

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> xx-06-2005		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master's Thesis		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> 20-08-2004 to 26-05-2005	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>  The Crisis in Strategic Communication: A Combatant Command Solution				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Mark E. Stratton II, Maj, USAF				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>  Joint Forces Staff College Joint Advanced Warfighting School 7800 Hampton Blvd. Norfolk, VA 23511-1702				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>  JFSC 25789	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b>					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  Unclassified Unlimited	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  66	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> JoAnne Hooper
<b>a. REPORT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UNCLASSIFIED			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b> 757-463-6301

**JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE  
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL**

**THE CRISIS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION:  
A COMBATANT COMMAND SOLUTION**

**by**

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

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**26 May 2005**

# ABSTRACT

When the United States became the world's sole super power, the events of September 11, 2001, were not foreseeable, and the hatred that many people currently have for America was not easily predictable. Today Islamic terrorists want to destroy the U.S. way of life and eliminate Western influence in the world. The threat we face today is as serious as the one we faced more than fifty years ago at the beginning of the Cold War. The Cold War taught us many lessons about dealing with dis-information campaigns and the time is right to remember those lessons. The U.S. inability to positively promote an honorable image in the Global War on Terrorism has created a crisis in our Strategic Communication strategy. Our adversaries, both foreign and domestic, will continue to misrepresent U.S. goals and values in an effort to undermine our war aims.

Strategic Communication is a difficult mission to get right every time but in order to win the battle for the hearts and minds of people around the world we must take this mission seriously and apply the right resources and talents to the solution. As part of the solution we need to build Combatant Command offices that are dedicated solely to the Strategic Communication mission. We should accept the fact that Strategic Communication is vital to our long term objectives and build and maintain organizations that can perform it. Fifty years from now our grandchildren will ask how we won (or lost) the Global War on Terrorism. Fifty years from now our grandchildren will ask why the Islamic world loves (or still hates) the United States. It is important that we build our Strategic Communication infrastructure to last the next fifty years to win the Global War on Terrorism.

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**America's negative image in world opinion and diminished ability to persuade are consequences of factors other than failure to implement communications strategies. Interests collide. Leadership counts. Policies matter. Mistakes dismay our friends and provide enemies with unintentional assistance... *Strategic communication is a vital component of U.S. national security. It is in crisis, and it must be transformed...* (Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication - Final Report, page 28)**

When the United States became the world's sole super power, the events of September 11, 2001, were not foreseeable, and the hatred that many people currently have for America was not easily predictable. In the glow of post Cold War euphoria, the U.S. government (USG) dismantled many of the organizations responsible for winning the Cold War's battle of ideas. Some of these organizations and the missions they performed were not only critical to bringing down the Soviet Union but were also instrumental in selling a good American image abroad. Once America stopped marketing its image overseas, its enemies seized the initiative and began promoting a highly negative image of America. This paper will describe the strategic marketing environment that America is currently in and describe why Strategic Communication (SC) missions are important to our national security. It will also describe why permanent SC offices are needed inside the Department of Defense (DoD) to ensure SC missions are properly integrated in the larger USG SC effort. Specifically, this paper will show that Combatant Command (COCOM) offices are required to handle the highly synchronized, coordinated and integrated SC missions needed to properly market the US image abroad. A lot of positive efforts have occurred in the last 12 months to correct weaknesses in the USG SC infrastructure but much more must be done. It is vital that DoD efforts are harmonized with other instruments of national power and that COCOM level SC planners be effectively organized. Proper COCOM staff structures consisting of dedicated SC officers will provide the continuity and flexibility

required to match the growing need for a mature USG SC infrastructure. Only then can we effectively turn the tide on the growing anti-America sentiment while we fight the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

## **Strategic Communication - Defining the Term**

There are numerous definitions as to what SC really means and what it really includes. Defining the term correctly is very important because it ensures that all the various USG agencies and organizations perform SC missions correctly. Currently the draft Chairman's Planning Guidance defines Strategic Communication as "the transmission of integrated and coordinated USG themes and messages that advance US interest and policies through a synchronized interagency effort supported by Public Diplomacy (PD), Public Affairs (PA), and military Information Operations (IO), in concert with other political, economic, information and military actions" (SCAWT, p. 4).

In the same brief the National Security Council (NSC) staff defines SC even more broadly: "the integration of Statecraft, Public Affairs, Public Diplomacy, (Military) Information Operations and other activities, reinforced by political, economic, and military actions, in synchronized and coordinated manner to shape foreign perceptions and behavior." Of particular interest to this paper are the words "...to shape foreign perceptions and behavior." This is at the heart of SC challenge because in order to accomplish that action, organizations with vastly different mission sets (and agendas) have to coordinate and synchronize efforts. The question of authorities, roles and responsibilities inevitably become a huge issue. This is not only a problem between cabinet-level organizations like the DoD and the Department of State (DoS) but also within each of those organizations as well. The DoD has struggled for years debating within itself the extent of its role and responsibility pertaining to SC activity. It is one thing to identify

the SC problem; it is a more difficult thing to solve that problem. Another interesting note about the two definitions is the conspicuous use of “integrated”, “coordinated”, and “synchronized” in each. These are major facets to the proper planning and execution of the SC mission, and without them, the entire effort is fraught with peril. The use of these terms indicate the importance of inter-agency cooperation and imply the type of challenges action officers face as we move forward in the SC arena.

As a final description of SC, the DoD used the Defense Sciences Board in its 2004 Summer Study on “Transition to and from Hostilities” to refine its understanding of the term.

The DSB went to great lengths to paint an accurate picture of SC:

...strategic communication describes a variety of instruments that have been used by governments for generations to *understand* global attitudes and cultures; *engage* in a dialogue of ideas between people and institutions; *advise* policy makers, diplomats, and military leaders on the public opinion implications of policy choices; and *influence* attitudes and behavior through communications strategies. (DSB, December 2004, p. 67)

As you can see this paints a very broad picture of Strategic Communication and leaves much to the imagination regarding the term. The four action words in italics above describe broad efforts unto themselves. The words ‘understand’, ‘engage’, ‘advise’, and ‘influence’ present huge opportunities for success or for failure and the DoD certainly has a hand in each. The trick is to ensure that each cabinet-level organization agrees to the description of each word and supports the appropriate role and responsibility implied by each.

As referenced in the descriptions above, Public Diplomacy is a huge part of Strategic Communication. Because PD efforts are so critical to a robust SC effort, it is important to have a firm understanding of what Public Diplomacy includes. Joint Pub 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military & Associated Terms* defines Public Diplomacy as:

Those overt international public information activities of the United States Government designed to promote United States foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad (JP 1-02, p. 431).

It is distinct from purely diplomatic efforts between governments, and it can be performed by both public and private entities. USG PD efforts normally consist of positive interactions between the USG and people from other countries. PD efforts normally strive to build a bridge of understanding between cultures that are different than our own. Once mutual understanding and trust is established using PD activities, USG policies are more apt to be accepted by foreign audiences. Public Diplomacy efforts might include Fulbright scholarships, student exchanges, country visits by U.S. diplomats, military officer exchange programs and any other action used to positively connect the U.S. to other countries. Any program aimed at fostering friendship between two countries can be seen as a PD program. A large part of PD includes the proper transmission of USG intentions through SC efforts. The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy's 2004 report puts things into more context with "America cannot determine its foreign policy on the basis of what pleases foreign publics. But when policy is adopted, the government should carefully consider the proper means for communicating it to populations abroad" (USACPD, 2004, p. 2). This is why SC and PD discussions are so often intertwined. Although Public Diplomacy is a vital component of SC, one can not effectively exist without the other.

## **The Strategic Communication Triad**

With this information as a foundation, in a broad sense the military portion of SC can be seen as the triad between IO, PA and military support to PD. Each of these disciplines will in

some way overlap the others which cause the inevitable battles for control. Although PD is largely a State Department function, there is also a large amount of military activity that can be classified as military support to PD. Military to Military (Mil-Mil) exchanges, humanitarian relief missions, coalition exercise programs, and military scholarship programs all put a good face on American military presence and illustrate examples of military PD efforts that compliment DoS efforts. The challenge is ensuring that the IO and PA efforts highlight the military *and* non military PD efforts taking place. Often times the USG does fantastic things for its friends (and sometimes its enemies) and does not take the time to integrate that information into a larger context in order to positively affect global opinion. Because there are clear military chains of command between IO, PA, and military PD, the desired SC effect on target audiences is often times not exploited because of artificial walls erected between military organizations. This causes missed opportunities to change the hearts and minds of the people who have learned to hate the United States in recent years. Of course, various organizations inside DoD will attempt influence global audiences but because strategic vision is not communicated very well between agencies the efforts will not be optimized.

The desire of the SC community is to identify methods to collaborate and synchronize disparate efforts by multiple organizations in order to maximize the influencing effect on world audiences. By planning for SC influencing operations in a more integrated manner, more mature and thoughtful messages can be sent to the world about the honor of our intentions. It is within the DoD's grasp to build organizations that consistently target the right effects to the right audiences at the right time in order to enhance USG prestige. By focusing our themes and messages in a highly coordinated and synchronized manner and always keeping the USG grand strategy in mind, SC staffs can ensure that honorable USG intentions are not misunderstood by

foreign audiences. The key is to have the right expertise on a dedicated staff that consistently performs Strategic Communication missions.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The SC Triad includes IO, PA and military support to PD and depends on the proper leveraging of each.

