

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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SHARED KNOWLEDGE IS POWER:
SEEKING UNITY OF EFFORT IN INFLUENCE OPERATIONS

by

Robyn A. Chumley, Lt Col, USAF

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Introduction

We must make ourselves heard around the world in a great campaign of truth.

-- Harry S. Truman¹

Ah, the good ol' days. Mother Russia and its Red Menace of communism crawled throughout its socialist republics and beyond, packaging neatly into a collection of nation-states perfect for the United States to confront with all the conventional military power it could muster. The Cold War—it all seems so easy now. The United States government galvanized strategic communication efforts to concentrate on its one great power rival, marshalling America's melting-pot public behind a national security strategy to spread freedom and dignity and democracy around the world.

And it worked.

It worked so well that eventually the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, changing everything, fragmenting the balance of power, launching a collapse of governments, the fractures of others and the heralded rise of our nation's hegemony.

Then, as history would have it, everything changed again on September 11, 2001. And after a series of miscalculations and mistaken ventures, the United States now finds itself struggling to sell its ware. Fingers point not at the failed policy of a neo-conservative ideology that touts muscular democracy, but rather at the supposed failure of strategic communication to spread America's good word.

And in the middle of this mixed-up mess rests the U.S. military's attempt to wrap its arms around the strategic communication mission, a unity-of-effort journey it has arguably been on for more than a decade. Despite reams of studies and reports and task forces and academic papers, the Defense Department's Joint community continues to arm-wrestle over archaic boundaries

between information and influence—in essence, the non-kinetic competency called information operations.

This paper will detail the disconnects across the military’s influence capability environment—from service doctrine to actual application in the field, then examine the multiple missives that have attempted to provide a strategic communication foundation. In the end, the way ahead will require resolving broad inconsistencies in interagency understanding and approaches to the use of influence as a part of the national element of power. The nation’s security depends on it.

Doctrinally Defining Influence Operations

Information is a strategic resource, vital to national security, and military operations depend on information and information systems for many simultaneous and integrated activities.

-- Joint Publication 3-13²

In addition to historical hiccups and departmental debates, there are marginalizing doctrinal disconnects across the U.S. Government interagency. To understand the proverbial train jumping the railroad tracks, it is important to understand how the various governmental communities, specifically the Department of Defense, defines influence and the role Information Operations play in exercising influence as a Joint Capabilities area practice codified by the Secretary of Defense.

The most recent Joint Publication 3-13, dated February 2006, describes Information Operations as the integrated employment of certain core capabilities, used in concert with supporting and related capabilities, to “influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human

and automated decision-making while protecting our own.”³ In the Joint world’s view, the doctrinal core capabilities of Information Operations encompass the following elements and capabilities:

- **electronic warfare**, which employs electromagnetic and directed energy to control and exploit the electromagnetic spectrum in the best interests of the United States;
- **computer network operations**, which exploits the information technology infrastructure to “attack, deceive, degrade, disrupt, deny, exploit, and defend electronic information and infrastructure”⁴;
- **psychological operations**, which endeavors to influence specific foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals employing selected and specifically phrased truth to generate behavior favorable to U.S. policy and those forces engaged in non-kinetic and kinetic military actions to advance U.S. policy;
- **military deception**, which is a deliberate action to deceive an adversary and achieve non-kinetic and kinetic effects favorable to friendly forces; and
- **operations security**, which is the process of identifying and protecting a friendly force’s information in order to deny the adversary the ability to correctly assess friendly capabilities and intentions.

Doctrinally, the following ancillary capabilities support core information operations capabilities:

- while operations security protects friendly information, **information assurance** actions protect friendly forces’ networks;
- **physical security** is aimed at safeguarding friendly force’s personnel, facilities and hardware by identifying and mitigating vulnerabilities in the combined system;

- **physical attack** disrupts, degrades or destroys the adversary's capability to conduct its battles;
- **counterintelligence** is the act of collecting human intelligence to protect friendly nations from adversarial attempts to gather intelligence; and
- **combat camera** provides the military establishment with imagery documentation to support strategic and operational information operations objectives.

