influence their audiences and change public affairs training to teach mass communication theories that are designed to influence their audiences.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ACRONYMS

DGDP   Directorate of Graduate Degree Programs

DINFOS   Defense Information School

FM   Field Manual

GDP   Graduate Degree Programs

IO   Information Operations

ISAF   International Security Assistance Force

JFC   Joint Force Commander

JP   Joint Publication

JTF   Joint Task Force

MNFI   Multi-National Force Iraq

MOE   Measure of Effectiveness

MOP   Measure of Performance

OWI   Office of War Information

PAO   Public Affairs Officer

PSYOP   Psychological Operations

SGA   Small Group Advisor

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The United States remains the world's only military superpower; however, its warfighting dominance does not necessarily extend to the information environment. As operations in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate, America's adversaries are capable of manipulating domestic and international media with lies, distortion and propaganda disseminated via the internet or media outlets sympathetic to their cause. Major news outlets then sometimes run these news stories. This propaganda degrades public support at home and abroad for U.S. military operations. Propaganda attacks by America's enemies directed towards the American public will not end with the Global War on Terror; future adversaries will continue to exploit this capability in order to achieve strategic successes from tactical actions.

The advent of 24-hour cable news programming, the Internet, and particularly the exponential growth of blog sites and satellite telecommunications all contribute to the modern information environment. The battle for information dominance takes place continually in this environment, which shapes public perception. The ability of a single entity to maintain total dominance of the information environment at all times is highly improbable, since the information environment is so vast and complex. It is crucial that the U.S. military improve its ability to dominate the information environment at decisive times with key audiences.

Antoine de Jomini, the 19th century military theorist, is credited with articulating many of the U.S. military's modern-day ―Principles of War.‖ Almost two centuries later,

the U.S. Department of Defense included three additional principles into Joint

Publication 3-0 *Joint Operations*: *perseverance*, *restraint* and *legitimacy*. These three

additional principles, together with the original nine, comprise the ―Principles of Joint

Operations."[1] America's strategic center of gravity is its national will.[2] It appears that

America's enemies know this fact. They plan and execute tactical operations to achieve

the strategic effect of weakening America's national resolve, by assaulting these three

additional Joint Principles of War. Their weapons of choice are the mass media and

internet. America's enemies seem to maintain a simple strategy: broadcast tactical

successes globally to create strategic victories.

Recent history demonstrated that America withdraws its military forces after

erosion in popular support for military operations such as Vietnam, Lebanon, and

Somalia.[3] Both in Iraq and Afghanistan, America's enemies know that they cannot defeat

U.S. forces by conventional means, so they focus on undermining the three Joint

Principles of War. Even a cursory study of daily news headline will show that America's

enemies are striving to attack America's and coalition partners' will to continue its

military efforts: *perseverance*. Next, despite the American military's best efforts to

prevent collateral damage, an airstrike will be alleged by its enemies to have caused a

large number of civilian deaths: *restraint*. As coalition nations withdraw their troops

from distant battlefields, and as American diplomats fail to secure international

resolutions and statements of support, America's moral and legal right to continue its

wars is shown to be waning: *legitimacy*.

For conventional military forces, achieving tactical success on the battlefield

towards operational and strategic goals is no longer an adequate formula for success in

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current and future conflicts. America must also bolster and protect its center of gravity, its national will. The military's role in defending this center of gravity is accomplished primarily through effective information engagement activities at the operational and tactical levels of war. At the national level, Strategic Communication, which includes public diplomacy, public affairs efforts, and other means, is the primary means the American government uses to protect this center of gravity by informing and educating domestic audiences and influencing selected foreign audiences.[4]

Within the U.S. military, public affairs and information operations conduct the lion's share of work to accomplish the tasks of informing, educating and influencing audiences on the local and global stage, in accordance with laws, statutes and directives that govern public affairs and information operations activities. Fact based, ethical communications is the centerpiece of policy for all PAOs and IO officers' actions, particularly when their efforts might be broadcast to a U.S. audience.[5]

Public affairs officers, as a part of the American military, are a relatively new occupational specialty. Before the establishment of public affairs as a military occupational specialty, its functions were a collateral duty for military officers, not their primary responsibility:

> American military public affairs remained in such an infancy until World War I, when President Woodrow Wilson established the civilian Committee on Public Information to travel across the country to boost public support for the war effort by giving speeches in churches, schools, and service clubs. At the end of the conflict, a public information unit was organized in the Army's Military Intelligence Division. In 1929, it was renamed the Public Relations Branch and in 1940 was taken out of intelligence altogether and transferred to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff and then to the Secretary of War. Once World War II began, its handful of personnel grew to more than 3,000 persons cranking out stories from the fronts, facilitating newsreel and radio coverage, and urging public support for the troops. The Navy and Army Air Corps also expanded their public

relations staffs, providing information, censoring some news, and helping war correspondents get their stories. When the war was over, military public relations had become part of the armed forces mission in war and peace.[6]

Currently, public affairs officers serve in every branch of the military and are kept gainfully employed providing information to various publics in the atmosphere of a 24 hour, 7 days a week news cycle:

> Today, public affairs is a vital mission in the United States Armed Forces. It is supported by the notion that government must render accounts for the resources given to it by the people. Moreover, the military - which defends the nation from external enemies and occasionally puts American sons and daughters in harm's way - is obliged to keep family members informed of the safety of the nation and their relatives in uniform. Perhaps no other government department has such a responsibility other than the presidency.[7]

It has long been a mantra in the U.S. military that public affairs informs and educates while information operations' role is to influence foreign audiences.[8] The general division of labor and responsibilities between public affairs officers and information operations officers in a deployed environment is typically the following: public affairs officers handle the media and keep U.S. domestic and international audiences updated on the U.S. military's operations; information operations officers keep the host nation civilians informed and attempt to influence them into supporting U.S. efforts.

Political scientist and author Joseph Nye said, ―in traditional international conflicts, the side with the stronger military force tended to win. In today's information age, it is often the party with the stronger story that wins." [9] This statement matches closely with the remark made by then LtGen James N. Mattis, I Marine Expeditionary Force, commanding general, who said, ―Ideas are more important than (artillery) rounds."[10]

This paper will examine how the U.S. military can improve its ability to influence various target audiences. Its focus will be the roles and responsibilities of public affairs officers deployed overseas in current and future military operations. This research primarily aims to evaluate the old paradigm that public affairs informs and educates while information operations activities influence audiences. The Defense Information School, the military occupational specialty school all PAOs must attend, teaches that military public affairs officers do not and should not attempt to influence or sway public opinion.[11] This philosophy has its roots in military doctrine. The 1997 version of Joint Publication 3-61 *Public Affairs* states, "Propaganda or publicity designed to sway or direct public opinion will not be included in DOD PA programs."[12] This ban on propaganda, particularly on influencing public opinion, is clear, concise and definite. This same doctrinal publication also sets the boundaries between public affairs and psychological operations, one of the five core capabilities of information operations:

> Under no circumstances will public affairs personnel engage in PSYOP activities, or vice versa. The JTF commander will establish separate agencies and facilities for PA and PSYOP activities. At no time will PSYOP personnel address the media, unless related to coverage of the PSYOP function.[13]

The implication of this Joint Publication is that public affairs must avoid influencing, swaying or directing audiences, leaving this task to information operations officers. However, this research will continue to evaluate and test this paradigm to see if appearances truly reflect reality.

Structure of the Paper

This chapter introduces the thesis, explains its relevance and defines several key terms while establishing the limitations, restraints and significance of the research.

Preliminary questions are first asked in this chapter and should be treated as secondary questions that must be answered in order to reach a logical primary research question. These questions are researched in chapter 2 and answered in chapter 3.

Chapter 2 provides an examination of the current literature needed to answer the preliminary and primary questions. Chapter 3 answers the preliminary questions and then raises the primary research question. Chapter 4 analyzes information from chapter 2 in context of the primary research question. Chapter 5 offers the summary, recommendations, topics for further research and a conclusion to this research.

<u>Preliminary Research Questions</u>

The U.S. military cannot allow its enemies to dominate the information environment. The U.S. military must improve its ability to influence domestic and international audiences while simultaneously countering its adversaries' propaganda efforts. These two separate activities -- one proactive and one reactive -- protect America's strategic center of gravity, its national will. In order to examine how to improve public affairs officers' ability to influence, the following questions must be asked and answered: Are military PAOs *expected* to influence various publics or are their duties simply to inform and educate those publics? Are military PAOs *allowed* to influence publics? What laws and regulations *restrain* military PAOs from influencing? Do military PAOs *actually* influence audiences? What are the current mass communication theories and techniques used in marketing, advertising and political campaigns?

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<u>Assumptions</u>

This study assumes that the reader will have a basic understanding of the U.S. military hierarchical structure and familiarization with common communication terms and practices. However, a detailed knowledge of the U.S. military or mass communication theories is not required to understand this research.

It is also assumed that the U.S. military will continue to work closely with civilian media agencies during on-going and future military operations. This research does not assume that mass media are supportive of the military operations or of the American Government's agenda or plans.

This research assumes that mass media generally does influence audience perceptions to a lesser or greater extent, depending on the individual audience.

<u>Limitations</u>

The goal of this research is not to advocate a restructuring of U.S. military public affairs organizations or to create new military doctrine for public affairs, but instead to develop practical solutions that could be applied rapidly. Its perspective is that of a deployed PAO working to gain and maintain U.S. domestic support during an ongoing operation. Though this research is applicable to stateside PAOs, the focus is designed to aid those deployed PAOs working in a contested information environment. This thesis will be limited to researching conventional means of influencing public perception; therefore, it will not encompass computer network operations or electronic warfare. It will also not research the effectiveness of command information or community relations activities of PAOs assigned to military bases in the U.S.

Although this thesis will research techniques to counter America's adversaries'

propaganda, it will not explore how to extinguish the root causes of ideological

extremism. Instead, it will look for common practices that could be applied against any

enemy, not just Islamic extremists. This thesis will study current mass media theories

and techniques used by political pollsters to identify if any of these practices could be

incorporated into public affairs training. This research is not meant to provide in-depth

research on these theories, which are already proven and well researched.

<p align="center">Significance</p>

This research aims at improving the effectiveness of military public affairs

activities. Expert consensus has long held that public opinion is the U.S. strategic center

of gravity.[14] Senior leaders place great importance on increasing the U.S. military's

ability to dominate the information environment; however, little if any viable

transformation of public affairs capabilities has been made towards this goal. The U.S.

military must increase its ability to conduct perception management simultaneously

across numerous and varied target audiences while impeding its enemy's propaganda

efforts. The noted Strategic Communication theorist and author, Kenneth Payne,

succinctly states the importance of winning the information war against America's

adversaries:

> The conflicts of the last decade have amply demonstrated that the media,
> ostensibly non-state actors, have become an important party in many international
> conflicts. In conflicts involving advanced Western militaries, this is accentuated
> by the evolution and increasing importance of information operations. Winning
> the media war is crucially important to Western war planners, and increasingly
> sophisticated methods for doing so have been developed--albeit with varying
> results.[15]

As advocated by Payne, this research aims to discover ways to bolster America's

influencing abilities while negating its adversary's propaganda attacks.

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[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3.0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), II-2.

[2] Ehrich D. Rose, ―Defending America's Center of Gravity" (academic research paper, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 5.

[3] Ibid., 9.

[4] Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 7-3.

[5] Psychological Operations a subset of Information Operations is forbidden from conducting influence campaigns within the U.S.

[6] Stephen Johnson, ―Military Public Relations in the Americas" (panel, Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., May 22-25, 2001.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Richard Myers, ―Policy on Public Affairs Relationship to Information Operations," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum, http://dodimagery.afis.osd.mil/learning/vipolicy/misc/articleParagraphs/0/content_files/file/CJCS%20PA_IO.pdf (accessed December 11, 2008).

[9] Joseph Nye, **"**In Mideast, the Goal is 'Smart Power'," *Boston Globe*, August 19, 2006.

[10] James N. Mattis, interview with Matthew Morgan quoted in Matthew Morgan, *Planning to Influence: A Commander's Guide to the PA/IO Relationship* (Academic research paper, U.S. Marine Corps Command and General Staff College, 2006), 1.

[11] Defense Information School, ―Public Affairs Roles and Responsibilities" (course PAQC-DINFOS 001-001-002) revised December 2008.

[12] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), II-2.

[13] Ibid., III-12-13.

[14] Jim Garamone, ―Pace: Will of American People is Enemy's ‗Center of Gravity'," *Armed Forces Information Service*, October 24, 2006.

[15] Kenneth Payne, ―The Media as an Instrument of War‖ *Parameters* (March 22, 2005): 92.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

After determining the preliminary research questions regarding military PAOs'

role in influencing target audiences, a thorough review of relevant military doctrine, both,

Joint and Service specific, regarding communication based influence was required. This

chapter discusses current literature, doctrine, laws, orders and regulations that pertain to

the themes of the preliminary research questions.

There was an abundance of Joint and Service doctrine relating to Public Affairs,

Information Operations and Joint Operations planning that was useful for a great portion

of the research. In the search for influencing techniques applicable for military

application, it was necessary to research current civilian public relations, political

campaign techniques and academic theory. There are numerous innovative

communication research manuals and articles relating to the topic.

A thorough review of applicable laws, statutes, orders, and policy regarding

influencing target audiences was necessary to determine the legality for application of

these techniques, specifically regarding the possibility of conducting influence operations

directed towards domestic target audiences. Outside of the military and scholarly

material, there is a large amount of news and opinion articles, books and transcripts

regarding this topic.

A study of propaganda was required to determine its nature and how best to

counter it, especially when employed by a skilled adversary and domestic and

international news corps that maintains a healthy skepticism of U.S. military operations.

The various themes relevant to examining research questions are military public affairs training, current public affairs activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, measures of effectiveness, information operations relation to public affairs, target audiences and shaping, influence and persuasion campaigns, legality of influence and persuasion, communication models and communication theories relating to influence.