## **The Modern Concept of Strategic Communication - NSC 68**

In 1991 the world watched in awe as the once invincible Soviet Union dissolved without bloodshed. Many historians agree that the “Evil Empire” yielded to democratic ideology because the Soviet people demanded it. Although it is true that the USG exerted sustained pressure on the Soviet leadership, it was ultimately the Soviet people that determined their nation’s fate. The sustained U.S. pressure began as early as 1950 when the Truman Doctrine was quantified in NSC 68. It outlined the strategy of Soviet “containment” and identified methods of ensuring U.S. victory in the Cold War. After World War II it was inconceivable that the Soviet Union could dissolve peacefully and yield to the ideals of freedom and democracy. Although NSC 68 certainly advocated enhancing U.S. military strength to counter Soviet power, the national security document also identified the strength of PD and made the “soft power” of PD a cornerstone of countering the Soviet ideology (NSC 68, section IV.B).

Although it took 51 years, NSC 68’s national security strategy objectives were eventually obtained by the Soviet people themselves. In the end it was the success of soft power efforts that won the Soviet people and convinced them to change the Soviet system of government. Today we face an enemy that is equally as dangerous to our way of life as the Soviet Union was in 1950. Today Islamic terrorists want to destroy the U.S. way of life and eliminate Western influence in the world. In September 2002, President George W. Bush issued the current National Security Strategy (NSS) to outline the grand vision required to counter this new threat.

Because it can be argued that NSC 68's vision eventually won the Cold War, it can serve as an excellent guide for lessons learned in implementing future strategies. Of particular interest is the manner in which soft power strategy was implemented in the Cold War and the organizational entities used to unify the USG efforts in winning the hearts and minds of the Soviet people.

During the Cold War, the USG established large organizations inside both the DoS and DoD to consistently undermine the communist ideology. These organizations not only had the goal of weakening the Soviet Union but had the goal to ensure that people around the world received and understood the message that communism was evil and not good for people yearning to be free. To go with this idea, freedom and democracy were heralded as the solution to the ills of the world. These USG organizations used all means available to shape public opinion in the world against communism.

Therefore, during the Cold War it was advantageous for politicians to take tough stands against communism and against the Soviet Union. It was politically acceptable to engage in military Information Operation (IO) campaigns against our global enemies. Because propaganda against communism was seen as a good thing, the American public was not sensitive to the thought of deception campaigns involving psychological operations and dis-information. The overarching concern of a more or less unified American public was to be tough on communism. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union many of the routine counter-propaganda type activities that helped us to win the Cold War became verboten in the eyes of the public (Garfield, p. 32). In the early 1990's, the United States rushed to reap the peace dividend and dismantled many of the organizations it set up to counter communist propaganda. In doing so, serious damage was done to our ability to counter the anti-U.S. rhetoric that blossomed in the 1990's and today.

To compound the modern problem for Strategic Communication, the information age created the ability of new global actors to shape the thoughts of like minded individuals around the globe. The world is truly a much smaller place than during the Cold War. Individuals who have the resources can mobilize large numbers of people around the planet (regardless of national borders). Because these virtual and borderless armies use the internet, 24/7 cable news networks and global radio networks to spread propaganda and dis-information about the United States, renewed focus must be applied to counter the threat. The Cold War taught us many lessons about dealing with dis-information campaigns directed against us and the time is right to remember those lessons. A study of NSC 68 provides a great foundation to explore ways in which we can counter the new radical Islamic terrorist ideology that we face today.

**BOTTOM LINE:** NSC 68 established ‘soft power’ as a cornerstone of defeating the Soviet ideology but over time we forgot the importance of soft power. With the advent of the information age it is vitally important that we remember the lessons of NSC 68.

## **Two Strategic Communication Strategies - NSS 02 and NSC 68**

In 1950 President Harry S. Truman faced very similar challenges that President George W. Bush faces today. President Truman faced an enemy that appeared to be committed to the destruction of the American way of life, an enemy that waged very robust propaganda efforts to sway people worldwide to their cause, and an enemy whose stated goal was the destruction of Western ideals. President Bush faces the same type of enemy today with the Islamic terrorists. Although this new enemy is not a super power or even a Nation-State, it does possess the means to inflict catastrophic effects to the American way of life. It also possesses the resources and support structures needed to wage a very long-term war against the United States.

In comparing the two strategy documents, a reader gets the sense that NSC 68 placed a higher premium on PD efforts than the current NSS 02. The current national security document places a higher premium on military options because of the perceived urgency of the threat and the difficulty in identifying realistic PD efforts to counter that threat. History shows that Truman depended on DoS efforts to guide his national security strategy and reflected that in his strategy documents. The nature of the enemy in 1950 and the temperament of the Commander in Chief at that time provided an excellent opportunity for robust PD efforts and organizations (Dale, p. 5-7). However, in today's environment PD efforts are woefully inadequate because the Cold War organizations that unified USG PD activities were dismantled and no longer exist. This is why current strategy documents have difficulty explaining the "how" of implementing good PD strategy.

NSC 68 consistently reinforced the idea of countering the ideology that supported Soviet power. NSC 68 attacked the very foundation of Soviet thinking. It sought ways to demonstrate to the world that the ideology itself was wrong. The policy to "develop a healthy international community" was actually tied directly to the policy of 'containment' of the Soviet Union (NSC 68, section VI.A). In fact, NSC 68 points out that the Public Diplomacy policy of developing a healthy international community was as important as the policy of 'containment'. To go along with this, the strategy heavily stressed the need to vigorously sponsor the United Nations (UN) and ensure that the United States operated within UN parameters of conduct. In other words, NSC 68 stressed the need to work diplomatic and public diplomacy options first and foremost. If the efforts to support those activities failed, the option of "containment" using military means was then warranted. This established diplomatic supremacy over "military first" options. As part of a fully engaged diplomacy effort, NSC 68 also stressed the need to keep the doors of

negotiation open in an effort to maximize U.S. ability to shape the hearts and minds of the Soviet people.

This philosophy conflicts with the current NSS in several ways. NSS 02 assumes that no one can negotiate with Islamic terrorists (Dale, p. 5). This assumption, no matter how valid from the U.S. standpoint, leaves few diplomatic doors open to the Islamic world. It hinders the ability of some Islamic nations to fully participate in our GWOT efforts because we force them to choose between supporting the U.S. or supporting their own people (many which support the Islamic radicals). From the Middle Eastern standpoint, the fact that the U.S. will not negotiate with 'Islamic terrorist' instantly causes a great deal of friction between the average Islamic person and the U.S. The propaganda machine within the Islamic world is propagated not only by traditional media but by Arab neighbors and friends that have in some way been harmed or threatened by American power (Holbrooke, p. 1 and Nye, p. 1-8). This propaganda machine is exceptionally powerful and difficult to overcome. Whereas Truman stressed the need for PD efforts to counter the Soviet enemy, the current instruments of national power do not support robust PD efforts against a cultural enemy that knows no single national border (USACPD, 2004, p. 30). The current NSS also does not adequately describe the tools needed to win the hearts and minds of our adversary. Because Islamic terrorists hide within a larger world-wide Islamic culture, it is imperative that U.S. policy is clearly communicated to the world through a mature and thoughtful PD effort. It took five decades for U.S. PD efforts to bear fruit in the Soviet Union. Similar efforts can bear fruit in the Islamic world if the USG builds organizations that perform the PD mission well. Knowing how important PD is to our larger SC strategy, the questions become: how did we successfully perform PD missions during the Cold War and can those successes be replicated?

**BOTTOM LINE:** NSC 68 sought to leverage public diplomacy with military preparedness in order to defeat the Soviet ideology. The NSS 02, on the other hand, primarily relies on military force to defeat the radical Islamic ideology. The next NSS should leverage PD more.

## **Cold War Strategic Communication - Birth of the USIA**

As the hunt for communist infiltrators operating inside the U.S. reached its height after World War II, the legal need to separate informational efforts aimed at foreign audiences and those aimed at domestic ones became very important to political leaders in the U.S. In large measure, politicians could not risk the political capital of being involved in any effort by the government to investigate or influence domestic audiences. It became apparent that any organization involved with anti-Communist influencing missions had to be fully oriented to foreign audiences and had to be separate and independent from cabinet level organizations (i.e. DoS). The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 (United States Information and Education Exchange Act - Public Law 402, 80<sup>th</sup> Congress) specifically forbid the State Department from participating in any influencing activity on the American public (Armistead, p. 109). Prior to the Smith-Mundt Act, the most effective way to get information to the rest of the world was to simply put it into the American stream of information flow. The DoS now had to separate itself from Influencing efforts such as propaganda, psychological operations, and to some degrees even certain public affair activities in order to ensure compliance with the Smith-Mundt act. These limitations posed serious difficulties to the department's ability to get unified messages out to foreign audiences. A Smith-Mundt compliant solution was needed in order to pursue the NSC 68 strategy. The United States Information Agency (USIA) became that solution. In an effort to satisfy the Executive branch's desire to counter Soviet propaganda, while also satisfying the Legislative

branch's guidelines, the USIA was established in 1953. It eventually became the most influential USG organization in changing the hearts and minds of the Soviet people and the world.

Restrictions set up by the Smith-Mundt act actually made the USIA much stronger than it would have been otherwise. The USIA was authorized to direct and unify PD and propaganda efforts across departments and reported to the President as situations required. The USIA allowed policy makers a great deal of latitude in decision making and risk taking. It also provided political insulation to the power brokers inside Washington D.C. because propaganda activities could be legitimately concealed by the USIA in the normal course of business. The USIA became the "go to" organization for getting propaganda and PD efforts accomplished in foreign arenas.