And, finally, the *related* capabilities outlined in Joint doctrine coordinate and integrate with the above core and supporting capabilities to achieve an effective information operations campaign. This is the fork in the road within the influence realm. The Joint community clearly wants to keep the core and related communities separate to ensure there is absolutely no perception that influence activities—i.e., psychological operations and military deception—will taint the pristine “just the facts, ma’am” role of the related community. Doctrinally, the related competencies associated with information operations are:

- **public affairs**, which are those activities geared to truthfully and accurately inform internal, domestic and foreign audiences about the Defense Department;
- **civil-military operations** are engagements conducted across the full spectrum of—or independent of—military operations to support national security objectives, such as providing local governance in a nation-state's reconstruction phase; and
- **defense support to public diplomacy** is conducted to promote U.S. policy objectives among various foreign publics.

So current Joint doctrine aligns information operations capabilities under three pillars—core, supporting, and related—carefully crafting a chasm between the influence vice inform activities while stressing the importance of synchronizing planned informational objectives among all.

The U.S. Army's Field Manual 3-13 predictably follows Joint Publication 3-13's core-supporting-related format—after all, the manual's precursor, Field Manual 100-6, charted the doctrinal information operations course in the mid-1990s and ignited the subsequent robust Joint debate over the role of information superiority in mission planning.⁵

As for the U.S. Navy, its scribed approach centers on the technology side of the information technology role, focusing primarily on electronic and network warfare and, perhaps purposefully, shying away from the influence side of the house. When it does brush through the human cognitive aspects of sharing and protecting information, it couches information operations as a process leveraged in command and control.⁶ That said, the Naval Network Warfare Command recently established Tier 1 goals regarding the information environment, such as the goal to operate the global information grid as a weapon system and to “extend and optimize” its information operations capabilities, including developing its workforce to achieve information superiority.⁷

The U.S. Marine Corps mirrors its shipmates in its more technical approach doctrinally, but has recently announced that its Special Operations Command will focus more on information operations. Of the command's core tasks, information operations falls last in its list of priority areas—behind foreign internal defense, special reconnaissance, direct action, unconventional warfare, and battling terrorism. The commanding general contributed the lack of priority to a shortage of staff, citing it will take it up to five years to reach full potential in this arena.⁸

Out on the cutting edge of information operations—and some have argued, perilously over it—marches the U.S. Air Force. The bluesuiters also assign three pillars to information operations, but not the same stovepiping defined in Joint doctrine. Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5, dated January 2005, assigns electronic warfare and network warfare as two of the three core

capabilities. The third? Doctrinally, the Air Force labels its third pillar Influence operations, which is intended to recognize the concept of “influence” as an integral element of the traditional elements of public affairs, psychological operations, counterintelligence, operations security and counterpropaganda.⁹ While Joint doctrine steadfastly maintains a separation between inform and influence, the Air Force boldly recognizes that the public affairs role of truthfully informing and educating an audience *by its very nature* inherently influences that audience. These are not simple semantic word-plays—this is the heart of the interdepartmental debate regarding the various connotations assigned to the term “influence” as a military operation.

For starters, **counterpropaganda**—which is identifying and exposing the adversary’s propaganda and countering with the truth—is barely addressed under the public affairs umbrella in Joint doctrine. However, in Air Force doctrine it is primarily a public affairs mission, though Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5 does not limit it to public affairs. In U.S. Army doctrine, counterpropaganda is parochially assigned as a psychological operations mission.¹⁰ Further, the Army psychological operations community takes issue with allowing its mission of countering propaganda to migrate to the public affairs practitioner.¹¹ Army psychological operations units have five traditional roles: influence foreign audiences, advise the commander on the psychological effects of actions and operations, provide public information to foreign audiences, serve as the commander’s voice to foreign populations, and counter enemy propaganda.¹² I anticipate every public affairs spokesperson in Iraq and Afghanistan would take some umbrage to these PSYOPs designated core competencies of providing public information or serving as the commander’s voice. Are these not only doctrinally, but historically traditional public affairs roles no matter where the spokesperson’s foot rests, in the homeland or on foreign soil? A blue-

suited spokesperson would doctrinally add that countering propaganda is a traditional public affairs role as well.

This is not an inconsequential academic critique. There are significant consequential first-, second-, and third-order effects, and more importantly, the very real possibility of unintended consequences precipitated by the doctrinal conflicts and disparities between the joint and among service doctrine that variously address human cognitive engagements to communicate, and therefore influence. The doctrinal discordant, inconsistent, and hence strikingly ineffective communication endeavors of the joint and service-specific influence practitioners is conspicuously evident in operations from Serbia to Iraq to Afghanistan.