Military Public Affairs and Training

The first step in this research was to study information currently taught to entry level military PAOs at the Defense Information School, Ft. Meade, Maryland. DINFOS is the military occupational specialty school that all Department of Defense PAOs must complete. Courses are taught by both active duty military instructors and civilians with years of public affairs experience. ―Public Affairs" is defined in Joint Publication 1-02 *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* as

> Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense.[1]

Though all three aspects of military public affairs are important, this thesis will primarily explore public information that is defined as

> Information of a military nature, the dissemination of which through public news media is not inconsistent with security, and the release of which is considered desirable or non-objectionable to the responsible releasing agency.[2]

All military PAOs are required to follow the Department of Defense's Principles of Information.[3] One of these principles explicitly states that information made available will be free of propaganda.[4] The Committee on Public Information also known as the Creel Commission in honor of its chair, George Creel, was designed to sell World War I to the American people.[5] The Creel Commission employed biased facts, misinformation

and complete fabrications to mislead the American public. Lies regarding German atrocities committed in Belgium served to demonize the German soldiers in the eyes of a naïve American public.[6] The Creel Commission did accomplish its mission, but was so despised by Americans that it was disbanded within months after the Armistice was signed.[7]

The United States found the necessity to control information again soon after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Executive Order 9182 established the Office of War Information.[8] This scaled-down version of the Creel Commission had the primary goal of censoring information that would be useful to the nation's enemies. In addition, the OWI provided information about the United States and its war efforts to its allies. The Voice of America, still in existence today, was a product of the OWI.[9] Like the Creel Commission, the OWI was disestablished soon after the war ended.[10] Americans appear to only accept press censorship and propaganda in times of extreme necessity and quickly act to remove it after a crisis has passed.

Joint Public 3-61, *Public Affairs* is the base document for all military public affairs activities. It states the mission of Joint Public Affairs

> Is to support the JFC by communicating truthful and factual unclassified
> information about Department of Defense activities to US, allied, national,
> international, and internal audiences. [11]

Joint planners recognize the role public affairs plays in affecting its adversaries via national and international media. During times of crisis and in war, military PAOs provide a Joint Force Commander with planning and execution of information campaigns designed to keep all interested audiences informed of current developments, primarily achieved through the release of public information to the media.

JFCs (Joint Force Commanders) should employ PA to develop and implement communication strategies that inform national and international audiences and adversaries about the impact of US military during operations and exercises. Making these audiences aware of US military capabilities and US resolve to employ them can enhance support from allies and friendly countries and deter potential adversaries. When adversaries are not deterred from conflict, information about US capabilities and resolve may still shape the adversary's planning and actions in a manner beneficial to the US.[12]

Traditional media is the preferred conduit for providing this information to the public. It is through the world media and Internet that information is released and misinformation countered.

However, based on lecture materials used at DINFOS for educating entry-level PAOs, it appears that propaganda and countering misinformation and disinformation comprise a small percentage of the course material, but because of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that percentage is increasing.[13] The fundamental technique for countering an adversary's propaganda is releasing, via the news media, the command's version of the facts and relevant opposing information.[14] This method is primarily reactive in nature.

This counterpropaganda technique is showcased in the following example. On February 2, 2005 an Iraqi insurgent group, the Mujahedeen Squadrons, appeared to score a major propaganda coup with the capture of U.S. Soldier John Adam. Their claim was backed up with photograph of the sullen soldier. Major news outlets throughout the world quickly reported news of Adam's kidnapping, which first appeared on an Islamic extremist website, and word was spread far and wide by the Associated Press, a prominent news service.[15]

―Our mujahedeen heroes of Iraq's Jihadi Battalion were able to capture American military man John Adam after killing a number of his comrades and capturing the rest,"

claimed the extremists.[16] They demanded all insurgent prisoners be released in Iraq within 72 hours, or else Adam would be beheaded.

An Army spokesman in Baghdad denied allegations of the kidnapping despite the photographic evidence of an African-American male with a close-cropped military haircut and dressed in fatigues with a rifle pointed at his head. The British newspaper, *The Guardian* did mention the military's denial in the fifth paragraph of their article but went on to explain that the Mujahedeen Squadron had claimed responsibility for another Western kidnapping the previous month. *The Guardian* concluded its story with a recount of other kidnappings and a generalization of kidnappings of foreigners in Iraq.[17]

It was not until several hours later that the events surrounding the capture of John Adam became known. A toy manufacturer, Dragon Models USA Inc., came forward and stated that the photo of John Adam was actually a toy military action-figure they produced named, ―Cody.‖[18]

The story of the kidnapping was clearly a hoax. However, for several tense hours, enemies of the United States dominated the world's headlines. The adversary posted the misinformation on their website; the news media then learned of the claims and began to develop the story. In developing the story, journalists contacted U.S. military public affairs officers who after researching the claim disputed its authenticity. Doubts of the story's veracity led to several news outlets retraction of the story but most outlets dropped the story. The technique used by the PAOs in the John Adam scenario is a classic, textbook procedure: counter the false claim with the truth and lobby for a full retraction from the news media.

A military PAO's credibility is what allows him the ability to influence journalists. If a public affairs officer were not seen as credible, then his ability to influence journalists would be limited; therefore their ability to accomplish their job would be degraded. The U.S. military holds credibility in high regard as demonstrated in FM 46-1, *Public Affairs Operations*:

> Once lost, credibility cannot be easily regained. The quickest way to destroy credibility is to misrepresent the truth. Communicating different messages to different audiences is also a sure way to destroy credibility of the source. When credibility is undermined, communication becomes ineffective and it is impossible to achieve information objectives.[19]

This linkage between credibility and influence is why DINFOS stresses its importance with their students; it enables them to perform their military tasks.[20] Credibility is why the missions and operations of public affairs and information operations officers are separated. Information operations are viewed to be less credible, perhaps even discreditable, therefore PAOs cannot be perceived as being involved with information operations activities.

Afghanistan and Iraq Military Public Affairs Activities

Though there is no commonly accepted measure of effectiveness for military public affairs activities; however, there are a variety of measures of performance. A MOP measures if one is doing things correctly while a MOE measure if one is doing the right tasks to accomplish the mission. One of the most accepted MOP for public affairs activities is the volume of information disseminated by the PAOs. The idea is that, the more information one distributes the better the chance is that media will pass along the PAO's information to the desired target audience. Military PAOs disseminate

information in several ways: press releases, internally generated stories, press conferences, embedded media and through command websites.

In the past three years, January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008 military PAOs working for Multi-National Force - Iraq and its subordinate units produced 9,561 press releases.[21] This number does not take into account statements released regarding Iraq by Pentagon, Central Command, and individual Services nor by another other U.S. governmental department or agency such as the Department of State.

Statements released by MNF-I for 2008 - 4,127

Statements released by MNF-I for 2007 - 3,721

Statements released by MNF-I for 2006 - 1,713

Similarly, in Afghanistan, International Security Assistance Force PAOs and its subordinate units produced 1,882 press releases.[22]

Statements released by ISAF for 2008 - 757

Statements released by ISAF for 2007 - 738

Statements released by ISAF for 2006 - 387

The number of press releases between these two wars is closely proportionate considering the number of military personnel assigned to each campaign. Both theaters of operations depict an increase in volume of releases and the relatively large rise in information being made available by PAOs from 2006 to 2007.

Analysis of the press releases disseminated from the Iraq and Afghanistan show there are great similarities; both offer information following the *Associated Press Style Guide* and they avoid editorializing and only state facts.[23] The press releases account for

enemy and friendly deaths and also economic, governmental and humanitarian deeds and successes.

In addition to these sterile press releases, military PAOs approved thousands of print and video stories written by their combat correspondents, who are military journalists. There are almost 3,000 such featured stories posted to Multi National Force - Iraq's website and more than a 1,000 daily stories.[24] NATO's contribution of stories is similar but proportionately smaller. These stories are primarily used by military newspapers to keep internal audiences apprised of the situation in both theaters.

More importantly, military PAOs orchestrated several hundred-press briefings both in theater and around the world via satellite transmission.[25] These press briefings were conducted with journalists in the theater of operations and remotely with the journalists reporting on U.S. Department of Defense. These press briefings were not all conducted by senior military officers, some were by mid-level officers specializing in an area of expertise or even with local civilian authorities.[26]

Military PAOs manage their command's media embed program. This program allows willing journalists the ability to share the same hardships with military service members. This program, which began in earnest during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, has been discussed in great lengths in scores of books, studies and editorials.[27] It is worth noting that during the invasion approximately 775 journalists were embedded with coalition forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003; however, the program has dwindled dramatically over the years, rising and falling as events warrant.[28]

Lastly, military PAOs attempt to bypass mainstream media outlets to communicate directly to their audiences by establishing and maintaining their own

command websites. These websites are populated mainly with their internally generated stories. However, these websites are not just targeted at American or Western audiences, both the ISAF and MNF-I websites post content in the local languages: Dari and Pashto in Afghanistan and Arabic for Iraq.[29]

Though there might be no valid methodology for determining military websites' impact and reach, some comparisons might be attempted to demonstrate their utility. Using common website popularity software offered by Alexa.com we see that YouTube' website garners approximately 17.62 percent of all global website traffic during one week. This popular web-based video sharing site is globally the third most popular website. For comparison, CNN averages approximately 1.453 percent of all internet traffic in an average week. ISAF's specific website is not monitored by Alexa.com; however, NATO's website is monitored. Since ISAF's website is hosted by NATO it is reasonable to presume a smaller percentage of web users visit ISAF's web pages. The NATO main website attracts approximately .0024 percent of web users in a given week while MNF-I garners approximately .00077 percent; the majority of visitors to these web sites originate from the United States. To put these figures in context, the popular restaurant chain KFC attracts .0056 percent of global internet users.[30] This means in an average week during the Global War on Terror, more than twice as many web users visit a fast food website specializing in chicken meals than visits the military websites for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the homepage Multi National Force - Iraq combined.

According to an October 2008 Gallup Poll 41 percent of American surveyed reported that the situation in Iraq was ―extremely important‖, 40 percent responded that

the situation in Iraq was ―very important" in influencing their choice of a presidential candidate.[31] It appears though that American interest did not extend to actually seeking out information from the military's point of view. In fact, only 20 percent of Americans surveyed by the Pew Research Center in November 2008 said that they actively looked for news concerning the war in Iraq.[32]

Measures of Effectiveness

As noted previously, military PAOs are kept busy with a host of duties. They are active writing press releases, organizing press conferences, approving and editing articles, answering journalists' questions, and advising commanders on media matters. Those tasks can be carefully measured and tracked as their measures of performance but the central question remains: Are they having an effect?

In the fields of public relations, marketing and advertising there are four generally accepted methods of measuring the effectiveness of information or marketing campaigns. Those methods are formal polling, focus groups, media content analysis and consultative audits.[33]

Formal polling takes an appropriate sample from the selected target audience and should help determine not just shifts in audience perception, but also why shifts are or are not occurring. Formal polling gives the organization sponsoring the poll the opportunity to measure the target audience prior to, during and after a communication plan's execution. Information in formal polling is quantifiable and allows the communication expert to examine results of the survey throughout the communication plan to determine if the organization is meeting its communication objectives.

Communication experts gather focus groups to attempt to gain a representative sample of a selected target audience. Data from this small focus group is taken, extrapolated, and used to represent the entire target audience. The advantage of a focus group is that it allows the facilitator to gain insights on issues previously not considered by the organization hosting the focus group.

Media content analysis is conducted to determine the tone, tenor and content of selected media outlets in order to gauge the pulse of the PAO's actions. This analysis can be conducted for most mediums: print media or television newscasts. Media content analysis will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Consultative audits are conducted with an individual or individuals in a small or elusive target audience to find out what that audience's perception is of an information or marketing campaign. Consultative audits are generally conducted to receive feedback on small, but influential target audiences such as, religious, industry, or government leaders.

Though the above stated methods are time and resource intensive, media content analysis is the easiest form of determining the PAO's effectiveness. If a military public affairs officer writes a press release and later sees that it generated interest in the media and numerous articles then they would conclude they were successful. The central question remains: Did those news articles generate an effect among the selected target audience?

A 2007 RAND Corporation study also noted that determining reliable MOE as crucial for military public affairs officers. This study shows some of the difficulties PAOs face when analyzing MOEs either domestically or when deployed:

However, direct observation, polling, surveys, interviews, and other methods can be used to gauge the effectiveness of the shaping campaign. Yet challenges remain. These techniques are difficult to get right and are expensive to implement. Additionally, they are subject to various forms of bias--including response bias (i.e., when the respondent tells the interviewer what he or she wants to hear), selection bias (i.e., when the sample is not chosen in a representative fashion), and self-selection bias (i.e., when only people who want to participate in a poll do so, and the responses of these individuals differ substantially from the hypothetical responses of those who did not participate).[34]

Consistent formal polling of a target audience is one of the most reliable measures of determining if an information or marketing campaign is having its desired effect. Numerous factors separate the civilian from military communication experts. It would be difficult to conduct formal polling, consultative audits or focus groups in enemy held territory. Even in semi permissive areas the research data would be skewed if data were being collected by armed soldiers and even if soldiers were providing security for civilian poll workers.

<u>Information Operations as it relates to Public Affairs</u>

According to JP 3-61 information operations are, ―actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one‗s own information and information systems."[35] Information operations officers supervise these actions. The goal of information operations is to achieve and maintain information superiority for the U.S. and its allies. To accomplish this, information operations has five core capabilities: electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception and operational security.[36] Public affairs, civil military operations and defense support to public diplomacy are related capabilities.