Although the USIA was technically separate from the State Department, the USIA's core expertise came from the DoS, and a certain level of synergy existed between the two organizations. The establishment of the USIA provided the means for the DoS to become operationally tactical in the implementation of USG themes and messages without getting legally or ethically dirty. The USIA would use PD tools to ensure that target audiences around the world rejected communist ideology and embraced democracy and capitalism (Armistead, p. 110). Some of those tools included radio and television programming aimed behind the iron curtain. Others tools included foreign newspaper injects and covert propaganda operations aimed at foreigners exposed to Soviet influence. Coordinating these efforts between DoS, DoD, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other USG organizations became the responsibility of the USIA. The USIA ensured that the various agencies stayed on the same talking points and remained true to the themes and messages set forth at the highest levels of government. Over time it was this consistent and steadfast attention to the strategic level integration of USG SC,

PD and propaganda objectives that helped win the Cold War. Unfortunately, a comparable organization to the USIA does not exist today for the GWOT.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The USIA successfully leveraged its Strategic Communication expertise to enable other Departments and Agencies to concentrate on the missions that they excelled at. The USIA became the focal point for these efforts and SC missions did not ‘fall through the cracks’.

## **Cold War Strategic Communication Strategy - A Case Study**

The operational arm of the USIA overseas was the United States Information Service (USIS). The USIS maintained close watch on the pulse of people overseas and sought the most effective ways to transmit anti-Communist messages to them. The organization was singularly focused on the best ways to undermine or eliminate Soviet influence in all areas of the world. It consistently returned to the grand strategy of containing communism and spreading democracy around the globe. The USIS did not organize itself as the sole action office for implementing SC activities but more as an information broker that recommended the best methods for SC implementation. By concentrating on analyzing public sentiments abroad, the USIS was not distracted by SC implementation issues. This gave the USIS a large degree of flexibility and credibility. An organization that pulses the attitudes of foreign audiences like the USIS does not exist today. Currently, the DoS is the only USG organization that has any significant role in measuring public opinion overseas. However, the DOS is woefully under funded in this mission area and does not have the capacity to fix the problem without Presidential leadership (DSB, September 2004, p. 72). The annual DoS budget for overseas polling and analysis is approximately six *Million* dollars a year (DSB, September 2004, p. 26). In comparison, the private sector spends approximately six *Billion* dollars a year on public polling efforts

(USACPD, 2004, p. 6). This should clearly show the importance that the private sector puts on polling which is something the USG understood when the USIA/USIS existed.

The USIS was extremely good at tailoring anti-Communist propaganda for its target audiences. However, sometimes the organization created bigger long term problems for the U.S. by focusing so intensely against communism. At times the USIS did not ensure that its anti-Communist approaches also dovetailed with American values. A great example of bad strategy, in regard to SC planning, occurred in the 1950s. At that time, communist influences in Middle Eastern universities showed a significant increase and anti-government demonstrations became commonplace. The youth in many of these countries were disenfranchised by repressive governments and had little opportunity to express themselves, especially within the university system. The communist influences on campus were aimed not only at promoting the Soviet Union but also at diminishing the United States which prompted the USIS to take action. The USIS initially developed a good, well grounded SC plan to deal with this problem, but as time went by the plan began to deviate from American values which in turn created larger long-term problems in the region (GWU, March 30, 1953, p. 1-6).

In order to win the hearts and minds of Middle Eastern youth, the USIS office in Baghdad, Iraq in 1953 recommended four 'lines of action' for the U.S. to strive for (via diplomatic channels):

- 1) Establish anti-Communist curriculum in the university systems,
- 2) Provide positive anti-Communist instruction to college age prison inmates
- 3) Establish more extra-curricular activities for students and
- 4) Disseminate more anti-Communist material targeted to college age students.

The USIS used its knowledge of the local people in Iraq to recommend very specific courses of action within each of the four items listed above. This included recommending actual names of people to assist in each line of action. On the whole this is an example of a good implementation of SC strategy. The four lines of action agreed with American values and could easily have been seen as supportive of U.S. grand strategy. However, in 1954 the communist influencers in the region became stronger and this mission area for the USIS became more critical. The USIS, therefore, had to become more aggressive to counter Soviet influence in the area. This is when the good, well grounded SC plan began to stray from America's long-term interest. The USIS focused so intensely on the specific target audience (Iraq college age students) that it lost sight of the long term strategic picture (GWU, March 30, 1953, p. 1-6).

As the program in Iraq became larger the USIS ignored enduring American values while pursuing the strategy to contain communism. In 1954 the USIS continued analyzing local audiences in Iraq and determined that the best way to undermine the communist propaganda was to tie the Soviet Union to pro-Jewish /pro-Israel sentiments. In a DoS Foreign Service Despatch #657 dated March 16, 1954, titled "Samples of anti-Communist Propaganda" it is clear that the USIS actively pursued a propaganda effort aimed at capitalizing on Middle Eastern hatred of Israel and Jews. In Despatch #657 it is evident that the USIS undertook efforts to highlight positive connections between the Soviet Union and Israel. It also made it policy to sway the Arab public by showing pro-Jewish sentiments demonstrated by communists (GWU, March 16, 1954, p. 1-2). The short-term gains of this policy measured against the long term price of this policy can not be understated. A policy that seeks to influence a target audience by playing on hatred is doomed to eventual failure and will eventually undermine all that is good. A 2004 Zogby poll showed that the number one reason people in the Middle East dislike America is

because of “unfair U.S. Policies” (Zogby, p. 2). They were particularly concerned about what they see as an unbalanced policy on the Palestinian issue. They also see “American rhetoric about freedom and democracy as hypocritical...” (DSB, September 2004, p. 45). The seeds of this perception of American hypocrisy may have been planted in 1954 when the US initially fanned the fire of Arab hatred for Israel.

However, this example of bad SC planning should not undermine our confidence in the overall good that the USIA (and USIS) provided to our USG SC efforts. For this one failure, at least one hundred successes can be found. In 1953 the USIA was a brand new organization working to define the full scope of its mission. The importance in explaining the 1953 failure is to highlight the fact that it takes time to build good organizations capable of performing the SC mission. It takes time to build an organization capable of equipping and training its workforce to handle the task expected of them. Using the lens of history, this type of mistake was not often duplicated by the USIA. For decades the USIA quietly performed its mission and continually chipped away at the credibility of the Soviet Union. In the end the USIA was one of the most effective tools in the USG toolbox to bring freedom and democracy to the people of the Soviet Union. But as we will soon see all good things must come to an end.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Strategic Communication is a difficult mission to get right every time. When it is done poorly or incorrectly the long term ramifications to the U.S. and to the world can be very bad.

## **The Collapse of the USG SC Infrastructure**

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 transformed the USIA forever. The focus of all its energy was to bring down the Soviet ideology and positively market the U.S. one. Without the Soviet threat it became increasingly difficult to justify the continued funding of the USIA. The

next major factor affecting the USIA was the explosive growth of information technologies. With the growth of 24/7 cable news, internet technologies, and satellite communications, the world opened up to instant means of obtaining information. The perception that the USIA's mission was accomplished led to much discussion inside political circles on its future utility. The idea that other organizations could safely perform SC missions added to calls for the dissolution of the office. More than anything else, the huge success of the organization sealed its fate. Politicians, motivated to save money and trim government bureaucracy, dissolved the USIA in 1999 and transferred most of its functions to the DoS (Armistead, p. 116-118). However, additional funding for DoS to perform the SC missions proved to be grossly inadequate. As a result the robust, mature SC efforts exercised by the USG during the Cold War suddenly ended. Arguably with the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and the dawn of the Global War on Terror, the USIA dissolved when our national security needed it the most.

In order to have a viable SC effort it is imperative that a strong PD effort also exist. Unfortunately funding for USG PD efforts also fell after the fall of the Soviet Union. The NSS of 2002 referenced the need for PD, but the budget request that followed did not reinforce it as a priority. In fact the military is currently funded at more than 400 times the funding level of all USG PD efforts (Nye, p. 8). This disproportionate level of budgetary neglect will lead to long term failure of NSS objectives no matter what military successes are gained. NSC 68 showed that PD efforts needed to be emphasized and spearheaded at the Presidential level and not delegated piecemeal to numerous departments. The eventual fall of the Soviet Union proved that strategy as sound.

Almost immediately after the USIA was dissolved, SC mission gaps began to form. Coordinated SC activities between agencies in the USG became dis-jointed, and the honorable

intentions of USG policy failed to be communicated to foreign audiences. The DoD saw the real threat this presented to our national security and attempted to establish an organization to perform SC missions abroad to enhance success in future military operations. In 2002 the DoD established the failed Office of Strategic Influence (OSI). This office was initially tasked to amplify the views of moderate Arab voices in the Middle East in an effort to curb anti-American sentiment in the region. With the prospect of a long-term war on terrorism, this seemed like a logical effort to assist in developing assistance in the Middle East for countering terror activities against U.S. forces. However, the Office of Strategic Influence was soon dissolved because public misperceptions about its function cast doubt on the integrity of the DoD (Garfield, p. 30). The issue of whether it was even DoD's responsibility to work in the PD influencing arena doomed the OSI as well. In fact one of the OSI's biggest detractors was the Pentagon's Press Office spokeswoman, Ms. Victoria Clarke (ASD/PA). She diplomatically fanned the flames inside media circles which eventually proved fatal to the OSI (Beuckens, p. 11). This is evidence that even inside the Office of the Secretary of Defense SC roles and responsibilities can be politicized to the point of implosion. After this disaster, the DoD learned that in the arena of SC a strong unity of command was absolutely required within the Department and that close coordination with outside agencies was needed at all times.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The loss of the USIA created a mission gap that has yet to be filled. It is very difficult to identify the current roles and responsibilities of the players in the USG that have a hand in SC missions.