Operational Examples

Serbia, 1999: The military was still wrapping its doctrinal head around information operations labels—is it information operations, or information warfare, or information in war—as well as clearly defining who is allowed to do what in the information environment when Operation ALLIED FORCE kicked off. Despite all the fog and friction, the various players of the military information community were stridently prepping the battlefield. Public affairs officers invited media to cover a major North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air exercise in the Balkans, which was intended as an overt show-of-force directed at the Milosovic regime. Later, when bombers deployed to Great Britain, public affairs practitioners from Washington to London and beyond boldly and persistently heralded the deployment of such powerfully capable forces intending to mass and maneuver what they hope would be behavior-modifying effects-generating messages across the information battlespace to target the leadership in Belgrade. The ensuing truth-based information campaign, if “campaign” it can be designated, was intended to

influence behavior. The consequentially protracted U.S. and NATO engagement in the Balkans starkly demonstrates the differences that emerged between intended objectives and actual outcome. The non-kinetic “behavior-modifying” massed and maneuvered messages associated with the media activities were not incorporated into the broader kinetic operations campaign planning. Essentially, media engagements were ad hoc events intended to create an arbitrary information effect rather than contribute to an integrated influence campaign to create multiple and cumulative effects favorable to coalition policy. Further, when information operators invited public affairs officers into planning meetings, they often met with resistance. And when public affairs attempted to highlight military capabilities in the theater on the internet in a “frequently asked questions” manner for media queries, the website was shut down out of fear of revealing secrets to the adversary. Shut down, that is, until the intelligence community recognized its viability—particularly when they counted the number of hits the website received from Eastern Europe, to include Serbian government locations.¹³ The information communities made a stumbling attempt to integrate and synchronize the various information elements of strategic communication, and it spawned a renewed debate on the role of public affairs in information operations that continues today.

Afghanistan, 2002-2003: From October 2002 through July 2003, the Combined Joint Task Force 180 Information Operations Cell Chief position was led by six different officers. Of those six, only one was educated and qualified in the field of information operations.¹⁴

Iraq, 2004: The U.S. military urged CNN reporter Jamie McIntyre to interview a U.S. Marine Corps “commander” regarding upcoming operations in the Sunni stronghold in Fallujah, Iraq. The “commander” turned out to be a public affairs officer, a Marine Corps lieutenant, who proceeded to engage Mr. McIntyre that coalition forces had crossed the “line of operation.” The

Marine lieutenant, in effect, led Mr. McIntyre to understand (falsely) that the anticipated retaking of Fallujah had commenced. The U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant's soundbite to CNN was, "We have two battalions out there in maneuver right now dealing with the anti-Iraqi forces and achieving the mission of restoring security and stability to this area."¹⁵ Though the lieutenant maintains his statements to CNN that day were factual and CNN misunderstood what was being communicated, it nonetheless remains that major operations did not commence until three weeks later.¹⁶ This set into motion what can be designated an "unintended" news broadcast industry debate about whether or not CNN had fallen victim to an "information operation." In other words, CNN believed it was unwittingly employed as part of a deception plan—purposefully misled to report operations had begun when they, in fact, had not.

Wittingly or unwittingly drawn into a deception is inconsequential. The network, perhaps so eager to lead in an industry that is driven by vigorous competition, chose to air the segment and stood by the broadcast. Was the lieutenant aware of what his words conveyed to a hungry media eagerly anticipating a military operation? Or was the lieutenant duped into using CNN to reach the Iraqi insurgents? A seasoned public affairs operator sitting in an information operations planning cell would not have knowingly allowed the deception, if deception it was, to proceed, nor used the loaded phrase, "crossed the line of departure." Public affairs professionals value, above all else, truthfulness—their credibility, the Department of Defense's (and ergo, America's) credibility, depends on it. The lieutenant has defended his statement. But the effect the lieutenant's statement had was counterproductive. If a public spokesperson deliberately intends to deceive, no matter the intended effect, he or she compromises his or her integrity and the perceived integrity of the Department of Defense and the nation; and he or she compromises the potential for future military operation success.

Afghanistan, 2004: To synchronize strategic communication efforts in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan created an organization similar to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM's Office of Strategic Communication and aligned psychological operations, public affairs and information operations with political-military operations to create the Theaterwide Interagency Effects organization.