Information operations' mission is to affect local populations while public affairs activities are directed towards U.S. and international media along with U.S. forces. In this regard, FM 46-1, *Public Affairs Operations* states

> Public affairs operations cannot focus on directing or manipulating public opinion, but may contribute to public understanding of U.S. intentions and activities by providing timely information about the operations.[37]

The field manual describes public affairs activities as complementary to information operations and stresses the need for close coordination and liaison. The line between public affairs activities and those of information operations is sometimes extremely close:

> However, joint doctrine for PA and IO name public affairs operations as a related capability to IO despite DOD's placement of PA in a central role in strategic communication's focus on influencing target audiences.[38]

Public affairs officers are given the task of monitoring public opinion and Information Operations, specifically Psychological Operations units are given the task of affecting public opinion in the joint area of operations. Credibility is important for not only the public affairs officer, but also for those involved in information operations activities:

> Credibility is essential for successful information operations. If an information source is not perceived as believable, then the desired effect of that communication cannot be achieved. Regardless of the source, target or objective of an information effort, in the GIE (Global Information Environment), credibility is founded in truth and enhanced by validation, corroboration, and consistency.[39]

Recent academic research has concluded that credibility has three dimensions: trustworthiness, competence and goodwill.[40]

> In most cases, more credible sources are more persuasive and more effective at delivering information. That is, credibility is skill that must be cultivated. Credibility involves at least three dimensions: Trustworthiness or sincerity: The extent to which the source is seen to truly believe what s/he is saying and to be reliable in only saying things s/he truly believes. Competence or expertise: The extent to which the source is seen as qualified or knowledgeable to make the

arguments being made.   Goodwill: The extent to which the source is seen as having the best interests of the audience at heart.[41]

Army FM 3-13, *Information Operations* sets forth a mechanism for achieving coordination between public affairs activities and those of information operations. This mechanism is the Information Operations Cell, sometimes referred to as IO Battle Staff or IO Coordination Council that meets routinely to synchronize and integrate command and control warfare tasks among the staff. Public affairs will have a representative on the IO Cell to ensure their activities are complementary to those activities being conducted by information operations. However, in FM 46-1, *Public Affairs Operations*, it specifically states that the PA representative to information operations must not be the public affairs director or main command spokesman to further ensure public affairs' credibility is not tarnished.[42]
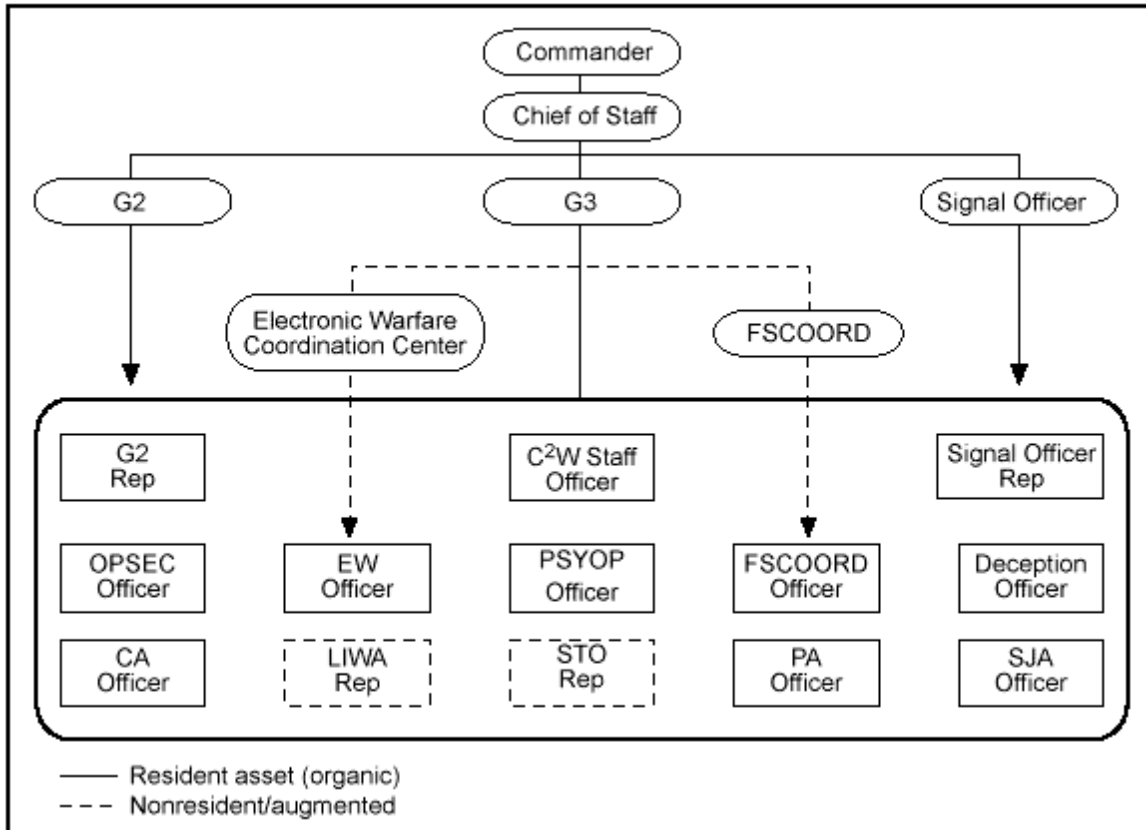
Figure 1.   Notional IO Battlestaff
Source: Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-61.1, *Public Affairs Tactics, Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 9-2.

Public affairs coordination and synchronization is discussed in more detail in chapter 9 of FM 3-61.1, *Public Affairs Tactics, Techniques and Procedures*. The IOBS or IO Cell is headed by the Operations Officer or his designate where one of the representatives will be from public affairs.[43] However, there are no mandated rules or regulations for the battle staff or cell:

> Composition of the Information Operations battle staff/coordination council or other such element is flexible and tailored to the operation and desires of the commander.[44]

This field manual recognizes that public affairs activities conducted through domestic and international media will influence public perceptions about operations and military institutions. Information produced by military public affairs has an impact on the Global Information Environment and can directly affect its adversary's decision-making process.[45]

<center>Target Audiences and Shaping</center>

Nowhere in the JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* does it state directly that the goal or intent of public affairs is to influence the American public. The Joint public affairs doctrine states that military PAOs have four target audiences, those groups selected to be influenced. They are the American public, international audiences, internal audiences that are the military members and their families, and lastly adversary forces. In the previous edition of JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* the term ―target audience‖ was not used, instead the generic term ―public‖ was used to describe audiences. The definition of target audiences is ―an individual or group selected for influence.‖[46] So though there is no direct statement that the goal of public affairs is influence, but using the definition of target audience one might safely infer that influencing is exactly the goal of military PAOs. These four target audiences are extremely broad. They are strategic level audiences, usually reserved for the Department of Defense, but when deployed to an active combat environment military PAOs must plan at three levels of war: tactical, operational and strategic. This is because tactical and operational incidents can have strategic consequences.

The very absence of the term ―influence‖ in Joint and Army doctrine is in itself interesting. The term, or perhaps euphemism, for influence in military doctrine is

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―shape.‖ This term is not defined in any military manual but is used repeatedly in Joint

and Service doctrine in reference to helping shape public perception.[47] There are

numerous references to media shaping public perception and how carefully planned

themes and messages by PAOs can help shape the information environment.

<div align="center">Influence and Persuasion Campaigns</div>

The terms ―influence‖ and ―persuasion‖ have negative connotations to some, but

according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary influence means, ―the power or capacity of

causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways‖ while to persuade means ―to move by

argument, entreaty, or expostulation to a belief, position, or course of action.‖ There are

no subjective connotations, such as positive or negative assigned to these words, which

implies they can both be used for the benefit or detriment of humanity.

The term ―influence campaign‖ would appear to connote a systematic, long-term

strategy with goals and objectives composed of manipulation techniques designed to alter

or reinforce a target audience's thoughts, behavior or attitudes. In current military

doctrine there is no mention of either influence or persuasion campaigns. In fact, even in

JP 3-13, *Information Operations* or FM 3-5.30, *Psychological Operations* there is no

mention of information, influence or persuasion campaigns, nor is there any guide or

checklist on how military officers should systematically begin to influence target

audiences.

The closest concept to a systematic, purpose driven strategy is in chapter 7,

―Information Superiority,‖ of FM 3.0, *Operations*, which addresses a new concept called

Information Engagement. Information engagement is defined as

The integrated employment of public affairs to inform U.S. and friendly audiences; psychological operations, combat camera, U.S. Government strategic communication and defense support to public diplomacy, and other means necessary to *influence* foreign audiences; and, leader and Soldier engagements to support both efforts [italics mine].[48]

The explanation of information engagement states that public affairs' role is to inform U.S. and friendly audiences. The rest of the explanation separates the task of influencing foreign audiences from public affairs activities.

Paragraph 7-10 of the same field manual highlights a potential problem faced by military public affairs and information operations officers by stating that military engagement activities should be nested and should compliment —. . U.S. strategic communication guidance when available. . . —[49] The phrase, when available, acknowledges that strategic communication guidance for information engagement activities is often lacking or non-existent. Military communicators are therefore forced to operate without a clear understanding of national strategic communication goals, objectives or intent.

Another issue raised in FM 3-0, *Operations* is matching soldiers' actions with the military's words and statements. To be effective in communicating, one's words and deeds must complement and match each other. According to the field manual, if these two properties of information engagement are not consistent then the military's ability to influence their intended audience is degraded.[50]

<u>Legality of Influence and Persuasion</u>

In order to answer the preliminary research question regarding what limitations are placed on military PAOs, a review of the current regulations, statutes and laws that affect their ability to influence domestic audiences needed to be conducted.

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A review of Joint and Service doctrine regarding public affairs and information operations finds that there are no regulations forbidding military PAOs from attempting to influence either domestic or international perceptions of operations. The one caveat is that the influencing activity is conducted in a truthful, factual manner with no intent to deceive their intended audiences. However, military PAOs have not always had such freedom. The previous edition of JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* (14 May 1997), specifically forbade any manipulation of public opinion by PAOs:

> The DOD obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs and operations may require detailed PA planning and coordination within the Department of Defense and with other government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public. Propaganda or publicity designed to sway or direct public opinion will not be included in DOD PA programs.[51]

This restriction was deleted from JP 3-61, *Public Affairs'* revision in May 2005, possibly causing a perceived rift between younger and more senior PAOs. Older officers were educated under the long-standing axiom that ―public affairs officers inform and educate not influence.‖ Younger officers, who studied, only the more recent publication, would not be aware of this previous restriction.

The seminal document regarding the U.S. Government's influencing ability is the US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, Public Law 402, commonly called the Smith-Mundt Act.[52] The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 clearly delineates the roles, responsibility and restrictions for disseminating information about the United States, its policies, its people and their values. The Smith-Mundt Act was devised to address two approaches for providing information to foreign audiences, fast and slow. The slow approach towards influencing foreign audiences emphasizes information programs and educational exchanges. To facilitate the fast approach, the Secretary of State is

responsible for dissemination of press, publications, radio, and motion pictures to foreign publics.[53] Importantly, the Smith-Mundt Act limits distribution of State Department information products to audiences outside the U.S., its territories and possessions.

The Smith-Mundt Act was amended and altered on several occasions, most notably in 1972 with the Foreign Relations Act, and in 1985 with the Zorinsky Amendment:

> In legislation over the years, Congress has restricted USIA's (United States Information Agency) public diplomacy apparatus from being used to influence U.S. public opinion. The Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1972 amended the Smith-Mundt Act to include a ban on disseminating within the United States any ―information about the United States, its people, and its policies" prepared for dissemination abroad. The Zorinsky Amendment added a new prohibition: ―no funds authorized to be appropriated to the United States Information Agency shall be used to influence public opinion in the United States, and no program material prepared by the United States Information Agency shall be distributed within the United States.[54]

The intent of the Smith-Mundt Act was to prohibit the U.S. Government from competing with private domestic media and to ensure the State Department could not conduct influence operations against the American people. When the Smith-Mundt Act was signed into law in January 1948, America had just emerged from its World War II where Americans learned the true power of propaganda as experienced in Nazi Germany. However, a more pressing concern was the escalation of the Cold War against communist Russia. The Soviet Union was using communist propaganda extensively throughout Europe, prompting U.S. legislators in the fall of 1947 to visit 22 European countries on a fact-finding mission. The legislators discovered Soviet propaganda techniques were extremely sophisticated:

> The significant increase in Communist propaganda in response to the Marshall Plan, announced the previous May, convinced the Congressmen on the European trip on the need for the information activities. Touring Europe the committee

members were told that despite the American role in liberating the continent, ―knowledge of the United States [was] being systematically blotted out‖ by Communist information activities that, in Paris, were compared to a ―tremendous symphony orchestra‖ that played all the time. Following the junket, Mundt suggested the Soviet Union would exploit the possible collapse of aid to Europe, a depression in the United States, and American withdrawal from Europe. The tool of the Communists, he continued, was propaganda. Information was the ―cheapest weapon‖ to counter the Communist threat.[55]

One of the key points surrounding the Smith-Mundt Act and its later revisions is its omission of any restrictions placed upon the Department of Defense‗s information activities. Though the Department of State is prohibited from conducting influence operations towards the American public, the Department of Defense is not constrained by this Act or its subsequent revisions. However, in 1999, President Bill Clinton signed Presidential Decision Direction-PDD 68 that ordered the creation of the International Public Information Group to resolve issues identified from the military missions to Haiti in 1994 and Kosovo in 1999.[56] The problems identified were twofold: first, no U.S. agency was designated as the lead on coordinating information products regarding U.S. policies; and second, no agency was placed in charge of countering negative media reports at home and abroad. The IPIG‗s mission is

> to synchronize the informational objectives, themes and messages that will be projected overseas . . . to prevent and mitigate crises and to influence foreign audiences in ways favorable to the achievement of U.S. foreign policy objectives.[57]

The State Department‗s Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs chairs the Group, whose members are composed of officials from across the U.S. Government, including the Department of Defense.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld signed the Information Operations Roadmap in 2003 that aimed to better synchronize DOD communications activities,

mainly information operations and public affairs. There are no legal constraints placed upon PAOs in regards to the targeting of influence operations. In fact, the Secretary of Defense advocates that PAOs become more engaged with foreign audiences and in assisting public diplomacy efforts.[58] The Information Operations Roadmap clarifies that public affairs and information operations officers need to closely coordinate their activities in a way that does not compromise PAOs' credibility.

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard B. Myers echoes this sentiment in September 2004. General Myers reiterated the Secretary of Defense's guidance on close coordination between public affairs and information operations; however, he provided additional clarification regarding target audiences. The Chairman states that public affairs ―principal focus is to inform the American public and international audiences" while information operations work to influence ―foreign adversary audiences using psychological operations capabilities."[59]

General Myers stresses a point that was not included in Secretary Rumsfeld's Information Operations Roadmap: how public affairs and information operations activities should be structured. Because of the overlapping tasks between the two functions, he implies that or it would appear that it be expedient for commanders to organize the two activities in the same staff section; However, Gen Myers strictly forbids this option when he states that public affairs officers will work directly for the commander:

> Pentagon officials say Myers is worried that U.S. efforts in Iraq and in the broader campaign against terrorism could suffer if world audiences begin to question the honesty of statements from U.S. commanders and spokespeople.[60]

The laws, regulations and orders regarding the influencing of domestic and foreign audiences have tightened considerably since the passing of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948. Nevertheless, there are currently no regulations restricting military PAOs from conducting influence operations against either foreign or domestic audiences, provided that the information used is truthful. The biggest concern regarding public affairs activities is maintaining credibility. Since public affairs activities are a tool commanders use to inform publics, it is vital that those publics perceive them as a credible source for accurate and timely information.

<center>Communication Models</center>

When military slang and jargon is stripped away, the basic roles of public affairs and information operations officers are to communicate with various publics. The purpose of this section is to discuss the various communication models used by corporate professionals and academic scholars.