## **Current Status of Strategic Communication**

In 2003, recognizing the gap formed by the loss of the USIA, President Bush established the Office of Global Communication with the mission to "...ensure consistency in messages that

will promote the interests of the United States abroad, prevent misunderstanding, build support for and among coalition partners of the United States, and inform international audiences” (White House, p. 1-2). In addition to this effort, the DoS established the position of Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. These were two steps in the right direction; however, the appropriate levels of funding have been dramatically smaller than the funding levels once afforded to the USIA. The 2005 U.S. budget allocates only \$317 million dollars to DoS PD efforts (U.S. Budget, p. 737). In comparison, in its first year of existence the USIA was funded at \$605M (in today’s dollars). Eventually the USIA’s budget grew to over \$1.11 billion in 1966 (Henderson, p. 308). Although the NSS references Public Diplomacy as necessary to win the war of ideas, the corresponding funding levels for PD have not supported it as a priority (NSS, p. 6). This mismatch has created a huge PD vulnerability in our current SC strategy and it must be dealt with as soon as possible.

The two biggest problems facing U.S. SC efforts revolve around the current state of USG PD operations. The problems that the USG are grappling with are: (1) the current budgetary constraints in the PD (and by extension SC) and (2) defining the strategic roles and responsibilities for SC activities within the USG bureaucracy. When USIA existed, the lines of authority were clearly drawn and bureaucratic infighting between departments was not a large issue. The PD mission distinctly belonged to the USIA which was accountable to the National Security Council. This greatly limited the number of potential disagreements between DoS and DoD on turf ownership. Without centralized control of PD and SC efforts, USG policies continue to lack unity and be misunderstood by foreign audiences. This self inflicted friction will make “winning the war of ideas” impossible. Future versions of the NSS must therefore place more emphasis on unified PD efforts to maximize the long- term benefits of soft power.

Only when the USG PD priorities are clearly delineated and when proper funding is allocated will we be able to meet the challenge of changing the mindset of the Islamic world. Only then will we truly win the war on terrorism and ensure our national security.

Because PD funding may never catch up to previous levels, any new strategy to address USG SC infrastructure must address the vulnerability of 'doing more with less'. In today's global information environment, this vulnerability can be mitigated by the speed of information flow and the ability to conduct virtual meetings across departmental boundaries. Recognizing the need to better coordinate PD and SC messages, the DoS began hosting a weekly Fusion Cell meeting in Washington D.C. to help inter-agency action officers coordinate and synchronize SC efforts (USACPD, 2004, p. 9). The JS J-5 SC office attends this meeting and takes DoD action items. Any action items that need to be delegated to other DoD organizations is then tasked out and coordinated accordingly by the JS SC office. While the Fusion Cell is relatively new, it is maturing quickly. A future goal for this weekly meeting is to open it up to larger USG action offices so that a broader understanding of SC efforts can be realized. Once dedicated SC action offices exist throughout the USG, a much better degree of harmonization can occur, and the integrity of U.S. themes and messages can be realized.

It should be noted that this Fusion Cell in no way replaces the mission once performed by the USIA. The Fusion Cell is simply an attempt to get as many SC action officers as unified as possible. Every department inside the USG is struggling with defining SC and its role in it. Part of the battle inside government halls is defining a universally accepted definition of SC and defining each department's role. How these organizations fit inside the broader mission of SC drives a lot of Beltway arguments.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The biggest problems facing SC revolve around low funding levels for PD and identifying the players in the USG that have a role in SC.

## **Operation Iraqi Freedom - Justification for Action**

The most recent example of a failure in SC objectives is readily apparent in the way the USG approached Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Although OIF was one of America's most successful military campaigns, the aftermath of combat operations has proved much more difficult. Without sustained public support, both domestically and internationally, no military success can be long enjoyed. Assumptions made at the OSD level (and higher) indicated that post combat nation building efforts would go smoothly once Saddam Hussein was out of power. It was regarded as common knowledge that once the Hussein regime was removed from power, the Iraqi people would unite behind American liberation. Prior to the war, the idea of liberation was widely promoted as how U.S. forces would be received by the Iraqi people. This idea of OIF being a "war of liberation" actually began with the passage of the Iraqi Liberation Act (ILA) in 1998, which made regime change the official position of the USG. However, no real effort was made to pursue the act's provisions until the attacks on U.S. soil on September 11, 2001.

Political pressure mounted to do more than simply contain Saddam Hussein. It became U.S. policy to continue the War on Terror by making OIF the second battle in the Global War on Terrorism. Public support for the inevitable war on Saddam's regime was absolutely critical so after the mid term elections of 2002 the Bush administration began actively working with the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq (CLI). The CLI was comprised of highly visible public and private individuals that organized to push for regime change and democratization for Iraq. The CLI trained and organized its members to hit the media talk show circuits to stress the need to liberate Iraq (Rampton, p. 53). At the same time the State Department also set up the Iraq Public

Diplomacy Group (IPDG) to provide media training to Iraqi dissidents that wished to publicly criticize Saddam Hussein and demand for the liberation of their country. The IPDG concentrated on training Iraqi dissidents on the art of being media savvy so they could “Help make the Bush administration argument for the removal of Saddam Hussein” (p. 55). According to the IPDG it was much better to show America and the world the opinions of Iraqi dissidents to make the case for war: “We’re going to put them (Iraqi dissidents) on the front line of winning public hearts and minds.” (p. 55)

This is generally how the SC idea of liberation was seeded in the public's mind. A well connected private organization (CLI) working with the White House and the State Department's IPDG got the message out that U.S. forces would be viewed as liberators. However this image quickly dissolved as anti coalition insurgents organized to terrorize both the Iraqi population and U.S. forces. Once the perception took hold that the U.S. was an “occupation” force versus a “liberation” force, the entire SC effort began to lose credibility.

Another failure of OIF SC concentrated on defining the reasons for going to war. This was possibly the largest SC failure in recent memory. The Bush administration outlined four major reasons for going to war with Iraq (Feldman, p. 27):

1. Disarm Iraqi WMD programs and prevent transfer of WMD to terrorist
2. Prevent the continued sponsorship of terrorism
3. Removal of Saddam Hussein from power (regime change)
4. The need for a democratically elected government in Iraq

Unfortunately our SC efforts concentrated almost exclusively on the issue of WMD. Although the other reasons were verbalized at appropriate times, the USG allowed major media outlets and USG officials to focus on the risk from Saddam's WMD programs. Although leveraging public

reaction to Saddam's WMD programs offered the quickest way to solidify support for war it also made the failure to actually find WMD's the single greatest way to lose public support. Instead of concentrating on WMD issues, the USG should have consistently outlined the importance of the other reasons for going to war. After it was apparent that finding the WMD's was almost impossible, the USG SC community (CLI, DoS, DoD, the White House, etc) should have leveraged SC efforts to highlight: Saddam's crimes, his sponsorship of terror, and the huge benefits from a peace-loving, democratically-elected Iraq. Instead of getting ahead of the story, the USG allowed the media to define failures instead of defining success. It appeared that all SC efforts to justify the war ended once the military option was executed. This was a fatal flaw in planning post combat operations.

While USG efforts concentrated on managing the chaos building in Iraq, the world community (to include supporters of Saddam Hussein) stepped up efforts to discredit USG intentions in the theater. The honorable intentions of the U.S. were repackaged by media outlets as failure, and the perception that the war was unjust took hold in the mind of the public. Throughout the Presidential election cycle of 2004 as both parties vied for votes, OIF began to be viewed as a distraction from the War on Terrorism. The election cycle should have been seen as a better opportunity to apply SC efforts to muster continued support for USG efforts in theater. Instead, many of the players involved in getting the message out prior to the war were painfully silent during the election. The lesson learned is that organizations working to promote the military option prior to combat must also be as active during and after combat to promote USG themes and messages. Otherwise, public support will disintegrate as domestic forces attempt to destroy the political leaders involved with decisions to go to war in the first place.

The question remains as to how Saddam Hussein was able to garner so much international support even after his fall. It is unimaginable how the USG could fail in so many ways to convince the larger American and global publics the need to remove Saddam from power. During the Cold War this type of SC activity was ripe with opportunity to get the USG message right. The current failure of USG SC to sway world opinion against Saddam's despotic regime will take years to study and fully understand. Historical perspective is important in understanding why planning assumptions failed to account for USG difficulties after Saddam's removal from power.

## **Operation Iraqi Freedom - Hussein's Propaganda Machine**

Prior to the mid 1980's, Saddam Hussein was an active supporter of numerous terror cells operating in Europe and the Middle East. He used these connections to assist in the elimination of political enemies both at home and abroad. He also used these connections to broaden his international support in his war against Iran from 1980 to 1988. As the Iraq/Iran war began to stress his infrastructure and political support, he reached out to non-Muslim nations for any support he could obtain to include clandestine support from Western powers. At the time it was in the best interest of Western powers that neither Iran nor Iraq win that war decisively, so Saddam found reluctant support from the United States, Great Britain and others. In order to curry favor with these Western audiences, however, he had to reign in his open support of terrorism and downplay any connections he had to funding Palestinian militant causes. The lessons he learned in the 1980's shaped his ability to deceive and manipulate the 'Information Environment' and served as his initial lessons in proper international public relations (Feldman, p. 45-53).