According to a U.S. Army public affairs officer deployed there at the time, instead of working directly for the CFC-A commanding general, she moved into Effects and worked for an O-6 with no experience in public affairs, psychological operations or information operations. Rather than providing advice and counsel to the commander, she fought for a voice among the others and often took a backseat to the advice and counsel the information operator provided.

She was further concerned when the former soldier in charge of information operations moved over to be the command's spokesperson. Though the spokesperson insists he was able to separate his recent information operator role from his traditional public affairs role, some have argued that he lost sight of the demarcation line when he announced that the Taliban were demoralized following the 2004 nationwide elections. According to the major, "The election further displays that the Taliban lacks the capability to conduct coordinated, sustained, and effective operations," and he added that a key Taliban leader was losing his follower's support.¹⁷

Media pressed the major for proof of his sweeping statement, which he was unable to provide (he says further information was classified).¹⁸ Was the major stating fact or caught up in the emotional moment—or was he targeting Taliban followers or the al Qaeda community or the international audience or the U.S. populace with his broad conclusions? Did his previous position as the command's information operations expert taint his credibility as the command's spokesperson? To be sure, combining like capabilities into one Effects office to synchronize

communication efforts is commendable and recommendable. Turning the info operator into the spokesperson in the same theater during the same war effort is not. And there is an unfortunate footnote—in 2005, CFC-A returned to the traditional “firewall” of public affairs and the rest of the strategic community, moving the public affairs position out of the Effects office.¹⁹

Baghdad, 2004: When the Multinational Force-Iraq’s Office of Strategic Communication was created, a public affairs official on the staff (not the spokesperson, by the way) steadfastly refused to participate in any meetings or discussions about synchronizing themes and messages because to do so meant crossing into the perceived “dark side” and working with doctrinally “taboo” information operations. I personally witnessed a very experienced and capable individual systematically marginalized out of a viable role in the OIF theater and returned home early. Public affairs practitioners continue to work in the MNF-I Strategic Communication office to ensure themes and messages were appropriately coordinate and applied in the information environment.

Synchronicity

“For sixty years strategic communication planning and coordination has been ephemeral and usually treated with indifference. The United States can no longer afford a repetitious pattern of hollow authorities, ineffectual committees, and stifling turf battles in strategic communication.”

*-- Defense Science Board Task Force*²⁰

Every major study of the strategic communication process in the last decade reached the same conclusion: There is not a cohesive approach to informing the global audience about U.S. outreach efforts. From the *Quadrennial Defense Reviews* to *Defense Science Board Task Force*

reports of 2004 and 2008 to a Defense Department *IO Roadmap*—not to mention the voluminous published articles across academia—the strategic communication business has been skewered for its disunity of effort. Rather than adhering to doctrinal applications of the principles of war, such as mass and offensive and maneuver, today’s scattered strategic communication process more closely mirrors a Tower of Babel, with every governmental agency assigning a different definition and role to the strategic communication capability. In order to achieve desired effects government-wide, the non-kinetic communication lines of operation (public affairs, information operations, defense support to public diplomacy and civil affairs) should parallel the kinetic joint lines of operation. What’s more, communication practitioners should speak the same language our colleagues in the kinetic joint lines of operation camp, and assign the same context to strategic communication that influence various populations with an end state of creating effects favorable to coalition forces.

Double Vision

In the mid-1990s, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff compiled a vision for the future in a product called Joint Vision 2010. The Chairman detailed four operational concepts for future warfighting—dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimensional protection, and focused logistics—and added that improvements in the information arena would show the way. Acknowledging that the ability to conduct information superiority is critical to successfully waging the full spectrum of military operations, the authors (on behalf of the Chairman) optimistically forecasted that the chariot on the information operations battlefield would be technology. “While the friction and the fog of war can never be eliminated, new technology promises to mitigate their impact,” the soothsayers boldly predicted.²¹

Protecting this enhanced clarity was (and remains) paramount. It demonstrates how the authors defined information operations: “We must have information superiority: the capability to collect, process, and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying an adversary’s ability to do the same.”²² Regrettably, the authors close with this short section with only a whisper about strategic communication: “In addition, increased strategic level programs will be required in this critical area.”²³