Communication models are systematic representation of an object or event in idealized and abstract form.[61] There are scores of communication models used today. The most common elements of these models are the sender, the message, the receiver and the feedback; as illustrated below. There are filters, distractions, miscommunications and biases which disrupt the below model for perfect communication. Some examples of items that could impede communications are poor cell phone connectivity, a tired, distracted or uninterested audience.
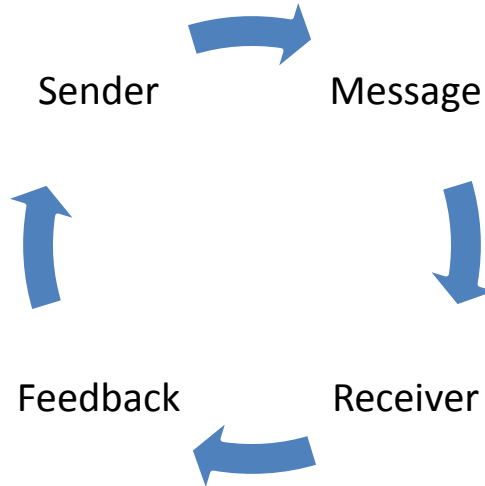
Figure 2.   Modified Schramm's Model of Communication Model
Source: Wilbur Schramm, ─How Communication Works," in *The Process and Effects of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), 3-26.

However, military PAOs typically work through and with journalists to get their information to the various publics. It is not practicable to expect PAOs to telephone or write letters to every interested individual so they must rely on journalists to get their messages and information to the masses.

This method relies on a different communication model developed by Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld in 1955 called the ‗two-step‘ or ‗gatekeeper‘ model.[62] In this model, a speaker explains information to a gatekeeper who interprets or reinterprets the information before passing it along to the audience.

Figure 3.   Gatekeeper Communication Model
Source: Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (New York: Free Press, 1955), 309-320.

The gatekeeper model appears to be more appropriate to military PAOs who rely on press releases, news conferences and interviews with journalists to communicate with their publics. It is then up to the journalists or alternative sources to interpret or reinterpret the information from the public affairs officer to their audience. It is important to note that miscommunication or alteration of the speaker's message occurs in this model. Other forces influence gatekeepers. For example, a newspaper reporter who receives a press release by a military public affairs officer may be influenced by experiences with that particular public affairs officer. He might have another source of information giving conflicting information or be under pressure by an editor or deadline in which to finish the story. This could explain why so much is written about the military and the media's relationship. Military PAOs believe their information should be more highly valued than any other source a reporter has for information.

An essential weakness of this model is the lack of direct feedback from the audience. In this model, the speaker should be satisfied for his main points to have been conveyed in the proper context; however, if mistakes or misinterpretations occur the speaker's only recourse is to reengage with a gatekeeper to clarify their original message.

<u>Communication Theories for Influencing and Persuading</u>

This research casted a wide net when studying the tactics and techniques of persuading and influencing target audiences.[63] The goal of this segment of research was to find proven systems military PAOs could employ to increase their ability to influence and persuade selected target audiences. This research determined that there were no silver bullets that could be used to magically influence audiences. Humans are complex

and cannot be controlled or manipulated like puppets by well-trained and clever information specialists.

However, there are several communication theories that explain how best to communicate a message, determine which medium to use in delivering the message, how to develop the message and how to protect a target audiences from influence efforts of others. This chapter will briefly explain these theories and provide examples of their usage. These concepts will be applied to the PAO task in chapter 4.

Theory of Mutual Inattention

James Lukaszewski, a prominent public relations practitioner, developed the Theory of Mutual Inattention.[64] Lukaszewski believes that ―we tend to ignore each other until something happens that forces us to notice each other.‖[65] This theory postulates that the public at large does not care a great deal about an organization‘s actions unless it affects them directly or until an organization does something that goes against the public‘s core values.

For example, one can assume a community that hosts a small military installation would tend to ignore the day-to-day running of the installation but if the military were to announce that they were adding an airport to the facility for large jet aircraft then the community would become aware and concerned. Issues regarding the safety and noise levels of this new activity would directly affect the community. At this point, the effected community would demand the military answer their questions regarding this new proposal.

There are two fundamental points to take away from the Theory of Mutual Inattention.[66] The first being, that it is the affected public who decides when the issue is

resolved, not the organization. The second point is, just because an issue is important to an organization does not mean that it is important to a community. If an organization's issue does not affect the public then the organization cannot force the public to pay attention.

<center>Framing Theory</center>

Framing as it relates to mass communication is the arrangement of information so audiences can readily understand a given specific event. It is the process of selective control over media content or public communication that defines how a particular piece of information is package for public consumption to either highlight desirable or negative attributes.[67] ―News frames are constructed and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasized in a news narrative.‖[68]

A central idea of Framing Theory is that mass media draws the public's attention to issues, a concept known as agenda setting. Framing theory goes one-step further. It not only tells audiences what to think about, but how to think about it. Framing establishes a news narrative and once a news frame is established, journalists are not likely to change them.[69] For this reason, it is crucial that information is framed accurately from the beginning of an event.

Robert Entman researched two similar incidents but found U.S. news media framed the news surrounding their coverage in quite a dissimilar manner. The events studied were the shooting down of commercial passenger airliners, one by a Soviet Union military fighter jet, the other shot down by a U.S. Naval ship. On September 1, 1983, the Soviet fighter pilot shot down a Korean Air Lines flight and on July 3, 1988, the

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American Navy shot down an Iran Air Flight jet. Both situations were similar, but the American press covered them differently.

Media framed the news surrounding the KAL shoot down as murder and killing while the coverage of the Iranian jetliner as a tragic accident and mishap.[70] To compare the coverage, the front pages of Newsweek Magazine for these incidents tell how they framed the stories; *Murder in the Air* for KAL and *The Gulf Tragedy: Why it Happened* to describe the Iranian incident.[71]

Headlines and judgmental descriptive adjectives are not the only way to frame a news event. Importance the news media gives an event sets a frame; placement and length of coverage are both crucial. If a news network places the story at the beginning of a news program it is perceived to be more important than the story that ends the program. A story on the front page above the fold is perceived as being more important than one at the back of the newspaper. Also, the length the story and the number of days it is reported affect the importance of the story. To demonstrate this point Entman discovered that the KAL shoot down received more than two times the print coverage and 33 percent more television coverage than the Iranian incident did.[72]

<div align="center">Inoculation Theory</div>

Researcher and founder of Inoculation Theory, William McGuire discovered that it is possible to build up a resistance to adversarial persuasion by providing information to an audience prior to the persuasion.[73] This theory works on the same principle as inoculating individuals with vaccine to build up a resistance for diseases, a small dose of the disease is introduced to an individual in order for them to naturally build up a resistance to the disease.[74]

This communication theory does not attempt to persuade or influence an audience, its goal is to build up a resistance to influence and persuasion attempts by others. It is a technique that is used to counter persuasion attempts. The way inoculation theory works is the sender of the message tells an audience a small part of a counterargument or opposing position listing several of its strengths then the sender tells the audience why that argument or position is wrong and lists the positive factors of their position. Then whenever the audience is threatened with the counterargument or position, they have a built up immunity to it.

Inoculation Theory is used extensively in politics.[75] A recent example of Inoculation Theory being used was during President Barrack Obama's Inaugural Address on January 20, 2009. President Obama makes the argument that the United States economy was in serious danger, and he listed several economic indicators to prove his argument. He then begins to inoculate the audience against a likely counter argument. He gives his audience a small dose of this counterargument followed by a more thorough defense of his proposal and attacks the counterargument. In the below example, the first paragraph is the President's argument, the second paragraph is the small dose of a likely counterargument. The third paragraph is the inoculating message:

> For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of our economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act--not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. All this we will do.
>
> Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions--who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are

short. For they have forgotten what this country has already done; what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them--that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works--whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account--to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day--because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.[76]

The result framed in this inoculation message was that if one does not support the President's plans then they are a shortsighted cynic who does not believe it possible for America to move forward and progress.

Affect Theory

Affect Theory was introduced and researched by social psychologists. This theory stresses the supremacy of human emotions and feelings over cognitive reasoning. Affect theorists attempt to trigger an emotional response of the receiver of their message in order to influence their attitudes and behaviors. ―Emotions are defined as a specific group of feelings that occur in response to an event, and moods are the enduring states of pleasant or unpleasant feeling.‖[77]

There are three main strategies for employing affect theories as it relates to influencing.[78] The first strategy attempts to directly elicit an emotional response in order to influence the receiver. An example of this strategy commonly used in advertising are the commercials to solicit donations for feeding starving children in Third World countries. These commercials follow a typical pattern of showing the viewers sad or depressing images then followed by happy, well fed children after receiving financial

support. The marketing specialists evoke sadness and pity but demonstrate what effect a small amount of money can make in order to secure a donation to their cause.

The second is a classical conditioning situation where one tries to associate an organization or product and stimuli with positive emotions. An example of this strategy is in product branding. Organizations advertise their products in a bright, happy atmosphere with positive stimuli; charming, spacious, tidy homes, a beautiful, smiling housewife, and loving, well behaved children that are the result of purchasing and using the organization's product.

The last strategy is association of an organization with popular activities, events or causes. This strategy is abundantly displayed with every major stadium and arena bearing a corporate logo and name. These corporations believe that linking their name with a particular venue will bring about good public relations and increased sales. Organizations donate millions of dollars to charities to associate their name with positive and worthy causes to evoke the positive emotional response with their name.

Medium Theory

The father of the Medium Theory is Marshall McLuhan who stated, ―the medium is the message."[79] The medium is the source in which a message is transmitted to the audience; mediums include television, print, radio, public address and interpersonal communication. What McLuhan found was that the type of medium used to deliver a message was extremely important.

The Medium Theory is widely studied and practiced in the marketing and advertising domain, but little research has been done in the public relations context though it is assumed that the scientific research would apply to public relations.[80]

Research has found that television is more likely to influence via affect while print mediums are more focused on content and influence through the cognitive logical processes.[81]

Practical application of this theory for military PAOs would suggest that video of service members helping orphans would have a greater affect on target audiences than a print story or press release without photos. However, if the military public affairs officer wants to explain a command's position on a given topic then using a print medium would have a greater influence than video.

Audience Segmentation

Audience segmentation is less of theory and closer to a practice and technique used by advertisers, marketers and political campaign operatives. The practice of audience segmentation is used to divide the target audience into groups based on similar demographic characteristics in order to better construct and deliver an influencing message.

Payne writes

> Understanding the audience requires research. The goal, in the end, is to segment the audience and deliver a tailored message to each segment, since a relevant message is more likely to be persuasive. Audiences can be divided up in multiple of ways, from globally right down to the individual."[82]

Advertising and marketing specialists attempt to narrow down and focus on smaller markets in order to sell their products. So on television sets across the nations the commercials during Saturday morning cartoons are aimed towards children. Toys, cereals and children's items are advertised, not spark plugs, automobiles or cleaning supplies. That is because advertisers know their audiences and are packaging their

products to appeal to the demographic audiences that watch those cartoons. "Businesses save valuable resources by not wasting efforts on consumers unlikely to make a purchase."[83]

For political campaigns, there is a maxim, "Go hunting where the ducks are."[84] This means that politicians should not waste their time campaigning in areas or to a demographic, which cannot or will not vote for them. A politician will not campaign at an elementary school because children cannot vote, nor will a Republican candidate waste his time stumping in a historically Democratic district.

The FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* describes a similar construct of audience segmentation. The U.S. Army and Marine Corps divides up a population into three categories: insurgent, neutral or passive, and those supporting the government (see figure 4).[85] As demonstrated in this figure, the goal of military efforts should not be in attempting to influence or persuade the insurgent, but instead reinforcing those who support the government and influencing those passive or neutral citizens away from supporting the insurgency and towards support of their government. The citizenry in the middle grouping are sometimes called fence sitters by the U.S. military because they have not made up their minds on which they should support. Therefore, they sit on the fence ready to be turned in either direction.
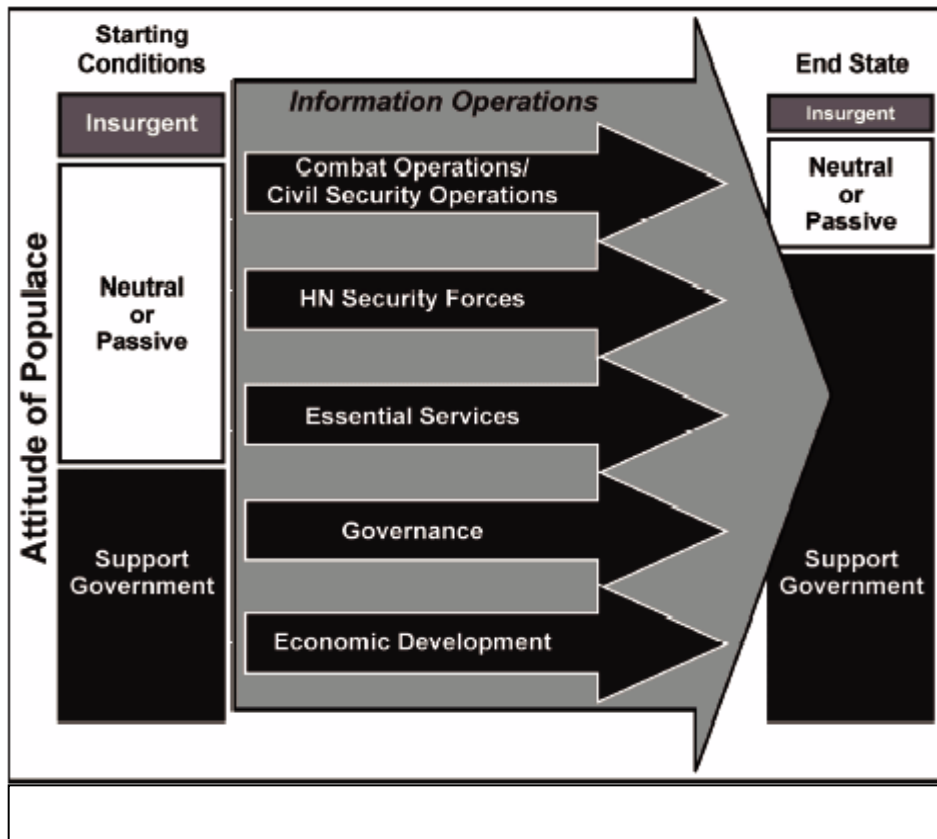
Figure 4.   Logical Lines of Operation for a Counterinsurgency

Source: Department of the Army. Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 5-3.