As a result, after the mid 1980's Saddam became very adept at hiding his connections to unsavory groups and became very skilled at controlling media outlets both internally and externally to Iraq. However, he still actively supported such groups as the Palestinian Liberation Front, Asar al-Islam, and Hammas. He openly and covertly provided refuge for such terror leaders as Abu Abbas, known for leading the hijacking of the Achille Lauro, and Abu Musaab al-Zarkawi known for leading the post OIF terrorist attacks against U.S. Troops. He also secretly provided logistical support to terror groups loosely tied to al-Qaeda. For decades he also supported the families of Palestinian homicide bombers by providing them cash rewards for successful attacks against Israel. These rewards were generally between 10,000 and 25,000 dollars and usually paid to Yasser Arafat for distribution. The quantity of information found after both OIF and after the death of Arafat indicates that their involvement was much closer than the world originally knew. Also unknown at the time was the extent in which Saddam was abusing the United Nations Oil for Food program. His ability to hide facts from the entire world and his ability to bribe government officials in order to prop up his personal wealth and power take on historic proportions. Surely, after his trial many facts will be brought to light that will prove to the world that the war was just and necessary. However, the black eye that the USG has received will be cemented in the minds of most people, particularly in the Middle East (Feldman, p. 45-53)

According to a study by Zogby International, most Arabs view U.S. Policy as unjust and imperialistic. This sentiment is echoed by the DSB SC Task Force: "This is the larger strategic context, and it is acutely uncomfortable: U.S. policies and actions are increasingly seen by the overwhelming majority of Muslims as a threat to the survival of Islam itself" (DSB, p.35). John Zogby, through extensive polling in Middle Eastern countries, found that most Arabs' support

for the United States declined considerably after OIF. He found that most Arabs' receive their news from anti-American news outlets in the Middle East and that most take issue with changing USG Middle East Policy and support for Israel. The question of support for Israel may be difficult, if not impossible, to change, but perception that the U.S. consistently changes policy on Middle East affairs is of valid concern, especially from an SC standpoint. The USG has had an incredibly difficult time maintaining a consistent policy in the region due to a number of political as well as international, reasons. Stability in the region has been very unpredictable and being on the right side of Arab issues is difficult at best. Western leaders have not been able to convert U.S. policy into an understandable set of themes and messages that the average Arab on the street can understand (Peterson, p.28-31). The SC challenge is to convert Western values into values that can be appreciated and understood in the Middle East. This leads us to an understanding that permanent SC structures dealing with the Middle East must be maintained by the USG. These SC structures can not simply be used to garner support for military operations. The SC structures and organizations must work around the clock to combine all the instruments of national power in order to sell USG policy in the Middle East. Any SC structure we build must unite all organizations that can influence Middle Eastern hearts and minds. It must unify SC professionals in the DoD, DoS, the White House, private industry, international organizations and all other organizations that convey USG themes and messages.

### **Operation Iraqi Freedom - the Success of Media Embeds**

Part of the DoD media strategy for OIF was the concept of embedding journalists inside combat units and offering them almost unlimited access to front line troops. Having the media attached to a combat unit for the duration of hostilities, had the benefit of engendering good relationships between U.S. Combatants and the media that covered them. Over 600 media

“embeds” traveled with front line troops and brought near real-time information to the U.S. public (Feldman, p. 89). In time, many embeds developed positive relationships with the troops they traveled with and, in fact, came to depend on them for their safety and well being. However, over time an American bias began to be discussed in relationship to the coverage of the war. The perception that embeds were adding patriotic flare to their stories was particularly noted to foreign audiences. A United Kingdom correspondent noted “...my objectivity was shot to bits. All I wanted was for the Americans to win quickly for my own safety, rather than any political reasons” (p. 89). To stifle international criticism, many media outlets sent independent journalists to the theater of operation to ensure unbiased reporting. Overall the idea of embedding the media was a SC success but the positive effects were short lived.

In the media world the saying goes that ‘...if it bleeds it leads.’ This was true for the war and embeds offered the drama that public audiences desired. However, embeds were restricted to the tactical level of war and were not often provided the operational or the strategic level context of U.S. efforts. The long term plan for Iraq was not discussed at length during the combat phase and the SC mission was sidelined. The media concentrated on the tactical level of war and efforts to explain the USG policy and vision stopped being discussed. While Western media sources were given unprecedented access to U.S. troops other media outlets from non-Western countries reported the *results* of U.S. force. Although not immediately apparent, this set up another challenge to SC efforts. While U.S. images of war were seen from the American troop’s perspective the rest of the world saw the suffering of the targets of U.S. attacks. While U.S. journalist saw professional soldiers conducting themselves with honor, foreign journalist saw the results of our combat power which was not always complimentary to our SC messages. This immediately set up the perception in the rest of the world that American ‘Hyper-Power’ was

being abused. When President Bush announced an end to major combat operations on 01 May 2003 the American media began to focus on the strategic reasons for our actions and began to seriously call into question USG policy. The American media, possibly reacting to criticism from foreign news outlets that it was biased, began to question President Bush's Iraq policy in earnest.

This leads us to understand the destructive power of SC failure. When WMD became difficult to find and evidence of insurrection and terrorism began to surface the American media began to undermine USG SC themes. It also began to seriously question the honor of U.S. intentions in the Middle East. SC efforts, now disjointed and not coordinated, could not turn the tide on the anti-war forces inside America. Although the final chapter in Iraq is nowhere near being written USG efforts at conveying themes and messages and winning the hearts and minds of Middle Eastern people will be incredibly difficult as long as we can not keep domestic support as well.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **DOD Doctrine - Strategic Communication Implications**

Now that we have some historical perspective on SC and understand the importance of getting it done right we should look into how DoD doctrine treats the subject. DoD doctrine consistently points out the importance of the National Security Council in unifying strategic-level USG efforts. Joint pubs indicate that to obtain strategic level unity of effort, direction and guidance must be provided at the Presidential level through the NSC. The DoD Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), illuminates several aspects of this subject in a way that warrants attention. Regarding the importance of unity of effort it states:

**Unity of effort** requires coordination among government departments and agencies within the executive branch, between the executive and legislative branches, with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations (IOs), and among nations in any alliance or coalition (JP 0-2, p. I-3).

**The President of the United States**, advised by the National Security Council, is responsible to the American people for national strategic unity of effort (p. I-3).

The pub then outlines the DoD's role in striving for Unity of Effort:

**The Secretary of Defense (SecDef)** is responsible to the President for national military unity of effort for creating, supporting, and employing military capabilities (p. I-3).

The President is therefore responsible for unifying the actions of all instruments of national power. As his operational arm for the military component of national power the SecDef is responsible for ensuring that military efforts are complimentary to the Presidential vision. If military efforts and organizations do not support Presidential vision in regard to unity of effort then JP 0-2 clearly indicates that the SecDef is responsible for "...creating, supporting, and employing military capabilities" to ensure USG unity of effort. Another key point in the passages above is the reference to the NSC. It should not be overlooked that the NSC, in an advisory role to the President is also responsible for ensuring unity of effort within the national instruments of power.

This leads us to the tie in to SC. SC by its very nature crosses all instruments of national power and it can be implemented by almost any USG agency or department. As such it is imperative that SC offices guarantee that mature and consistent implementation of informational activities be institutionalized inside the federal government to prevent ad hoc ambiguous implementation of SC strategies. Within the modern structure of USG agencies and departments the NSC is the only organization that can effectively reach out between major cabinet level departments to effect policy and execution decisions. During the Cold War, the USIA was chartered to report to the President through the NSC and it had very strong Presidential support.

As an example of the level of Executive support to the USIA, President John F. Kennedy wrote a memorandum to then Director of the USIA, Edward R. Murrow, on 25 January 1963 outlining the USIA mission. The memorandum stated:

The mission of the U.S. Information Agency is to help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives by (a) influencing public attitudes in other nations and (b) advising the President, his representatives abroad, and the various Departments and Agencies on the implications of foreign opinion for present and contemplated U.S. policies, programs and official statements (Henderson, p.66)

This shows the level of Presidential involvement in the SC arena. During the Cold War highly visible directors of the USIA were appointed that could bridge the gaps between private industry, Congress, the President and the Executive-level Cabinets. However, the present NSC staff does not have a comparable organization to proactively enforce policy decisions and guide SC efforts. Lacking a single entity to drive USG unity, other methods must be explored.

Since we do not have a single organization like the USIA it is important to at least get all the SC players on the same sheet of music. In an effort to ensure an SC unity of effort, JP 0-2 also indicates the importance of having clear objectives from the national level.

In the abstract sense, an objective is the clearly defined, decisive and attainable goal toward which every military operation should be directed — the military objective. ***Objectives provide the focus for military action; they are essential for unity of effort*** (JP 0-2, p. I-6).

Although Joint Publications indicate that ‘Objective’ is clearly a principal of war, the pubs also demonstrate how important the principle is in peacetime operations as well. JP 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, appendix B-1, highlights the difficulties of clearly defining the objective in non-war settings but nevertheless stresses the importance of doing so to the greatest degree possible.