Five years later, the whisper becomes a roar. In Joint Vision 2020, one can sense the Defense establishment now gasping for breath in the rapidly advancing information arena: “(A)dvances in information capabilities are proceeding so rapidly that there is a risk of outstripping our ability to capture ideas, formulate operational concepts, and develop the capacity to assess result.”²⁴ This “substantially” changes military operations, they announced. It should come as no surprise to the well-versed military leader that information superiority leads to decision superiority, meaning information superiority is now a “key enabler of the transformation of the operational capabilities of the Joint force and the evolution of Joint command and control.”²⁵

A New Core Competency

In the long shadow of September 11, 2001, the Defense Department conducted a capabilities roll-call and determined information operations as one area of six that required transformation. In one of the Bush Administration’s seminal publications, the *Quadrennial Defense Review* made the remarkable announcement that information operations was not just a force enabler, but a core capability for the future.²⁶ Senior military and civilian advisors upped the ante, stating Defense needed an “unsurpassed capability” to “influence perceptions, perform computer network defense and attack missions, conduct electronic warfare, and carry out other

protective actions.”²⁷ Following suit, the *Defense Planning Guidance for FY 2004-2009* directed the Defense Department make information operations a core military competency, and ensure it is fully integrated into both supported and supporting operations’ deliberation and crisis action planning.²⁸ That guidance launched a study into organizing, training and equipping for this new core capability. The study would “roadmap” the future for information operations.

Mapping the IO Way

Published under former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld’s signature on October 30, 2003, the classified *IO Roadmap* laid a foundation for developing core information operations capabilities (not related and supporting, by the way, just core) into a mature warfighting force.

Blazing this path, an oversight panel reviewed 15 studies mandated by the *Defense Planning Guidance* directive and found inclusive effects-generating competencies and capabilities. The panel determined that overarching requirements, policies and procedural controls were needed; the relationship between information operations public diplomacy and public affairs better defined; improvements in organization, career force development; more robust education and training; refined analytical support; a better understanding of computer network attack, computer network defenses, computer network defense threat attribution, computer network insider threats; the need for an electronic-space analysis center; transforming electronic warfare capabilities; better preparations to conduct psychological operations; and enhanced operations security were paramount.²⁹

To achieve core competency status, the *Roadmap* recommended redefining information operations to ensure a common understanding of the effects it should achieve in the information

environment. Without that common understanding, the services would not properly organize, train, and equip for the necessary mission.

The *Roadmap* provided a common framework to build upon, specifically that information operations deter, discourage, dissuade and direct the enemy; protect the friendly force's plans while misdirecting the enemy's; and control adversarial communications and networks while protecting the friendly force's.

This vision drove the oversight panel to reign in the myriad mission areas, narrowing the field of 13 mixed-bag mission areas into five—electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception and operations security. The oversight panel reasoned that these are the five that create operational affects, or prevent the adversary from the same, that must be integrated to achieve desired effects; and that to include more core capabilities would dull the operational focus on affecting the adversary's decision-making process.³⁰

The *Roadmap* took significant steps to sharpen the arrows in its information operations quivers by mandating education and training obligations. This essentially created a Joint IO Planners Course at the Joint Forces Staff College and spurred the development of a graduate-level information operations course at the Naval Post Graduate School.

The *Roadmap* also delegated to combatant commanders the responsibility to program, plan and budget for information operations rather than address it as a traditional ad hoc action.

The *Roadmap* dictated increasing the psychological operations force structure, as well as creating a Joint PSYOP Support Element at Special Operations Command to coordinate programs and products across the Defense establishment to ensure consistency in effects-generating message planning and execution.

Interestingly, the *Roadmap* discussed an information operations career *force* for the uniformed services—but did not mandate a more uniform approach by mandating career *fields*. Info operators, if you will. Though this competency crosses all the services to one degree or another, not all the services designate each capability important enough to carry a specialty code, or functional area, or rating in their respective service. Instead, for example, in the Air Force, operations security remains an additional duty—as does military deception, and psychological operations. Meanwhile, the Army is creating an information operations functional area for all disciplines.

Further, the *Roadmap* did not—despite the *Defense Planning Guidance* direction—adequately tackle the tough issue of defining the seams between public affairs, psychological operations and public diplomacy. It paid the issue some lip service, advocating that psychological operations focus on military endeavors, that the Defense Department collaborate with U.S. government agencies on information objectives, and that public affairs “be more proactive” in supporting public diplomacy initiatives with foreign media and audiences.³¹ No doubt, the concern over connecting public affairs with two “influencers” was percolating. But the lack of depth in examining this issue, and the dysfunctional relationship between the government’s strategic communication functions, guaranteed the land of confusion would continue in the influence operations realm—in doctrine, in strategy, in action.