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[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 442.

[2] Ibid., 443.

[3] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), viii.

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[6] Ibid., 318.

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[11] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, I-2.

[12] Ibid., I-7.

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[22] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Press Releases," International Security Forces Afghanistan, www.nato.int/ISAF (accessed December 8, 2009).

[23] Defense Information School, "Public Affairs Roles and Responsibilities."

[24] Information obtained from Multi-National Force-Iraq's website www.mnf-iraq.com.

[25] Information regarding press conferences can be found on MNF-I and ISAF's websites.

[26] Information from Coalition, NATO and DOD websites.

[27] A few examples of books about the DOD's embed program follows: *Embedded: The Media at War* in Iraq by Bill Katovsky and Timothy Carlson - Lyons Press (2003); *Embedded--Weapons of Mass Deception: How the Media Failed to Cover the War in Iraq* by Danny Schechter, Prometheus Books (2003); *Embeds or In-Beds? : Media Coverage of the War in Iraq* by Justin Lewis and Rod Brookes, and Nick Mosdell and Terry Threadgold, Lang Publishing (2005); *Red, White, or Yellow* by Charlie Jones, Stackpole Books, (2008).

[28] Andrew Cortell, Robert Eisinger, and Scott Althaus. "*Embedded Media in the 2003 Iraq War: Independent Voice or Government Mouthpiece?*" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington, DC, September 1-4, 2005, 14.

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[35] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, GL-4.

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[37] Department of the Army, FM 46-1, 13.

[38] Lindsey J. Borg, ―Communicating with Intent: DOD and Strategic Communication" (Academic research paper, Air University, 2007), 73.

[39] Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-61.1, *Public Affairs Tactics, Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 2-4.

[40] Steven R. Corman, Aaron Hess, and Z. S. Justus, ―Credibility in the Global War on Terrorism: Strategic Principles and Research Agenda" (Academic research paper, Arizona State University, 2006), 7-8.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Department of the Army, FM 46-1, 13.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., III-23.

[46] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), GL-12.

[47] Both Joint and Army public affairs manuals use the phrase shape public perception numerous times, but no definition of shape is offered by the DOD. However, it is seen to be used as a synonym of influence.

[48] Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 7-3.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 7-1-7-5.

[51] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-6, 1II-2.

[52] Office of the Law Revision Council, ―Title 22 - Foreign Relations and Intercourse Chapter 18 - United States Information and Educational Programs," U.S. House of Representatives, http://uscode.house.gov/uscode-cgi/fastweb.exe?getdoc+ uscview+t21t25+1617+2++%28%29%20%20AND%20%28%2822%29%20ADJ%20US C%29%3ACITE%20AND%20%28USC%20w%2F10%20%281461%29%29%3ACITE %20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20 (accessed March 4, 2009).

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[61] SHKaminski, ―Communication Models," SHKaminski Blog, http://www.shkaminski.com/Classes/Handouts/Communication%20Models.htm (accessed October 5, 2008).

[62] Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (New York: Free Press, 1955), 32.

[63] Examples of communication theories evaluated and rejected for this research were: Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Social Penetration Theory, Symbolic Convergence Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Symbolic Convergence Theory, Elaboration

Likelihood Theory, Cultivation Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Dependency Theory.

[64] The Theory of Mutual Inattention was originally published in *Influencing Public Attitudes: Direct Communication Strategies That Reduce the Media's Power* in November, 1992.

[65] James Lukaszewski, "It Ain't Easy Being Green," *Vital Speeches,* February 18, 1991, 532-535.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Prominent authors in this field of study are Erving Goffman, Lance Bennett, and George Lakoff.

[68] Robert M. Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents," *Journal of Communication* 41 (Autumn 1991): 7.

[69] Entman, 25.

[70] Ibid., 8.

[71] Ibid., 9.

[72] Ibid., 10.

[73] W. J. McGuire and D. Papageorgis, "The Relative Efficacy of Various Types of Prior Belief-Defense in Producing Immunity Against Persuasion," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 62 (March 1961): 327-337.

[74] William McGuire, *Constructing Social Psychology: Creative and Critical Processes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 52-71.

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[79] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge Press 2001) 1.

[80] Pfau and Wan, 118.

[81] Ibid., 120.

[82] Payne, 41.

[83] Quoted in Kevin Clancy, ―Marketing Strategy Overview," *American Marketing Association*, 2001.

[84] Dan D. Nimmo, *Newsgathering in Washington: A Study in Political Communication* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 76.

[85] Department of the Army. Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 5-3.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine how to improve a deployed PAO's ability

to influence selected target audiences. The organization of chapter 3 presents the

methodology used to research the purpose of this study. Chapter 2 of this study

compared and reviewed Joint and Service publications, applicable laws and statutes, and

relevant communication theories and models regarding influence and persuasion. As

noted in chapter 1, the purpose of the study was determined by posing several

preliminary questions to derive the primary research question. This chapter will answer

the preliminary questions based on the research conducted in chapter 2 in order to pose

the primary research question.

The Debate

There is an ongoing debate within the military public affairs community that

centers on the mission of its occupational specialty. Is the role and responsibility of

military public affairs officers to influence their various audiences, or is it just to inform

and educate their audiences? This question is the central cause of friction within the

public affairs field.

The discussion regarding influence is raised and answered within the very first

weeks of initial public affairs training. All new PAOs undergo training at the Defense

Information School in Fort Meade, Maryland. Students are taught that public affairs

officers inform and educate the public.[1] It is the responsibility of information operations

(IO), a separate and distinct military occupational specialty, to influence, disrupt, corrupt

and usurp the enemy's decision-making ability.[2] Further, the schoolhouse teaches that PAOs should not set out with the intent to influence U.S. domestic public opinion. The PAO is described as the military's honest broker with the American public. The goal of public affairs officers is to enable the American public to make informed decisions about the U.S. Armed Forces.

The DINFOS course lessons are derived from the Joint Public Affairs doctrine that states that the mission of public affairs is to communicate factual and truthful, unclassified information. Joint and Service doctrine dictates that military PAOs must adhere to the Department of Defense's (DOD) Principles of Information.[3] One principle states –propaganda has no place in DOD public affairs programs."

Propaganda is defined by the Department of Defense as

> Any form of communication in support of national objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.[4]

This definition of propaganda advances a key conundrum for PAOs: communication between a military public affairs officer and an audience must be devoid of any content that might benefit the U.S. military. PAOs must inform and educate audiences with no intention of creating a positive impression of the U.S. military on their audience. The goal is pure data transfer. Even the information selection itself must be designed and crafted to avoid influencing an audience.

The debate within the public affairs communities arises because some PAOs disagree about the feasibility of such a narrow responsibility: to regurgitate information and data to the public. They interpret the role and responsibility of public affairs officers is more accurately to influence their target audiences.

This chapter answers the question of whether public affairs' role is to inform and educate or influence audiences by answering the preliminary questions raised in chapter 1 and researched in chapter 2.

<u>Actual Role of Military Public Affairs Officers</u>

Despite what is commonly believed and taught, it is the role and responsibility of military public affairs officers not only to inform and educate but also to influence their audiences. This segment of the chapter will argue that some influence techniques are currently taught to public affairs officers by instructors at DINFOS, that military PAOs actually apply influence practices, and that military doctrine dictates public affairs officers influence their audiences.

The Defense Information School teaches new PAOs a specific influence technique for answering journalists' questions. This technique states that the PAO will answer the question and then ―bridge their answer‖ to the command's message.[5] The message is the command's position (interpretation of) on an issue and expresses what the command would like its audience to know (or perceive) about that issue. In bridging to the command message, military PAOs are attempting to influence how their audience thinks about that issue and how it views the actions of their command. The goal or desired effect of this influence is to gain or maintain public support for that command's activities or issue. If the real goal of public affairs were to inform and educate, then PAOs would answer reporters' questions directly without bridging, and trying to put the military's spin on an issue.

The Defense Information School, the same institution that claims that military public affairs' should not influence, issues public relations textbooks to their students.[6]

Public relations is —the business of inducing the public to have understanding for and goodwill toward a person, firm, or institution."[7] Military public affairs activities are similar to those of public relations, except that public affairs officers are prohibited from lying or hiding the truth by laws, policies and doctrine.

Furthermore, a study of press releases distributed by military commands in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrates a widespread disregard for the ban on propaganda, as defined earlier. The information in these press releases is crafted by the PAOs to highlight military progress, demonstrating that all activities conducted by military PAOs are designed to influence their audiences. The goal of this influence is multipronged: gain and maintain support of the host nation's government; and gain tacit approval for the actions of the military's actions by host nation citizens and regional leaders. Directly in opposition to the basis the ban on propaganda, the military aims to derive benefit from its influence activities. Therefore, despite the ban on propaganda, in practice PAOs do attempt to influence their target audiences.

Actions that might be considered attempts to influence or disseminate propaganda are not confined to the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, but are practiced by PAOs at military bases in the U.S. and even the Pentagon. The Department of Defense's public website contains hundreds of press releases and stories that are designed to portray the U.S. military in a positive manner.[8] Therefore, it is apparent that the U.S. military does not adhere the ban on propaganda, as strictly defined, even at the highest levels of DOD.

In fact, the Joint public affairs doctrine charges all members of the military with providing accurate and timely information, not just public affairs officers.[9] The clear goal of this influence is to gain and maintain public support for the military's activities:[10]

Although commanders must designate only military personnel or DOD civilian employees as official spokespersons, they should educate and encourage all their military and civilian employees *to tell the DOD story* by providing them with timely information that is appropriate for public release. By projecting confidence and commitment during interviews or in talking to family and friends, DOD personnel can help *promote public support* for military operations.[11] (italics mine)

In apparent contradiction, the same Joint Public Affairs doctrinal publication that bans the use of propaganda tasks the military public affairs officer with countering adversaries' misinformation and propaganda. This responsibility directs the military public affairs officer to communicate for the purpose of allowing ―PA to help defeat adversary efforts to diminish national will, degrade morale, and turn world opinion against friendly operations."[12] In responding to this responsibility, the public affairs officer must counter the enemy's actions by trying to sustain or improve national will, sustain or improve morale, and maintain world opinion in favor of friendly operations. To be successful at counterpropaganda, a PAO must influence his audiences while degrading the enemy's influence activities.

Joint Public Affairs doctrine tasks military public affairs officers with three specific influence responsibilities:

Contribute to global influence and deterrence by making public audiences aware of US resolve, capabilities and intent; Contribute to deterring attacks against US interests by disseminating timely, fact-based, accurate and truthful information to the public; Counter adversary propaganda with the truth. Actively use truthful, fact-based, accurate, and timely public information products to respond to adversary inaccurate information and deception.[13]

Additionally, the same manual defines four target audiences for military PAOs: American, international, internal, and adversary forces.[14] As noted in chapter 2, the term target audience is defined as ―an individual or group selected for influence."[15] The American public is listed as the public affairs officer's first target audience. The term

"target audience" is new to the 2005 version of JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* that replaced the previous 1997 edition. The 1997 version did not contain the term "target audience," only referring to "general public" and "internal audience." Words have meaning, especially in the military, where imprecise terminology can result in mission failure and meaningless deaths.

From the roles and responsibilities assigned to military PAOs, it is clear that PAOs are expected to influence their target audiences. It is also clear by orders and regulations that military PAOs' attempts at influence must be conducted with only factual and truthful information, and that they not employ any course of action that could damage their credibility. The actual goals of military public affairs officers are to gain and maintain public, domestic and international support, elicit tacit approval for military actions from U.S. domestic and host nation audiences, degrade or undermine enemy planning and actions, deter enemies, and counter adversarial propaganda.

<u>Permission to Conduct Influence Operations</u>

Are military PAOs allowed to influence publics? As previously discussed, military PAOs are not only allowed to influence audiences but are expected to influence specific target audiences. The only target audience that joint force commanders (JFC) are required to influence, are the nation's adversaries and potential adversaries. Military PAOs are crucial to a JFC's influence efforts. Joint public affairs doctrine specifically cites military PAOs' ability to put an "international public spotlight" on an issue in order "to deter or dissuade" a potential adversary.[16] This is clear guidance to military public affairs to use mass media to influence world audiences.

Every Joint and Service publication that references the global information environment mentions the fact that it is impossible to restrict audiences from PAOs' activities because of the ease and speed of telecommunications and the widespread use of the internet. A public affairs officer cannot craft a message or piece of information without its ―spilling over‖ to other audiences. Once a piece of information is in the public domain, it becomes accessible to virtually anyone.

Restraining Regulations

What laws and regulations restrain military PAOs from influencing? As discussed in chapter 2, there are numerous laws, statutes and regulations that constrain U.S. Government departments and agencies in this area, but there are currently no laws that restrict Department of Defense employees from communicating factual and truthful information. In fact, military PAOs are expected and even urged to release information to control or dominate the global information environment.

Although the Department of State's communication and influence efforts are tightly controlled in the U.S., military PAOs have extensive latitude to disseminate factual and truthful information to domestic audiences. The Smith-Mundt Act, which regulates the Department of State's communication efforts, is thought by some to also constrain the Department of Defense as well as other branches of the U.S. Government; however, there is no legal basis for such claim. Military PAOs are legally allowed to influence domestic and international audiences, provided they issue only factually based and truthful information.

Common Influence Theories

What are the current influencing communication theories techniques used in marketing, advertising and political campaigns? Scores of communication theories claim to increase a practitioner's ability to influence target audiences. There are tricks, tactics and techniques that make similar claims. This research only studied proven theories and techniques that are consistent with the Department of Defense's values of honesty and integrity. As noted in chapter 2, five theories and one technique were selected for examination in this study. Many other theories were researched and examined according the criteria of feasibility, acceptability and suitability. In order for a theory or technique to be included in this research, it had to meet these standards during every phase of conflict, from the pre-conflict deterrence and shaping phases, through the conflict phase, and ending in the stability phase of an operation. The technique of ―audience segmentation" did not pass the feasibility requirement during the conflict phase but was still included because of its value during the pre- and post conflict phases of an operation.

Other techniques were eliminated because they were not suitable for the long-term credibility of a public affairs officer. They relied on deceptive practices and manipulation of information that were not in keeping with the orders and regulations governing the conduct of military public affairs activities.

In addition, it should be noted that, if misapplied, all of these theories could have negative repercussions towards the credibility of the public affairs officer. It is the intent of this research to highlight how these theories can be used to positive effect with the intended target audiences. In civilian practices, these same techniques could be used, for example, to influence children to begin or to stop smoking. These theories could also be

used to influence voters to elect corrupt or undesirable officials or to bolster the chances

of a righteous and deserving candidate for public office. It is incumbent upon the

military public affairs officer to use these theories wisely and ethically in keeping with

the highest traditions of the U.S. military.