The objective of an operation other than war might be more difficult to define; nonetheless, it too must be clear from the beginning...Each operation must contribute to strategic objectives. Avoid actions that do not contribute directly to achieving the objective (JP 1, p. B-1)

Having clearly defined objectives not only unifies military actions but also unifies agencies that support military efforts. This concept certainly flows both ways, however. When the military instrument of power is in a supporting role it is important that military efforts and organizations effectively and efficiently coordinate with other agencies involved in implementing USG policy. Under tight budget and manpower constraints effective coordination with non-DoD organizations is sometimes difficult at best. Other instruments of national power do not function or plan in the same ways that military members do. This leads to a great deal of self-inflicted friction as the bureaucracy of the USG machine works to define strategic-level direction from the President. Words and policy statements mean very different things to the different arms of government. JP 0-2 stresses the importance of interagency coordination like this:

**...Interagency coordination demands planners consider all instruments of national power and recognize which agencies are best postured to achieve the objective.** This consideration is especially necessary because the security challenges facing the United States today are growing in complexity, requiring the skills and resources of many organizations (JP 0-2, p. I-10).

**...Unity of effort can only be achieved through close, continuous interagency and interdepartmental coordination and cooperation,** (JP 0-2, p. I-11)

The DoD must go much farther than the pubs state, however. The Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) concept is an excellent start but more will need to be done until the other instruments of national power have the manning and budgetary levels required to fully implement national level objectives. The JIACG is a coordinating cell designed to assist in obtaining the unity of effort the pubs refer to. However having more planning and coordination teams from DoS, CIA, NSA, DHS, etc embedded inside military coordination cells only solves one part of the problem. Certainly military aspects of USG effort will become more streamlined

using the JIACG. However, the DoS and other organizations implementing USG policy will continue to lack the proper resources to fully exercise their own capabilities at a strategic level.

To understand this problem better it is important to understand the current operational footing that DoD has in comparison to other departments. By most measures cabinet level organizations outside the DoD are seen as reactionary in nature. Because the DoD has long-range plans and seems to adapt to crisis very quickly it is usually seen as responsive in nature. There is a huge difference between *reacting* and *responding*. Currently the DoD is *responding* to potential threats and taking the initiative where directed. The level of funding allocated to the DoD permits a proactive, initiative based philosophy. The DoD, although task saturated around the globe has a funding structure that is conducive to long range planning and preparation. The other cabinet departments serving the President (particularly the DoS) do not have an adequate level of funding to permit long range, strategic level thinking similar in scope to the DoD. This forces other departments to *react* to national security situations. This denies them the ability to take the initiative and coordinate properly. Over time this dilemma becomes so systemic that entire generations of career civil servants in those other departments become incapable of thinking in terms of long range U.S. national interest. They can only react to the fire that is closest to their office. This must be fixed otherwise the DoD will always become the first line of defense instead of the last. Diplomatic, economic and informational instruments of power must always be the most viable and primary way to implement USG policy.

The last part of DoD publications that pertain to how DoD handles SC unity of effort pertains to another principle of war: unity of command. Because so many different organizations within the DoD have the potential to participate in SC efforts it is important to ensure that all DoD activities adhere to policy and are disciplined enough to remain true to Presidential intent.

When the complexity of military Information Operations are taken into account, this is a very difficult task. Almost every unit within the Department has some form of IO capability. In addition to that, in today's information environment almost any soldier, airman, seaman or marine can make strategic level impacts to USG policy simply by appearing on cable news in the wrong (or right) light of day. Therefore it is absolutely critical that USG SC messages not only be properly coordinated between the instruments of power but be properly disseminated and understood at the lowest levels within the DoD as well. This is a daunting task that is made easier by ensuring a strong unity of command. JP 0-2 puts this concept into proper context with: **“Command is central to all military action, and unity of command is central to unity of effort”** (JP 0-2, p. III-1). JP 0-2 goes on to say that complex operations like the integration of Strategic Communication efforts should be unified as much as possible through the “decentralized execution of centralized, overarching plans.” Joint doctrine also indicates that decentralized execution remains a basic Command and Control (C2) tenant of joint operations which is at the heart of good Strategic Communication work. Because SC efforts are implemented at every level of command it is imperative that planning be conducted at a strategic, centralized level while execution be allowed the freedom of movement at the tactical level (p. II-13).

The question becomes how to execute the C2 within the military infrastructure as it pertains to SC efforts? On this measure the Joint Pubs offer time tested methods to ensure that the flow of command decisions are made in appropriate manners. Again, unity of effort is of primary concern to the SC action officer. Because SC themes and messages are so vital to the strategic goals of the United States it is important that the efforts of the DoD are properly

synchronized with the other instruments of national power. JP 0-2 offers the following guidelines to pursue unity of effort:

- ... Unity of effort is strengthened through adherence to the following C2 tenets.
  - Clearly Defined Authorities, Roles, and Relationships.
  - Information Management.
  - Implicit Communication.
  - Timely Decision making.
  - Robust Integration, Synchronization, and Coordination mechanisms.
  - Battle Rhythm Discipline.
  - Responsive, Interoperable Support Systems.
  - Situational Awareness.
  - Mutual Trust. (JP 0-2, p. III-14-16)

In reality military units use whatever means needed to implement national level policy. We must remember that Joint Publications are a just starting point for units in the field. The foot soldier must also use an entire array of directives and guidance from the squad level all the way up to the Presidential level. The key is that the national level policy must be clearly defined through the DoD chain of command and not be contradicted at any point in that chain. In order to support the C2 tenets for unity of command, all levels of the DoD chain of command must permit the speed of information flow while maintaining disciplined quality control. The information that reaches the lowest ranking member of the military must have the clarity and integrity of purpose as to clearly be tied to national level values and objectives. Again, this is much easier said than done. This is at the heart of the military SC problem. It only takes one member of the DoD to invalidate a viable SC plan and message.

Therefore it is important that the DoD create and maintain a “unity of command” for SC objectives. Traditional military organizations are not built to effectively implement SC priorities because of the obvious need to concentrate on combat effectiveness. Information (and propaganda) flows around the globe far too fast for every foot soldier to ‘get the word’ on rapidly changing SC messages. Chances are good that the words that a soldier chooses to use in

front of the media may contradict USG policy in some way. In the past, news cycles and information flows provided DoD Public Affairs (PA) enough flexibility to manage the flow of information from most areas of DoD. Properly screening soldiers to ensure they understood SC messages prior to being interviewed for television or print media, while not always tightly controlled, was at least somewhat manageable. With the advent of digital photography, computers and the internet, information can now be placed in the world domain in the matter of seconds (e.g. pictures from Abu Ghraib). PA and other DoD organizations dealing with information flow can not keep up with the pace of information distribution. So it has become vitally important that the DoD establish SC offices that not only coordinate and plan SC efforts with outside agencies but also distribute SC tools to every member of DoD for use in their daily jobs. Unity of command must ensure that every member of the U.S. military is on board with our strategic goals and objectives and know how to tie their specific task or job to those goals and objectives. The chain of command must ensure that every member is synchronized with the SC themes and messages and appreciates the honorable intentions found in our USG policy. When every member of DoD understands their responsibilities to USG SC objectives, future negative actions by members in uniform will be minimized.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The NSC's active involvement in USG SC efforts is required to ensure USG unity of effort. For the DoD unity of effort and unity of command must be done right in order to synchronize with the other instruments of national power.

## **Public Affairs - Strategic Communication Implications**

The PA part of SC also deserves special attention. After the war in Vietnam DoD PA became very sensitive to the perception that it was viewed as a propaganda arm of DoD. Useful information from JP 3-61 that pertains to the current philosophy of PA efforts are:

The mission of joint public affairs (PA) is to expedite the flow of *accurate and timely information* about the activities of US joint forces to the public and internal audiences ... *Today, the speed of military operations and advances in communications technology complicate the challenges of supporting news media efforts* to keep the internal and external public informed (JP 3-61, p. v).

...Propaganda or publicity designed to sway or direct public opinion will not be included in DOD PA programs (JP 3-61, p. II-2).

...PA planning includes: a public affairs assessment; determination of strategic communication goals and objectives; message development; guidance to ensure unity of effort... (JP 3-61, p. viii).

...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...(JP 3-61, p. III-12).

The references above clearly indicate that military public affairs officers have a stake in the proper coordination of Strategic Communication messages. The doctrine also clearly indicates that the current information environment and the needed separation of PA from PYSOP makes that coordination difficult. The need to separate military public affairs missions from military information operations is also identified outside the Public Affairs Joint Pub. Joint Pub 1, “Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States” identifies PA, PSYOP and public diplomacy as “aspects of the informational instrument of national security strategy.” The pub goes on to say that care must be exercised to prevent misperceptions about the role of the different mission areas inside the information environment. The JP 3-61 leaves no room to misunderstand the boundaries that public affairs officers operate in:

...Similarly, PSYOP uses specific techniques to influence favorable behavior or beliefs of non-US audiences. In contrast, joint PA operations should not focus on directing or manipulating public actions or opinion. They provide a timely flow of accurate information to both external and internal publics. While they reinforce each other and involve close cooperation and coordination, by law PA and PSYOP must be separate and distinct.

... It is critically important that PA, public diplomacy, and PSYOP coordinate among each other in order to maintain credibility with their respective audiences (JP 3-61, p. III-18).

Based on the PA doctrine, it becomes apparent that a great deal of friction can be generated between the PA, PSYOP and military support to PD arms of DoD's efforts. By law, a wall was erected between PA and the IO portion of military operations. A memorandum from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, spells it out even clearer: "While organizations may be inclined to create physically integrated PA/IO offices, such organizational constructs have the potential to compromise the commander's credibility with the media and the public," (Shanker, December 2004, p.2). Because PSYOP missions are structurally placed into the military IO mission set, an artificial barrier has been placed between military SC activities and PA. Most military SC planning is conducted in IO chains of command causing difficulties with PA participation. The fact that PSYOP campaigns must be integrated into military SC efforts places a great deal of apprehension with military public affairs offices. Because of this friction between IO and PA the rules of SC ownership must be clearly delineated inside the DoD chain of command.