Communicating Confusion: May-June 2003³²

May 1: “My fellow Americans, major combat operations in Iraq have ended.”

-- President George W. Bush

May 27: “It’s a very small group—one or two people—in isolated attacks against our soldiers.”

-- Maj. Gen. Buford Blount III, 3rd Infantry Division Commander

June 12: “We do not see signs of central command and control direction... These are groups that are organized, but they’re small; they may be five or six men conducting isolated attacks against our soldiers.”

-- L. Paul Bremer, Administrator, Coalition Provisional Authority, Iraq

June 18: “This is not guerrilla warfare; it is not close to guerilla warfare, because it’s not coordinated, it’s not organized, and it’s not led.”

-- Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno, 4th Infantry Division Commander

June 18: “There’s a guerrilla war there, but we can win it.”

-- Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz

June 30: “I guess the reason I don’t use the phrase ‘guerrilla war’ is because there isn’t one, and it would be a misunderstanding and a miscommunication to you and to the people of the country and the world.”

-- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

Popular Science

In October 2001, the Defense Science Board Task Force released a report on a 10-month study regarding “managed information dissemination,” strongly urging the U.S. government to give a higher priority to strategic communication, to coordinate the effort to shape public understanding and support for national and foreign policies.³³ By 2004, the Defense Science Board Task Force would find itself studying the same issue and repeating the same recommendation—though by this time, the perception was that the United States was in a strategic communication crisis. Much as it did in the earlier report, the Task Force calls for action—this time, for transformation in the strategic communication arena. With respect to the Defense Department, the report applauded initiatives to include embedded media in Iraq and the plus-up of psychological operations and civil affairs forces. However, the Task Force added that it believed more work need to be done to negotiate the overlapping lanes in the public affairs-public diplomacy-psychological operations area.³⁴

Round Two of a Defense Review

Recognizing the stagnating stovepipes that remained in strategic communications, the *2005 Quadrennial Defense Review* took the significant step of creating the deputy assistant secretary of defense (Joint communication) position to “shape DOD-wide processes, policy, doctrine, organization and training of the primary communication-supporting capabilities of the Department. The initiative encompassed public affairs, defense support for public diplomacy, visual information, and information operations including psychological operations.”³⁵ Essentially, this was the initial step to recognize the need for a military communication advocate at the senior level to synchronize the military’s strategic communication efforts.³⁶

The new Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense prompted the Defense Department to launch the *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication*, which included 55 initiatives designed to improve this squirrely military capability.³⁷ Like the colloquial groundhog-day conversation, the *Execution Roadmap* stressed the same issues initially identified half a decade before, notably that there are doctrinal disconnects that must be deciphered. Further, the *Execution Roadmap* identified significant gaps in funding, organizing, training and equipping the supporting capabilities in information operations: public affairs, “aspects” of information operations (principally psychological operations), defense support to public diplomacy, and visual information, particularly combat camera.

Other initiatives included education and training opportunities in civilian industry, crafting strategic communication plans for the operational theaters, creating integration groups at the Joint and combatant command levels, and building a standing public affairs element that trains others how to integrate public affairs into information operations strategies.

When asked in December 2007 for a status report on the 35 items suspended for September 2007, the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Joint Communication declined to cite all the completed tasks. Colonel Greg Julian allowed that, “We have put a dent in it, and we’re identifying other means of acquiring the resources needed to accomplish some of the tasks.”³⁸ Julian attributes the lag in some initiatives to funding, a lack of resources, and continued differences in how agencies approach strategic communication.

The Way Ahead

“Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or—if you really want to be blunt—propaganda. But whatever it is called,

defining what this war is really about in the minds of the 1 billion Muslims in the world will be of decisive and historical importance.”

-- Richard Holbrooke³⁹

Despite the tremendous strides made since the *2005 Quadrennial Defense Review* mandated attention to the strategic communication deficit, DoD is still crawling toward a walking posture. Why the reluctance to harness all the military competencies to bear on this crucial capability? Because it's hard, that's why.

Tim Allen's character in the hit television show, "*Home Improvement*," was comically fascinated with fast cars, hardware stores, and tools—and more fast cars, hardware stores, and tools. Sound familiar? The Defense Department is the quintessential Tim Taylor of the mythical show, *Tool Time*—ever more comfortable with pursuing next-generation weapon systems based upon platforms rather than capability.