Communication theories should be viewed as tools to help the public affairs

officer achieve his mission. They are not suitable for every occasion but should be

examined independently and selected, as the situation requires. As recognized earlier, the

information environment has changed, and military PAOs need to adapt and change with

it in order to remain effective, while still maintaining the trust and confidence placed

upon them.

<center>Effective Influence</center>

Do military PAOs actually influence audiences? This question is broad and is

subject to interpretation, particularly when it comes to defining the term ―audience.‖

Numerous communication studies conclude that the source of information is sometimes

more important than the actual information.[17] If a source is viewed as credible then the

information will more readily be believed, but if the source is known to be suspect, the

information disseminated will be more closely examined and scrutinized. This is why

credibility is of primary importance to PAOs.

The audience determines the credibility of the source and the source‗s

information. It is important to remember that audiences are not homogeneous or

monolithic. Because a public affairs officer will not have universal credibility within any

target audience, the maintenance of credibility should be focused on the majority of the

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population or, more specifically, on key decision makers and opinion makers: the key ―agents of influence‖ in the society.

Military PAOs are tasked with not only disseminating positive information about their particular branch of Service or the command they serve, but also to distribute information that shows the faults and shortcomings of the U.S. military and its members.[18] This form of self-criticism can increase the PAOs‗ credibility because it demonstrates to the target audiences that the public affairs officer is open and honest, even with information that casts the military in a negative light.

Primary Research Question

Credibility is considered a precious commodity because it is the major factor in an audience‗s receptiveness to the PAO‗s influence activities. As stated earlier, a public PAO‗s messages will never have complete acceptance among all members of an audience; credibility cannot be controlled, only managed, since the audience determines it. This study will research other factors that can improve a public affairs officer‗s ability to influence selected target audiences. Through the study and application of specific communication theories, a PAO will be able to improve his ability to influence selected targeted audience. The following chapter will analyze these communication theories, techniques and factors in order to answer the primary research question: How can military PAOs improve their ability to influence selected target audiences?

The purpose of reviewing communication theories and techniques is to provide exposure of these theories to commanders and military PAOs and to demonstrate their military application, not to expand the body of knowledge for each theory. Therefore, in-

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depth analysis of each theory is not provided. Before these theories are used by military

PAOs, these officers should undertake a complete study of these theories.

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[1] Defense Information School, "Public Affairs and Information Operations" (course PAQC-DINFOS 001-001-002) revised December 2008.

[2] Defense Information School, "Public Affairs and Information Operations" (courses PAQC-DINFOS 007-001-007 and 007-002-003) revised December 2008.

[3] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), I-3.

[4] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 439.

[5] Defense Information School, "Effective Responses" (courses, PAQC-DINFOS 005-002-006) revised December 2008.

[6] Cliff W. Gilmore, "Redefining Warfare: A Plan for Transformation of the United States Marine Corps into the World's Premier Perception Warfare Organization" (academic research paper, Capella University, 2007), 12.

[7] *Merriam Webster,* Online Dictionary, s.v. "Public Relations."

[8] Information can be found on Department of Defense's website, www.defenselink.mil.

[9] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, I-6.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., I-4.

[13] Ibid., III-1.

[14] Ibid., I-7-8.

[15] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), GL-12.

[16] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, I-4.

[17] Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1366.

[18] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-61, viii.

Chapter 4

Analysis

Chapter 2 demonstrated that military public affairs officers are allowed, and even encouraged, to influence target audiences, including the American public, international audiences, internal audiences to the Department of Defense, and adversaries. There are no laws, regulations or orders that significantly hamper the military PAOs' ability to influence or persuade, provided that all information they provide is truthful. It was also shown that public affairs activities and those of information operations should be coordinated and synchronized. All doctrine, policy and regulations dictate that PAOs and their activities should be coordinated with, but not subordinated to, those of information operations.

The first portion of this chapter will analyze public affairs activities to determine if they are measurable and quantifiable. This section will be followed by a brief analysis of the responsibilities of military public affairs officers. The remaining portion of the chapter will examine communication theories and techniques that are proven to influence to determine if and how they could be used by operationally deployed military PAOs.

Measuring Public Affairs Activities

A critical shortcoming identified early in this research is the lack of quantifiable measures of effectiveness for public affairs activities. In order to analyze techniques and communication theories to improve military PAOs' ability to influence target audiences, a review of measures of effectiveness is required.

Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and*

Associated Terms defines a measure of effectiveness as

> A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect.[1]

The ―system behavior‖ in the definition is the information environment that

changes as rapidly as one can assess it. It includes the thoughts, opinions, attitudes and

beliefs of all target audiences. The system changes because there is an almost infinite

number of variables' affecting it, not just public affairs press releases or news

conferences. The challenge for military PAOs is to determine if their actions caused an

effect on the system, or whether the effect could be due to any of the numerous other

variables.

Measures of performance, on the other hand, assess processes and methods for

achieving the mission. In public affairs, an example of a measure of performance would

be the number of press releases disseminated to the media or the number of press

conferences held during a given time. As stated in chapter 2, the number of press

releases distributed by Coalition Forces in Iraq and by ISAF PAOs, in Afghanistan

increased every year from 2006 through 2008. An increase in press releases is a positive

measure of performance, but it is not a measure of effectiveness because it does not track

how that information was used or interpreted by consumers.

Simple measures of performance or effectiveness do not tell a PAO if his actions

are having an effect on the target audiences because they do not assess changes in the

information environment. A PAO could increase his measure of performance by

increasing press releases to the media. These releases could be tracked in the press to

demonstrate if the message reached target audiences. However, this measure says

nothing about a corresponding effect (for example, a change of opinion) within the target

audience.

There is no doctrinal measure of effectiveness for military public affairs.

Measures of effectiveness are not even mentioned in the Joint Public Affairs doctrine.

However, Joint Public Affairs doctrine does mention methods for evaluating ―success‖ of

public affairs activities:

> There are several ways to evaluate the success and credibility of the PA effort.
> One is to assess the general tone of the media in their questions and dealings with
> the PAOs and the command in general. A second is a continuous assessment of
> available media products and public opinion polls. Another is to estimate the
> impact of command information on the internal audience from the feedback of
> other functional areas (morale, welfare, recreation and services, chaplain, and
> inspector general). PA personnel should also monitor the impact of news coverage
> on the mission and HN concerns. These reviews assist in evaluating the accuracy
> of media reporting and help to gauge the editorial tone communicated to the
> public. PAOs should look to all feedback sources to assist in determining what
> additional information, explanation, and programs are necessary to improve the
> efficiency of the PA process.[2]

The methods listed above are subjective or qualitative at best. They seek to gauge

measures of performance, not effectiveness. They evaluate the PAO‗s processes and

media acceptance of his products, not the effect on perceptions or attitudes of the target

audiences. Instructors at the Defense Information School do not teach their students how

to measure the effect of their work on their audiences.[3] Instead, they teach their students

how to measure the effectiveness of the PAO‗s performance. A newly trained PAO can

measure their success by analyzing citations of his products in news stories, the tone (for

example: positive, negative, neutral) of the coverage, and if the message was accurately

interpreted by the media. The DINFOS instructors teach their students to conduct media

content analysis and interpretation of opinion polls, but neither method is a quantifiable

metric for analyzing the actual effect of a PAO's actions.[4]

Army Major General Winant Sidle held three prominent public affairs positions

during his career: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs; Chief of

Information for the U.S. Army; and Chief of Information in Saigon. He once remarked,

―You don't need much public affairs when you are winning. Your success shines

through." However, Sidle felt the opposite was also true: ―The best public affairs

program imaginable will not disguise failure."[5]

Historian William M. Hammond, counterinsurgency author H.R. McMaster and

communication researcher Kenneth Payne all conclude that winning the information

battle in today's operating environment is crucial, but that public affairs activities, no

matter how sophisticated, cannot win a war.[6] The fundamental element that wins war is

strategy, not spin. Strategy is

> A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in
> a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and or
> multinational objectives. [7]

Public affairs activities can only highlight and draw attention to a winning

strategy. If the strategy is flawed, then even the best public affairs activities cannot help

disguise this fact for long. PAOs cannot be expected to ―put lipstick on the pig"; it is a

waste of time, resources and their credibility. Payne asserts, ―…effective

communications cannot, by themselves, win wars among the people, but it will be

impossible to win them without it."[8] Therefore, measuring the effectiveness of military

public affairs activities is crucial.

Of the four methods previously discussed in chapter 2 as measures of effectiveness--formal polling, focus groups, media content analysis, and consultative audits--media content analysis is the easiest, fastest and therefore a common practice used by military PAOs.[9] However, the best these methods can ever hope to achieve is a limited, incomplete snapshot in time of the information environment.

If a PAO had vast resources at his disposal, a combination of all four methods might yield an acceptable metric of determining the effectiveness of specific public affairs activities by measuring a change in the information environment. However, these resources--principally time--are not available to military PAOs, especially those deployed to faraway battlefields in austere conditions. Media content analysis, if used appropriately, can help the PAOs gauge their efforts within given limitations, but it does not adequately measure the effect of their actions on their target audiences.

The most prominent limitation of media content analysis is that it relies on the previously discussed gatekeeper communication model. This model assesses how journalists interpret the PAO's information, not the actual change in the information environment: the thoughts, attitudes and beliefs of a given target audience. Using media content analysis as an MOE requires an assumption that mass media has a profound ability to influence an individual's thoughts, attitudes and beliefs more than other influencers such as upbringing, religion, family members, and previous experiences. It also assumes that a target audience actually consumed and internalized this particular piece of mass media. Just because a particular story was on television or in a newspaper does not necessarily mean that a target audience experienced a meaningful effect from the story. However, as previously discussed, the information environment is so vast one

cannot expect military PAOs to be able to influence directly their target audiences. Out of necessity and expediency, PAOs are forced to acquiesce to employing the gatekeeper model as their standard operating procedure.

Another limitation placed on PAOs who rely on media content analysis is one of language and culture. Completing literal and contextual translations of mass media from foreign sources, in addition to analyzing journalistic style and content, is very time consuming. Specially trained experts are required to determine the meaning and value of a specific story and its possible impact. For example, just because a story appeared in a Kabul newspaper does not mean that it will be read outside the capital, or that it reflects what an average Kabul newspaper reader believes, much less what a villager in the distant mountains believes.

Military PAOs must also consider objectivity in respects to the content of the mass media. Far too many military PAOs rely exclusively on the metric of positive, neutral or negative reporting for analyzing media content. Although a quick and efficient, this metric is misleading because the mission of military public affairs is to communicate truthful and factual unclassified information to desired target audiences. Providing positive, neutral or negative information is not mentioned anywhere in the PAO mission statement. Because the Joint publication for public affairs does not task the public affairs officer with spinning or manipulating information, positive, negative or neutral outcomes of coverage are irrelevant. Doctrinally, PAOs have the duty to report the truth, not to attain coverage that may inaccurately cast their command or military operation in a positive light.

The only suitable metric for gauging media content analysis is determination of factual or inaccurate reporting. If a military command is practicing a sound strategy then factual reporting will eventually reflect this fact, and the resulting media coverage will be neutral to positive. However, if the strategy is weak or suspect, then factual reporting will ultimately turn negative. In this case, spin and careful media manipulation by the military public affairs officer are required to attain positive or neutral reporting of a flawed strategy. However, doing so will eventually have the consequence of loss of credibility of the public affairs officer and his command in the eyes of the media.

Following the practice of measuring factual and inaccurate stories will lead PAOs to an understanding of what effect they can anticipate to achieve from their labors. Public affairs officers attempt to influence their target audiences by having their command's information represented factually and accurately in the media by journalists and other gatekeepers. Therefore, if a public affairs officer's target audience is affected by the global information environment, to included media reports, then the public affairs officer can reasonably expect to affect his target audience. However, if the target audience is not affected by current news and press sentiment, then public affairs activities will have minimal impact.[10]

A rare, but specific example of determining the effect of mass media on a target audience is the 2005-intercepted letter between two top al-Qaeda terrorists, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of the al Qaeda franchise, al Qaeda in Iraq. In this letter, al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's second in command, questions al-Zarqawi's tactic of filming and releasing images of beheadings, he conducted in Iraq:

However, despite all of this, I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma. And that however far our capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan that is waging war on us. And we can kill the captives by bullet. That would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts. We don't need this.[11]

One of the four stated target audiences identified by Joint doctrine is adversary forces, of which al-Qaeda is clearly the leading one in the current Global War on Terror. The above statement by al-Zawahiri, arguably al-Qaeda's principal ideologue and propagandist, makes it clear that al-Qaeda is extremely sensitive to media reports that affect public sentiment and that mass media and public opinion of al-Qaeda's target audiences does influence al-Qaeda's operations and strategy. Military public affairs officer can attempt to approach al-Qaeda's target audiences to create an effect on the al-Qaeda organization.

However, it is far less clear if military public affairs activities will have an effect on target audiences that do not have regular contact with mass media, such as we find in remote regions of Afghanistan. In some remote mountain villages in Afghanistan, people do not have regular access to television, internet, radio or newspapers. Since exposure to mass media with these audiences, is, at best, through secondhand information, military public affairs activities will only have a negligible effect on them.

As noted previously, PAOs cannot expect to isolate information to selected target audiences, because once the information is in the information environment, all audiences can consume it. For example, information released primarily for U.S. domestic audience consumption can and will quickly make its way to other audiences. This phenomenon makes imperative consistency of message to all audiences. This is also the case for

psychological operations activities. Psychological operations products, once disseminated, can be acquired locally and spread globally. This fact explains why public affairs officers need to be aware of what the other influence specialties are doing. As stated in Joint and Service doctrine, as well as in the October 2003 Information Operations Roadmap, military public affairs must coordinate with psychological operations officers to ensure consistency of message and purpose. Unity of effort is a subcomponent of operational design. Unity of message must go hand in hand with unity of effort. It would be folly for one command to disseminate contradictory messages and themes to the same audience. Coordination is crucial to ensure that ―information fratricide" does not occur.

Analysis of a PAO's responsibilities

The task of military public affairs officers is to influence the target audiences' thinking through media outlets, while ensuring that their messages are consistent not only with all organs of the U.S. Government, but also with their command's tactically-focused information operations activities. PAOs will measure their effectiveness based on their ability to have their command's actions and messages accurately portrayed in the media. Accuracy is what is important, in regards to media coverage, not tone (positive, negative or neutral.)