As long as common terms of reference remain ambiguous, public affairs offices will not be able to fully engage in the SC fight. It is not only a doctrine problem within the military PA infrastructure. Philosophically, it is dangerous to expect PA to be fully briefed on all aspects of military IO objectives (PSYOP, MILDEC and OPSEC). The risk of having the integrity of public affairs officers called into doubt by the international community, as well as the American public, is a risk that can not be taken. The entire SC effort hinges on the fact that our public affairs offices are honest brokers of information. PA is the face of DoD information distribution, so any organizational construct that integrates PA must take this into consideration.

PA doctrine emphasizes the importance of SC but does not indicate how it can be adequately implemented. Other than delineating what PA must not do (i.e. work with PSYOP), it does not offer ways in which it can work with IO capabilities. In the modern information world, PA needs to have the latitude to operate freely but independently within our SC planning cells. There are certain aspects of SC planning that PA should be shielded from, but those areas have yet to be adequately quantified and outlined within joint doctrine. PA needs some form of top cover to allow it to bridge the wall into military IO planning but keep it from being tainted by even the perception of being influenced by (or privy to) PSYOP objectives. Memorandums and policy statements may help, but to have a lasting effect, JP 3-61 needs to be changed. In addition the laws restricting contact with PSYOP may need to be reviewed in the light of new IO missions. These are difficult divides that offer no easy solutions. With time and perseverance, IO and PA can eventually come to some accommodation to allow for fully integrated SC planning within all the instruments of military SC and IO planning.

**BOTTOM LINE:** DoD Public Affairs offices must not be *perceived* as being corrupted by IO. Separation of the two is important to maintain credibility in the world.

### **Analysis - Three Problem P's for Strategic Communication**

Remembering the difficulties that we have had in working coherent SC efforts, we can generally group SC problems into three major areas. Friction can originate from the following SC problem areas:

- 1) *Personalities* of the players working SC issues,
- 2) *Politics* involved with SC activities and
- 3) *Policy* differences between organizations in determining SC priorities.

Each of these P's have a dramatic effect on the types of organizations we build to work SC issues. Since 9/11 the mass of the USG apparatus has been mobilized in the GWOT. As such government organizations and personalities have leaned forward to ensure they participate fully in decision making regarding USG policy. This in large part is the American way of 'getting into the fight' but it is also in part to ensure that organizations within the government get larger parts of the budgetary pie. The personalities inside the beltway in Washington DC can be very compelling in shaping SC constructs. The saying goes that success has many masters but failure knows none. A lot of power players inside government want to leverage their own organizations to take over the SC effort whether it makes sense to be involved or not. These personalities hinder the ability of legitimate organizations from making positive progress in SC efforts. The agendas of these personalities will eventually be exposed but it will take time to sort them out. The next 'P' is tied to the politics of the organizations themselves. Again this is tied to resource constraints as organizations try to implement policy on the cheap. Some organizations profess to own the SC mission but need more money to adequately perform the mission. When the DoS absorbed the USIA in 1999 it was authorized to perform many of the SC missions but it never appropriately staffed the functions of SC. Due to legitimate manning constraints regarding PD and SC activities the DoS can not perform full spectrum SC planning and coordination. However, DoD also has a role in SC efforts that is often times hindered by bureaucratic resistance by DoS players. The last P concentrates on the Policy differences in determining SC goals and objectives. This is a natural problem that is actually good for the development of good SC planning. It is a healthy debate to discuss the policy implications of varying SC options. An example of this problem is the policy debate regarding whether the Arab news network Al-Jazeera should be promoted, minimized, marginalized, or neutralized. This is a legitimate policy

discussion that could have a large number of differing opinions within each department in government. If it is to be promoted then USG officials could make diplomatic type interviews that are beamed directly to the Arab population. This could sway the next generation of Arab toward a pro-American leaning. On the other hand if we were to neutralize the network using military power then it is true that no more anti-American messages would be transmitted to the Arab audience but they would hate the U.S. even more for our hypocrisy regarding freedom of speech.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Personalities, Politics and Policy matter in the SC arena. In order to make all engines inside the USG work toward the same goal these three things must be considered and leveraged in every way possible.

### **Grand Vision - the Defense Science Board Summer Study**

The USG has been slow to respond to the change in world opinion; but it has finally taken steps to improve the USG SC infrastructure. Prior to the difficulties in managing post OIF world perceptions there was a legitimate debate inside USG circles on whether we needed a more robust SC infrastructure. The DoD, and to a lesser degree DoS, did not readily admit to a crisis in our SC efforts. Although some grumbling took place inside the USG about our vulnerabilities in the SC arena, the problem was largely ignored by our senior decision makers. However, after OIF and the consistent international and domestic criticisms about our Iraq policy, it became apparent to most within the federal government that the SC problem was real and could potentially undermine the entire GWOT effort. It eventually became understood that a major pillar of GWOT rested on our abilities to properly implement and execute SC efforts.

The DoD began to identify ways in which it could support the other instruments of national power in the SC arena. DoD finally came to accept the premise that a critical

vulnerability existed that could negate any and all military success. The most significant of these studies included the 2004 Defense Science Board (DSB) Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities. In support of this Summer Study, the DSB created a Task Force to concentrate solely on Strategic Communication. On September 23, 2004, the Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication released its final report which outlined seven recommendations for the USG to consider in correcting current vulnerabilities in our SC infrastructure.

The report concentrated on three overarching questions that needed to be addressed by senior decision makers:

- (1) What are the consequences of changes in the strategic communication environment?
- (2) What Presidential direction and strategic communication means are required?
- (3) What should be done about public diplomacy and open military information operations?

The first question revolved around the post Cold War environment and the new information environment that this paper addressed earlier. The second two questions are very interesting and also deserve some attention in this paper. The questions directly impact how the DoD should implement organizational constructs for USG SC implementation. Any recommendations that this paper makes must take into account the basic SC direction that is being considered at the highest levels within the USG. The DSB report is the only report that is currently being considered by senior leaders in the USG for SC infrastructure changes so it will be used heavily here.

The report very plainly spells out that our USG apparatus for effective, worldwide communication is in crisis. Of particular interest to the Task Force was the U.S. inability to

communicate with the Islamic world. The first step in solving a big problem is identifying the true nature of the problem. The Task Force identified the problem with the following:

**Understanding the Problem:** Strategic communication is a vital component of U.S. national security. *It is in crisis*, and it must be transformed with a strength of purpose that matches our commitment to diplomacy, defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security. (DSB, September 2004, p. 2)

Yet the current national security strategy (October 2002) says nothing about the power of information nor does it allude to the necessity of integrating all of the forms of national power and authority. We now have national strategies for securing cyberspace, protecting national infrastructures, military strategy, and others, yet a national strategy for the employment of strategic communication does not exist. This blind spot existed throughout the 1990s, abetted in part by the belief that the end of the Cold War also ended our responsibility to continue strategic communication. This critical strategic mistake was made at the same time a new threat posed by radical Islam was emerging. Strategic communication must be at the center of America's overall grand strategy in this war. (DSB, September 2004, p. 37)

Dissemination of information to “huddled masses yearning to be free.” Today we reflexively compare Muslim “masses” to those oppressed under Soviet rule. This is a strategic mistake. There is no yearning-to-be-liberated-by-the-U.S. groundswell among Muslim societies — except to be liberated perhaps from what they see as apostate tyrannies that the U.S. so determinedly promotes and defends (DSB, September 2004, p. 36).

The Task Force connected the dots between Cold War successes in Strategic Communication and post Cold War failures of the same. Because the USG had the apparatus in place to understand and analyze the Soviet people during the Cold War, we were able to tailor SC efforts to sway them to our way of thinking. However, since the end of the Cold War we mistakenly and prematurely believed that we understood what the Islamic world wanted as well. The DSB wisely points out that this failure to understand the Islamic culture will doom our SC efforts to failure. The report clearly identifies that the vulnerabilities we have today are a result of the destruction of our SC infrastructure after the Cold War. It does, however, demonstrate ways in

which the current government can overcome those vulnerabilities and rebuild organizations to meet the SC challenge.

Because the military has a huge forward presence in the world the DSB indicated that the military must step up to the plate and accept certain responsibilities that it did not have in the past. The report emphasizes the need for the DoD to play a more active role in the support of PD functions by the DoS. But to compliment DoD, the DoS must also be organized and funded to a much higher level in order to maturely tackle the problems in our public diplomacy efforts. This acknowledgment of the problem is a huge first step in correcting a critical vulnerability. The hard reality of the work ahead is clearly defined by the Task Force:

The current state of U.S. public diplomacy itself has become so stigmatized that it literally must re-invent itself. Given the generational national security damage that has accrued, a re-focused and transformed U.S. public diplomacy—we call it “strategic communication”—must be launched. Specifically, success in “strategic communication” necessarily involves institutional culture change and the selective borrowing of private sector best practices. For example, this new strategic communication function must be more comprehensive, substantive, locally agile and below the radar than public diplomacy today. Moreover, realistic expectations must be set: It will take decades to counter extremist terrorist recruiters and fully restore U.S. global standing and credibility (DSB, September 2004, p. 50).