Strategic communication is squishy stuff—its geeky “soft power” takes us away from our convenient comfort zone of conventional “hard power” forces accelerated by technology. It requires planning, programming and budgeting to recognize the fundamental need for more information resources—people, primarily—taking precious dollars away from the comfortable technologically preferred kinetic effects solution. It requires confronting the perceptions that public affairs / psychological operations / public diplomacy cross the Maginot line into propaganda—and admitting this “campaign of truth” is what we have been doing all along.

Conclusion

Along with the 55 requirements laid out in the *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication*, and the hundreds of academic conclusions on this critical capability, I submit the following recommendations. All are not necessarily new, nor are they the “silver bullet” so many senior leaders want, but they should allow the Defense Department to build a critical war-winning capacity to conduct strategic communication in the ubiquitous information environment that demands innovative processes and practices to mitigate the national security threats the information environment poses.

Recommendations

Senior leaders must embrace and reward a cultural change that recognizes the importance to communicate broadly and persistently to achieve predetermined effects favorable to the United States and our coalition partners.

Senior leaders also must instill a culture in the military community that embraces the strategic communication mission with robust resources.

The Defense Department should create a stand-alone Influence Operations Center of Excellence, led by a three-star general, to establish policy and procedures in jointly organizing, training and equipping the military forces in this discipline as well as fortify liaisons with other governmental agencies to synchronize the strategic communication process.

The Defense Department should delegate combatant command authority for information operations to one unified command—U.S. Strategic Command—to ensure unity of effort across the competency.

The Defense Department must legally define the roles and responsibilities of public affairs, psychological operations and public diplomacy—which includes revisiting the viability of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 for today’s globalized and interconnected world.

Each service should consider merging public affairs and psychological operations—the two disciplines that communicate the truth across the full spectrum of military operations—into one career field. That said, the services should institutionalize that separate billets for public affairs and psychological operations remain in place to ensure delineation of roles and responsibilities.

The Defense Department must standardize doctrinal approaches to information operations throughout the Joint community, using the Air Force approach as the prescribed template (i.e., the three pillars in the Joint community would be electronic warfare, network warfare, influence operations).

Each service should integrate strategic communication into all levels of professional military education as soon as possible.

Finally, the Defense Department must cross-pollinate military public affairs, intelligence, strategic planning and public diplomacy liaison opportunities on staffs.

In sum, the evidence suggests that departmentally we are often at cross-purposes. Significant capabilities are not understood nor are they effectively realized. It is incumbent that we marshal all the capabilities of the Department, in collaboration with our colleagues in the State Department and the other Federal departments to communicate America’s agenda clearly.

The U.S. government must dispel its abhorrence to co-mingle the effects-generating attributes of information operations, public affairs, defense support to public diplomacy and

civil-military affairs. What's more, communication practitioners must understand the tenets of the kinetic joint lines of operation and incorporate the language and the context of those joint lines of military operation into the lexicon of the non-kinetic communication lines of operation. Information "warriors" should speak the same language and assign contextual meaning to the information weapons they used in concert with their kinetic effects-generating colleagues. Integration is key—without this collaboration, the United States will continue to miss the mark on communicating for effect.

~~—Mandate cultural expertise, to include strategic language proficiency requirements, for all information operators~~

~~—Properly resource influencers (referring to the Air Force's definition of the influence capability in information operations)~~

~~—one strategic communication expert estimated government resources to conduct arguably the "most critical element of national power" as insufficient by a factor of 10³⁷~~

~~—i.e., the Air Force gutted its strategic communication capabilities in recent force shaping measures (and is now trying to recapture what it lost by increasing the officer personnel cap to its most recent level of 300—a good start, but hardly a sustainable number to meet today's challenges)~~

~~—Institutionalize release authority for weapon system video at the source~~

~~—i.e., establish a "60 minute rule" for video release similar to the mandated release of information (news release) to the public for significant events~~

~~—Incorporate more public affairs billets at information operations professional military education schools~~

End Notes

1. President Truman's "Address to American Society of Newspaper Editors," April 21, 1950, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpaper/index.php?pid=715&st=Campaign&st1=Truth> (accessed 15 Dec 2007)
2. Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations*, page x.
3. *ibid*
4. *ibid*, pages II-4-II5
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