There is no single definitive, effective and efficient measure to assess military public affairs as a separate ―influence activity." Public affairs activities ride on the coattails of political and military strategies. Analysis of a specific information environment is, in most cases, a practice best left to historians. However, even in the

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absence of clear-cut measures of effectiveness for public affairs activities, the PAO must still develop and execute a plan.

As a planning assumption, mass communications theories that have been scientifically researched and proven to succeed in commercial and academic environments will also prove reliable for a PAO's use. The purpose of this research to suggest influence theories and techniques that military PAOs can use to increase their ability to affect their target audiences.

<p style="text-align: center;">Theory of Mutual Inattention</p>

An understanding of the Theory of Mutual Inattention will help the PAO determine what information is relevant to release, and to which target audience. The theory will also give the PAO an appreciation of the power of a target audience. Lukaszewski claims that the Theory of Mutual Inattention must be understood by those planning and supervising military public affairs activities. He also believes that public relations experts cannot make a target audience care about an issue if that issue does not affect it.[12] This means that not all information will be of concern for all target audiences, and it means that it is up to the audiences when they will stop caring about an issue. Internalizing this theory will benefit all military PAOs, especially those in a deployed environment during all phases of an operation.

In a deployed environment, when tactical or operational military staffs focus on an issue, often in isolation from the perceptions of their target audience, there is a tendency for each staff to believe that everyone else should care about its issue as much as it does. Applying the Theory of Mutual Inattention clearly reveals that this is seldom the case. That is because each target audience has differing concerns.

Journalists normally have a great sense of determining what their target audience will care about; military professionals oftentimes do not. This situation is caused by both training and experience. A journalist's livelihood depends on his ability to find a good story. To a lesser extent, the same is true for military PAOs. The PAO must be able to determine which target audience will care about his command's information and craft that information into a narrative that will have a positive effect on the selected target audiences and journalists. If done correctly, then the journalists will see the potential in the story and distribute it to the PAO's target audiences via their particular form of mass media.

Directly related to the power of media to broadcast a PAO's information is the power of an audience to care about an issue. When combat operations for Operation Iraqi Freedom began in early 2003, there were 775 embedded journalists providing coverage for the war. Most news outlets in the U.S. focused their coverage almost exclusively on combat operations; however, soon after Baghdad fell to the Coalition, interest declined because audiences believed the war was essentially over. However, more than five years later, the war continues, albeit with far less actual combat. It was relatively simple for PAOs to get their audience to care and keep their attention during kinetic operations, but as the war in Iraq drags on it has proven extremely difficult to keep the attention of the U.S. domestic audience. Military PAOs have a limited ability to keep an audience caring about issues that the audience does not deem as worthy of its time and attention, and they have a limited ability to do the opposite: make an audience stop caring about an issue.

The following communication theories, if properly used, do have the potential to keep an audience caring about an issue. Nevertheless, there are no silver bullets that will

bend a target audience to a PAO's will; these are scientifically valid communication

theories, not manipulation tricks.

<u>Framing Theory</u>

Once the military public affairs officer decides that his information is worthy of

release to multiple audiences, Framing Theory will help him decide how to present his

information to the target audiences via the media. How gatekeepers initially describe an

issue is of vital concern for a military public affairs officer because, as research proves,

once a narrative is created for the public that narrative is extremely difficult to change.

Framing is more than spin; it is how a military public affairs officer's command wants

the narrative to be understood by a target audience. Take for example the National

Football League's Super Bowl XXXVIII half-time show. One of the musical

performances was by Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake, where Timberlake removed a

portion of Jackson's wardrobe, accidentally exposing her breast. A controversy erupted

in the American media over whether or not this was a publicity stunt or, as Jackson's

spokesperson called it, a ―wardrobe malfunction." With hundreds of thousands of dollars

in fines and penalties at stake, Jackson's spokesperson attempted to frame the story as an

accident, blaming the incident on the defective costume in an attempt to quell the

controversy and mitigate the adverse reaction by the American public. The spokesperson

was trying to frame the incident as an accident, not a stunt.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the *Associated Press's* use of the word ―former"

offers a military example of Framing Theory. Western media described the city of

Ramadi in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq as a Sunni insurgent stronghold until April 22,

2007, when this prominent news agency decided to change the frame regarding Ramadi.

From that day onward, the mass media described Ramadi as a ―former‖ Sunni insurgent stronghold.[13] That one word signaled a change in how the narrative of the conflict in that city would be characterized, but it would take several more months for that characterization to be applied to the entire province.

When using the Framing Theory, a military public affairs officer is attempting to manage the narrative that an audience uses to think about an issue or event. A narrative is a story that weaves together related events. Prior to the beginning of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, in the early 1990s, there were accusations in the media comparing Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler. Such a comparison, or framing, was an attempt to put a simple narrative in audiences‗ minds that Hussein‗s actions were similar to Hitler‗s actions fifty years earlier. The narrative is simple because most people know who Hitler was and what he did. The audience did not need to know all the details, just that Hitler was bad, and, that if Hussein was similar to Hitler then he must be bad and must be stopped. This narrative was resurrected in 2002 as a justification for the Coalition Force to invade Iraq.[14]

Narratives need to be simple in order to attain optimal audience understanding and for military PAOs, narratives also need to be truthful and factually based. The earlier example from chapter 2 of the change of narrative in Al Anbar in the spring of 2007 shows how another simple narrative took hold in the mind of key target audiences. Journalists described the change taking place in Al Anbar as al-Qaeda‗s ―overplaying its hand‖ or that Anbar citizens finally ―had enough‖ of al-Qaeda‗s murder and intimidation and decided to expel them from their lands. The narrative was essentially that average citizens rose up against an evil oppressor: a simple, universal and truthful concept. As

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seen in the Theory of Mutual Inattention, audiences do not have unlimited time to study the nuances of western Iraq's social-political history or al-Qaeda's extremist ideology. However, audiences do understand the concepts of fighting back, self-protection and changing sides during a war. Framing is, in essence, the distillation of the issue down to a clearly understandable idea.

As previously shown, words truly do have meaning. The same is also true for narratives. By controlling the narrative, a public affairs officer can influence the thoughts and ideas of his target audience.

Another way that a public affairs officer can attempt to control the narrative of an issue is by selecting what information he releases to the public. According to Kenneth Payne,

> Lying outright to the media may not, in many circumstances, make much sense, but controlling the flow of information emphatically does, and the purpose of the public affairs staff is precisely that--to control the dissemination of information so as to maximize the military and political advantage to US forces.[15]

The advantage to which Payne refers is the ability of a PAO to determine what information is distributed to the mass media.

There are very few items of information that PAOs must release to the public; aviation mishaps and deaths of military personnel are the two most notable. Generally, PAOs have wide latitude to use their judgment in deciding what information to release. In addition to those few mandated items that must be released, it is clear in both Iraq and Afghanistan military PAOs are releasing bits of information that portray Coalition Forces' actions along several major themes known as ―lines of effort" by the military. Though themes in each war theater change over time, there are several that are shared between the two wars: security, governance, reconstruction, and transition. Security

refs to military or police actions taken to increase the security of the host nation populace. The governance information theme focuses on progress made by host nation politicians and citizens. The reconstruction theme shows how improvements are being made to benefit host nation citizens. Finally, the transition theme demonstrates how the host nation military, police, government officials and average citizens are taking over more responsibility from the Coalition. These themes develop a mental framework for the military public affairs officer to determine which pieces of information to release and provide guidance on how that information should be framed.

Take for example, the security theme: From 2006 through 2008, Multi-National Force - Iraq PAOs disseminated 1,225 press releases pertaining to the finding and destruction of weapons caches. These caches ranged from one hand grenade to tens of metric tons of explosives. The reason PAOs release information about discovered caches is to show that these weapons can no longer be used against military, police or citizens. Therefore, the Coalition Forces are winning. The logic behind this argument is dubious, but the press releases continue to flow using these seizures as a metric of success. Some weapons cache press releases also demonstrate another topic for the military public affairs officer to consider: blending multiple themes in one release. If an Iraqi military or police unit finds the weapons cache, then it is possible to blend the security theme with the transition theme: two themes in one release. One could even add another theme to this release if an Iraqi citizen reports a cache to an Iraqi military or police officer who subsequently removes it. Such a release would advance the security theme and two different transition themes, the second transition theme being an Iraqi citizen working with his government's forces to remove the potential threat.

It is still up to the gatekeepers to decide if these themes or narratives are worthy of being disseminated by their news organization. This power of the gatekeeper is often a frustration for the military because the gatekeeper often determines that the military's progress or successes are not as worthy of mention as are its setbacks or failures. Nonetheless, using these themes to create an easily understandable framework for their target audiences is a military public affairs officer's responsibility. It is important also for the military public affairs officer to remember that his adversary is simultaneously courting the same or similar gatekeepers to have its message be heard by their target audiences. This research in meant to study and determine the most efficient and effective methods to improve military PAO's ability to influence target audiences with an implied additional benefit of being able to better dominate the information environment over America's adversaries.

Inoculation Theory

It is in the context of this battle for the information environment when Inoculation Theory will prove its usefulness to military PAOs. As al-Zawahiri said, more than half of al Qaeda's battlefield is in the media, so it is incumbent upon military PAOs to be skilled in fighting in this battlespace. Inoculation of a target audience is a proactive method that can be used to protect a narrative. Vital to the success of this theory is being proactive, since research has proven that one cannot inoculate an audience after it has received a countering argument or information.[16] As stated in chapter 2, Inoculation Theory works when the sender of a message tells an audience a small part of a counterargument or opposing position by listing one or more of the arguments key premises. Then, the

sender tells the audience why that argument or position is wrong and lists the positive factors of his position.

This theory may not be applicable to every situation a deployed public affairs officer will encounter because it relies on the military public affairs officer to foresee a possible information attack and provide target audiences, via the gatekeeper, information he believes will protect his narrative. An example of how Inoculation Theory was used effectively was in the summer of 2007 in Ramadi, Iraq. As discussed in previous examples, Coalition Forces with the aid of local citizens were able to expel al-Qaeda in Iraq-led insurgents from the city of Ramadi. Violent attacks within the city by insurgents almost completely disappeared as local citizens worked together and with Coalition Forces to capture, kill or drive out all those known or suspected to be behind that city's violence. Journalists based in Baghdad were waiting for the first spectacular attack to hit the city because it would herald the return of al Qaeda and the fragility of the peace. Journalists do not report that nothing happened; they wait to report that something happened: Nothing happening is not news; something happening is news. Military PAOs understood this dynamic and went to work inoculating journalists to the fact that al Qaeda would try a spectacular attack in order just to make headlines. Then the PAOs went on to describe the progress being made in the city by the citizens and listed several reasons why these citizens would not welcome al-Qaeda's return. When the attack did happen, a large percentage of journalists put the attack in perspective for their audiences. Most news stories used the term _isolated incident' to provide context for the event. Headlines trumpeting al Qaeda's return to the city did not occur.[17]

The key elements to understand from this example were that the inoculation was conducted repeatedly and prior to the foreseeable incident. The information provided by the PAOs was truthful and their efforts were focused on mitigating the potential for inaccurate information to be spread to their target audiences, such as claiming that insurgents are infiltrating Ramadi; it was not to prevent negative news stories or to downplay a serious threat. It is also worth noting that this inoculation attempt by the PAOs was not to inoculate the public, but rather the media gatekeepers. Media would not waste airtime or column inches on preparing audiences to view a potential future attack in proper context. However, once the attack did occur, it was reasonable to assume that journalists would consider the warnings issued by the PAOs. Therefore, in fact, the PAOs did influence the way journalists would perceive any potential attack in Ramadi.

As previously discussed, inoculation does have severe limitations. In this example, only a few the most influential English-speaking journalists working in Baghdad were inoculated. However, their coverage helps set the frame of the other media outlets. Major media outlets are influential because they help determine the narrative on how stories will be covered. By protecting the narrative of a successful and stable peace occurring in once one of the most deadly cities in all of Iraq, Coalition Forces were able to retain an example of how peace could take hold in the volatile urban centers of Iraq.

Another limitation of inoculation is the message has to be narrow and clearly defined and designed to counter a specific message, even if that message was a suicide attack in Ramadi. The inoculation attempt from the above example would not have worked if the PAOs had been vague on the threat, location and reason for the attack.

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Saying, ―Coalition Forces anticipate someone bad will do something bad somewhere in Al Anbar in the future‖ does not qualify as inoculation. Specificity is crucial to success for inoculation.

<center>Affect Theory</center>

Staying with the last example, it is worth analyzing the motives of the PAOs for trying to mitigate inaccurate reporting of a potential, isolated attack in Ramadi. Why did they spend time inoculating the press? Why did they want to mitigate potential fear and despair of the host nation's citizens if the attackers were only planning on a lone, isolated attack? One possible answer to those questions can be found when applying Affect Theory. To summarize the research from chapter 2, emotions matter, which could be a reason the PAOs would have taken pains to protect the Ramadi's citizens from despair caused by inaccurate news reporting.

Military application of Affect Theory as discussed in chapter 2 is extremely limited, but still important. The U.S. military has been described as an organization whose purpose is to kill people and break things.[18] Though true, the military does much more than that, especially in counterinsurgency operations. In counterinsurgency operations, the military's role is to stabilize the security situation and enable local governance and economic conditions to rebuild, take root and thrive. All of these activities take place in the human dimension called the human terrain by the military. Humans are emotional as well as rational beings so it is important for PAOs to communicate at both levels, the logos (logical), and the pathos (emotional).

The ancient Greeks understood that in order to persuade effectively the communicator must appeal to both sides of the human dichotomy. Too often sterile

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military press releases and speaker notes only relate facts, figures and statistics. Numbers do not communicate emotions nor do they stimulate an emotional reaction from the audience. Likewise, vague bits of information without context do not illicit emotional responses from an audience because the audience cannot empathize without details.

As an example, the below press release recently distributed by PAOs at Multi-National Force - Iraq is clearly crafted to support the transition theme; Iraqi police officers successfully accomplish their mission. However, because of the lack of details provided, the press release wastes an opportunity to create empathy.

Though factually and stylistically correct, the press release might have been more effective if it would have provided details to press regarding the crimes or what effect the crimes had on its victims even if it would have given details regarding the arrests or the criminals then it could have had an effect on the audience. As it reads now the audience cannot relate to the police officers or the victims of the criminals deeds. Building a bond between the reader and victim would create the emotional connection that would provide meaning to the reported incident.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE No. 20090220-03

Feb. 20, 2009

      ISF arrest two suspected criminals

      Multi-National Division – Baghdad

      BAGHDAD – According to Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi National Police arrested two suspected criminals, wanted on warrants for larceny, during patrols Feb. 19 in the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

      Iraqi NP officers from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd NP Division, arrested a suspected criminal while serving a warrant at approximately 11:30 p.m. in the Bayaa neighborhood.

      Meanwhile at approximately 11:45 p.m. in the Aamel community, NPs from the 2nd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., arrested another suspected criminal with a warrant.

      The NP transported the detainees to a nearby headquarters for processing.

Figure 5.   MNF-I Press Release

Source: Multi-National Force-Iraq, ―ISF arrest two suspected criminals,‖ Multi-National Force-Iraq, http://www.mnfi.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id= 25469&Itemid=128 (accessed January 12, 2009).

<u>Medium Theory</u>

      Another aspect that is tied to Affect Theory is the medium in which the information is conveyed. This practice is called Medium Theory. To grossly over simplify Medium Theory, video is for emotions while print should be used to convey rational, analytical information. To a military public affairs officer who is forced to using

the gatekeeper model of communication, Medium Theory has extremely limited applicability.

As discussed in chapter 2 the U.S. military has only minimal web presence to inform and educate their target audiences. Military video clips and print stories posted to websites seldom receive much attention by large segments of the desired target audiences. Direct communication with the military's target audiences is rare and time consuming, so the military relies on the mass media to deliver their information. Military PAOs have even less control over the type of mass media used by a journalist. Print and television media have the same level of access to the military and its information. A public affairs officer might desire a print reporter to cover a particular story, but if television reporters wish to cover the event then there is little a public affairs officer can do.

This issue is complicated in a wartime situation with embedded reporters. Military commanders and their PAOs are constantly torn with the choice of providing immediate, breaking news with their desire to develop the information more fully to provide better context of the situation to their target audiences:

> The strengths of the television medium in covering ―breaking news" are said to be partly responsible for a subtle but significant shift in the orientation of print media. Newspapers have started to focus on providing in-depth, analytical coverage on existing issues, which has been called the ―new long journalism".[19]

Television as a medium is conducive for coverage of battle and military action scenes while the print medium is better suited to provide context to the action. During stability operations, the print medium is better suited to cover more nuanced events such as a meeting with tribal sheikhs in Iraq than is television, especially if translators are required for the meeting.

A public affairs officer has several options for mitigating the issue of medium when deployed. A public affairs officer needs to be well aware of their command's future plans in order to get the right mix of mediums to a given event. There is an old adage in the public affairs community that says, ―80 percent of a public affairs officer's job is to ensure the right reporter is at the right place at the right time." If it proves impossible to move a reporter to an event for coverage, the public affairs officer can mitigate this media absence by sending one of his own military journalists or combat cameramen to cover the event and then provide that footage or photographs to the news outlet.

Mediums can and should be broken down by PAOs into more discrete categories such as, 24 hour cable news outlets, major television networks (both prime time and morning programming), satellite cable stations, local television stations, magazines both news and specialty, newspapers, on-line newspapers, blogs, wire services to include print, radio and television, radio news, and radio talk news programming. These mediums have to be considered when the public affairs officer considers the audience they intend to target, U.S. domestic, internal, international or an adversary.

<div align="center">Audience Segmentation</div>

As demonstrated above there are numerous mediums available to the military public affairs officer to get his message out to their intended target audiences. According to Joint public affairs doctrine, there are four target audiences that PAOs are responsible for influencing: U.S. audiences, internal audiences to the Department of Defense, international, and adversaries. At first glance, four target audiences do not appear to be a daunting task for the PAOs to focus their efforts on; however, each of these target

audiences must be further subdivided. This process of paring down target audiences is called Segmentation.

When political communication specialists begin crafting a communication strategy to get their particular politician elected, they must study their electorate very carefully. Because electorates are extremely large it is impossible to construct themes and messages for individual voters, instead populations must be divided into manageable groups, segments. Male voters and female voters are each a segment that a politician needs to appeal to in order to win their votes. From there the specialists begin refining these segments, age brackets, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, urban, suburban and rural, political ideology and finally key issues. The term ‑soccer mom" entered the American lexicon during the 1996 presidential campaign to identify a key target audience for politicians, middle-class, suburban mothers. Similarly for the 2004 presidential election the term, ‑NASCAR dad" referred to a white, middle-aged, working class male. These terms are examples of colorful descriptors that the mass media embraced, but for political communication experts the skill of segmenting key target audiences means the difference between winning and losing an election.

For military application audience segmentation is crucial and ties directly to Affect and Medium Theories. Military PAOs must consider their target audience when they are crafting their messages, when compiling their distribution lists, and when they are choosing media embeds. Getting the message out in high circulation print mediums or large television viewership ratings do not necessarily translate into reaching the PAO's target audience. *Teen Vogue Magazine,* marketed towards sophisticated teenage girls has a circulation of almost half-a-million readers per issue while the home shopping channel,

QVC is broadcast into 90 million homes in the U.S. and is the number two television network in regards to revenue in the U.S.[20] But it is doubtful a deployed, operational-level division commanding general would consider either of these two mediums critical to getting their message out.

A press release crafted and disseminated for a particular segment of a target audience is analogous to a trained military sniper engaging a target. The purposes are similar, a planned and focused engagement of a specific target. Compare this effort to a generic press release disseminated to a large distribution list in the hopes of reaching its target. This way is akin to an artillery round being fired from an unregistered howitzer artillery piece; it has greater effects but one can only guess in the general area it will land.

The following chapter will provide a summary, recommendations, topics for further study and a conclusion.

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[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 337.

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CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION

Summary

The purpose of this research was to determine how military public affairs could improve its ability to influence its target audiences. This study focused its attention on achieving this goal through the proper application of communication theories and techniques particularly in those situations where the military PAOs communicate with their audiences through the mass media. In order to accomplish this research goal, it was first necessary to ask and answer several preliminary research questions: Are military public affairs officers expected to influence? Are they allowed to influence, and are they currently influencing audiences? What theories and techniques being used by academics, marketing and advertising specialists and political campaign specialist could be incorporated by military public affairs officers that would aid them in influencing their audiences?

This study found that it is indeed the duty of public affairs officers to influence target audiences. Importantly, it dispelled the old paradigm that states: ―public affairs activities inform and educate, while information operations activities influence," and argued that this paradigm is actually counterproductive to the mission of public affairs. This was shown through research of the Joint Public Affairs and Service doctrine and through past and current practices of public affairs organizations. Research determined that there were very few limits imposed on military PAOs in regards to their ability to influence both domestic and international audiences. The only major restraint is that all communication must be truthful and factual.

This study determined that the goals of the "influence activity" of military public affairs officers' are

> To gain and maintain domestic and international public support, elicit approval for military actions, degrade enemy planning and actions, deter enemies, and counter adversarial propaganda.[1]

This study found that communication theories developed and tested in academia and proven commercially are of value to military public affairs officers and that the practice of audience segmentation, as applied by political campaign specialists, could be used by PAOs to narrow and define their target audiences. Marketing and advertising specialists use mass communication theories and political campaign techniques to communicate their message and sell their products. Though there are similarities between the marketing and advertising fields and that of the public affairs field, choosing allegiance to a media "brand" during wartime is much more complex and possibly dangerous than choosing, for example, a brand of toothpaste.[2] For military PAOs to be effective in their wartime mission, they must be more conversant with mass communication theories than those practices of Madison Avenue marketing and advertising firms.

This research also concluded that, in addition to a sound military strategy to win, the government must also gain and maintain public support from key audiences. This is a crucial focus for military public affairs officers, which itself demands a sound strategy. This study also recommends that military strategy should include in its design, a plan for keeping target audiences informed and for combating enemy misinformation and propaganda.

This research also determined that there are no standardized, quantitative measures of effectiveness for public affairs activities that can be conducted in wartime environments outside the United States. There are some limited qualitative, pseudo-scientific techniques that are employed by public affairs officers to measure effectiveness, primarily involving media-content analysis. This lack of standardized procedures hinders PAOs' ability to provide responsive support to their commanders. The shortcoming in standardized analytical procedures makes it difficult to assess if a PAO's actions are having any effect on the information environment.

Finally, this study found that five mass communication theories and one political campaign technique are feasible, acceptable and suitable for use by military PAOs to improve their ability to influence target audiences. Only one of these techniques, audience segmentation, was taught, and only in a cursory manner, at the DINFOS.

Recommendations

Four specific recommendations result from this research:

It is of primary importance to the Department of Defense to clarify and simplify public affairs doctrine. Though there is a trite expression within the military, ―there is no military prison officers go to for violating doctrine," it would make the public affairs community much more effective if its officers understood their boundaries, limits and responsibilities. Specifically, the updated doctrine should include in the mission statement for public affairs activities the phrase, ―inform, educate and influence target audiences." In addition, public affairs doctrine should state as specifically as possible what effect or effects PAOs are trying attain by influencing their target audiences. Within JP 3-61, *Public Affairs* five goals of influence were identified. These goals need

to be stated directly in the public affairs mission statement. These goals are to gain and maintain domestic and international public support, elicit public approval for military actions both domestically and internationally, degrade enemy planning and actions, deter enemy aggression, and counter adversarial propaganda.

The current DOD definition of propaganda should be changed; it is currently too broad and contradictory. If the Department of Defense decided to enforce its ban on propaganda, as currently defined, almost every form of public affairs communication activity in use today would have to cease. Joint Publication 3-61, *Public Affairs* directs military PAOs to attempt to gain and maintain domestic and international public support for military operations. This task directly contradicts the ban on propaganda. Therefore, a better-written definition would clarify this issue for public affairs officers.

The Defense Information School should adapt its initial public affairs officer training to incorporate proactive counterpropaganda techniques. The counterpropaganda techniques currently taught by DINFOS instructors is generally reactive in nature, so public affairs officers are typically on the defensive. However, DINFOS is not at fault in this regard. The schoolhouse is only allowed to teach from approved doctrine and currently there is no U.S. military doctrine that outlines counterpropaganda techniques or theory. The DOD should produce counterpropaganda doctrine and it should be taught at DINFOS.

The Defense Information School needs to examine mass communication theories in its curriculum to provide the basis for teaching new PAOs how to influence their target audiences more effectively. As noted previously, DINFOS only allocates one class to instruct students on almost a dozen important mass communication theories.[3] This

decision is largely because DINFOS has not changed its philosophy that public affairs only informs and educates, it does not influence. This viewpoint matched the older 1997 version of JP 3-61. However, it is not in line with the 2005 revision of that publication.

This study chose five theories and one technique that were demonstrated to have military application. There are, of course, numerous mass communications theories, and the inclusion of any mass communication theories applying to influence activities would be an improvement on what DINFOS teaches now. This is in no way is meant to malign the dedicated staff of instructors at DINFOS. Over the years, the course has been compressed from ten weeks to eight and a half weeks. However, the importance of dominating the information environment warrants an expansion of the curriculum.

<u>Topics for further study</u>

This research paper attempted to address several key questions relating to military public affairs activities, specifically their ability to influence selected audiences. In the course of this research a number of issues arose which were outside the scope of this study, but remain relevant. Research in these issues could contribute to the body of knowledge regarding public affairs activities.

First and foremost, research should be conducted to determine quantifiable measures of effectiveness for public affairs activities. It is extremely difficult to gauge the ―value added‖ effects of public affairs activities without quantifiable measures of effectiveness. Development of a system of metrics to measure the global information environment or selected target audiences would greatly benefit not only military public affairs officers, but the entire U.S. military.

The next topic for future research relates to the question, ―Is it possible to inform and educate an audience without influencing that audience?‖ Answering this question is the final, and perhaps most vital piece of the debate within the public affairs community. By answering this question, it would help clarify the roles and responsibilities of public affairs officers.

Finally and maybe most importantly, research should be conducted to determine if the Department of Defense should conduct influence operations, particularly those directed towards the American public. There are proponents on both sides of this issue and both sides appear to have strong arguments on their behalf. This research should take into account who should determine what effects military public affairs officers should try to achieve. It should also look to set limits for military public affairs officers in regards to topics which public affairs officers should refrain from using their skills.

Conclusion

Public affairs activities are just one tool in a commander‘s toolbox to accomplish his mission. As demonstrated throughout this study, public affairs activities will not ordinarily win a war for a commander when used alone. However, if ignored or misapplied public affairs could lengthen the campaign or forestall victory. As noted in Carl von Clausewitz‘s famous trilogy, the military, the government, and the people are inextricably intertwined. Without the support and backing of the government and populace, military force alone cannot achieve lasting victories. It is the role and responsibility of military PAOs to keep the government and its citizenry informed on its military‘s actions, by doing so it will garner the appropriate level of popular support to carry out the will of its civilian leaders.

In order to fulfill its mission, PAOs must be educated and prepared to fight in the global information environment. This study and preparation allow PAOs to effectively inform, educate and influence both friend and foe. A comprehensive understanding of mass communication theories and techniques is as important to the PAO as an in-depth knowledge of his primary weapon system. Former Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, James Glassman described America as being in a war of ideas.[4] Military PAOs must be ready to fight this war with skill and determination.

It was the purpose of this research to improve PAOs ability to influence their target audiences. The U.S. military's warfighting excellence has allowed it to retain its supremacy on conventional battlefields. This excellence must extend beyond skill at arms to incorporate the unconventional battlefields that it finds itself engaged in now and for the foreseeable future.

[1] Material found throughout Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005).

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GLOSSARY

Center of Gravity: The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. (DOD)

Influence: the power to affect somebody's thinking. (Merriam Webster)

Information Environment: The aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information. (DOD)

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

Joint Doctrine: Fundamental principles that guide the employment of US military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective. Joint doctrine contained in joint publications also includes terms, tactics, techniques, and procedures. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. (DOD)

Joint Principles of War: Objective, offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, simplicity, legitimacy, restraint, and perseverance. (JP 3-0)

Measure of Effectiveness: A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. (DOD)

Measure of Performance: A criterion used to assess friendly actions tied to measuring task accomplishment. (DOD)

Operational Environment: A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. (DOD)

Psychological Operations: Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. (DOD)

Public Affairs: Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense. (DOD)

Strategy: A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives. (DOD)

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DJIMO
USACGSC
100 Stimson Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

Mr. John N. Cary
DJIMO
USACGSC
100 Stimson Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

Dr. Scott R. Borderud
DCL
USACGSC
100 Stimson Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301