The Task Force makes the clear connection between SC and PD and emphasizes how important the long view is in these efforts. The Task Force understands that the GWOT is a fight that will go on for decades and, as such, must have soft power as a significant pillar.

## **DSB Recommendations - The President**

The Task Force made seven major recommendations which directly tie to the long-term health of USG national security strategy. The last two recommendations pertain to DoD organizations and efforts. However, to understand how the DoD recommendations fit into the big picture, one must also have a working knowledge of the other recommendations as well. The

first three recommendations pertain to what the Task Force believes the President should do to improve the stature of SC. The first recommendation centers on the need for the President to issue a directive to:

- a) strengthen the USG ability to understand global public opinion and how potential USG policy decisions will be interpreted by the global community;
- b) strengthen the ability to coordinate the different USG SC organizations and;
- c) promote the appropriate legislative efforts to enhance SC efforts.

The second recommendation for Presidential attention concentrates on the need to restructure the NSC to permit harmonized SC activity. Its findings indicate that current leadership from the OGC and the SC PCC is woefully inadequate and impotent to effect any positive change.

The White House Office of Global Communications and a NSC PCC now have formal authorities relating to strategic communication coordination. Their practical influence is marginal at best, non-existent at worst. Their authorities should be rescinded. Given ample evidence that traditional NSC and cabinet models have not worked, these entities should be replaced with new structures grounded in legislation that address 21<sup>st</sup> century realities. (DSB, p. 61)

The third recommendation indicates that the President should set up a non-profit, private organization similar to the RAND Corporation that deals specifically with supporting USG efforts at understanding the nuances and dimensions to SC. The Task Force recommends that a “Center for Strategic Communication” be established to provide information and analysis on global public opinion and other in-depth SC products. The Center would offer services to all major governmental organizations to include the DoD and COCOM staffs.

## **DSB Recommendations - The DoS**

The fourth and fifth DSB recommendations target DoS weaknesses in the SC arena. According to the report, a major tenant that must be reenergized in the DoS is its wayward PD mission. Within the larger framework of departmental diplomatic activity, it appears the DoS has

lost sight of the purpose of its PD activities. The activities are currently disjointed and appear to serve the State Department's bureaucratic interests more than the larger USG interest. Without a well-respected PD program that is firmly grounded in an overall Grand Strategy, the DoS SC effort will always be extremely difficult to implement with the other elements of national power.

Actions speak much louder than words in the SC arena. All positive PD efforts performed by State (and other agencies) must be continually highlighted and tied to USG policy in some way. Again, since the end of the Cold War, PD focus and funding has not kept up with other areas of USG attention. In a post 9/11 world, this can not continue especially in light of the generational war in which the U.S. is now involved. The DSB points out that no real incentives exist inside the State Department to do PD. In fact the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs has been largely vacant since 9/11. Because the post was unoccupied for over 2 years (2002-2004) and because the level of funding has not supported the PD part of its mission, it is usually seen as a Public Affairs organization for the DoS versus a PD organization for the USG (DSB, December 2004, p 81, 102-103). It gets back to the fact that the DoS is woefully understaffed, under-funded and unfocused on the PD function. The DSB points out that this must be fixed both structurally and fiscally. One of the ideas brought up in the report concentrates on restructuring the lead PD position inside the DoS to give it more authority to manage and oversee worldwide PD programs. Currently the position has a reporting responsibility, but not the power, to make real leadership decisions. Another huge limitation of the position is that it currently does not have the ability to control the intelligence focus of the Office of Foreign Opinion and Media Research (OFOMR), which now resides inside the DoS's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). Because the PD arm of DoS does not control the purse strings or reporting chain of the OFOMR, the Under Secretary has no power to truly affect

real progress regarding the analysis of foreign audiences. At the core of proper SC planning resides the tenant of “knowing your target audiences.” As long as the Under Secretary has no legitimate power to plan and execute all aspects of the State Department PD mission, it will always flounder in a sea of apathy at State. Only when a high ranking individual carries the appropriate stick (and carrot), will the PD/SC mission area get fixed inside the DoS. The DSB recommended more power and authority be granted to the position of Under Secretary of State for PD and PA and a full tripling of personnel and funding for the PD mission. The DSB also took a page from the Goldwater-Nichols bill and applied it to the DoS. The report indicates that because of the apparent stove pipes that have developed inside the DoS, a new “joint” way of thinking is desperately needed inside the DoS. Lastly, high level promotions must be tied to experience in the PD side of State.

The idea of a Goldwater-Nichols requirement for the DoS and other agencies is not new. In the report “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols - Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era,” the authors indicate that the need for interagency “jointness” is critical to ensure USG unity of effort. The benefits to the DoD in the last decade have become apparent, but now, in order for the DoD to continue making forward progress, the interagency (to include State): “...demands that we extend our notion of “jointness” beyond the Military Services to the interagency and coalition levels” (Murdock, p. 60). The implication here is that in order for the USG to get the SC mission right, we must have a unity of effort not only across the cabinets but within each cabinet as well. There must be a properly organized inter-agency SC structure with proper funding in order to carry out its piece of the mission.

## **DSB Recommendations - The DoD**

The recommendation that the Task Force made for State was made in conjunction with the recommendations for the President and DoD. These can stand independent of one another and still bring positive effects to the SC fight; however, when implemented all together, a large degree of synergy can be attained. The DoD recommendations compliment the DoS recommendations, but they go deeper to ensure long-term military support to the inter-agency for USG SC. The TF recognized that the DoD usually has the supporting role in the matter of USG SC and needs to structure its organizations and efforts to maximize that role. Currently, it is performed in an ad hoc basis and usually performed differently between each major organization within the DoD. The TF had two recommendations for DoD that target organizational restructuring to support SC. The first recommendation identified the need to make the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD-P) lead DoD integrator of military support to PD and SC efforts. In that capacity the USD-P should coordinate between the appropriate departments inside the DoD (i.e. PA, USD-I, etc) to ensure the DoD unity of SC command. Also, the USD-P should act as the DoD Principal on the NSC's SC Coordination Committee. This would add gravitas to the SC mission inside the DoD. As the focal point for all high level USG SC discussions, the USD-P would be in a position to sustain strategic view to DoD military support activities. By making this a responsibility of the civilian leadership inside the Pentagon, it also ensures the mission area does not get lost by the hard power advocates by the Pentagon's uniformed leadership.

To compliment this first military recommendation, the TF also delineated the need for the USD-P to require the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD-ISA) to act as the focal point for military support to PD and to define responsibilities. Reenergizing this function inside ASD-ISA will require significant resources and time. The

Deputy Assistant Secretary under ASD-ISA would ensure the proper level of staffing expertise. It is very important to understand that these SC offices within the civilian leadership structures of the Pentagon will drive large changes in organizations within the uniformed channels as well. The Joint Staff will require someone with expertise to reach COCOMs and satisfy USD-P requirements. The USD-P will answer strategic SC problems addressed by the NSC and will focus energy on the Joint Staff to provide answers and options. As a result a JS “belly button” will form, and the natural need to expand the staff will occur. Once this JS focal point begins to mature, the COCOM and service staffs (J39’s, IO offices, PA offices, etc) will also have to adapt in some manner in order to meet JS & USD-P requirements. It will take time for this evolution to occur, but the TF recognized the first step was to force a change in the military support to PD staffing structure. Possibly in response to the DSB TF recommendations, the JS J-5 took steps to change their IO Policy Branch to include a single POC for Strategic Communication. USSTRATCOM went a step further and provided that POC two full-time media analysts contracted from the Rendon Group to support SC efforts inside the JS.

The second major recommendation for the DoD concentrated on planning aspects of military operations. For example all military plans should include SC components (annexes, tabs, attachments, etc), and these plans should collaborate with the DoS diplomatic missions (and by implication the inter-agency). At the COCOM level, this will drain the resources on the J39 and IO offices. In fact COCOMs would probably need to create new positions to satisfy this requirement due to the coordination aspects involved with writing such products. This would relate to the way the first military recommendation drives organizational changes to a commander’s staff. In order to satisfy both recommendations, a change in staff constructs is definitely necessary. To address the stress on COCOM staffs, the TF also recommended a

tripling of resources available to the combatant commanders to implement military support to PD programs. Furthermore, USSTRATCOM and USSOCOM will have to shift IO resources to expand its support for SC programs (to include new military support to PD programs). All in all, the TF took a comprehensive look at the larger problem and identified a clear method of solving the problem.

The DSB understood the difficulty in changing the DoD regarding the SC problem. Acknowledging and identifying the problem was the first and hardest step. There may be some debate within DoD (and USG) circles as to whether the DSB identified the problem (and solution) appropriately. The most interesting aspect about the DSB is that each recommendation can be accomplished independently. The DSB discovered that in order to rebuild the SC infrastructure we needed to address the system as a whole and approach it in a full spectrum manner. Everything the USG does in regards to SC must have a valid purpose and must tie into our Grand Strategy. In order to win the hearts and minds of an entire culture, all government organizations should synchronize with the USG SC mission. The DSB wisely instructed that this should not be done in an ad hoc way, and that it can only be done by ensuring that every major muscle of the federal government has a dedicated office to perform the SC mission.

In light of military doctrine, can the DSB recommendations be fully implemented without violating the military need for unity of command? The DSB stressed that the USD-P needed to take lead for DoD SC responsibility. Should that responsibility actually be assigned to a different Under Secretary of Defense in DoD? The USD-I has oversight responsibility for Information Operations and most DoD SC expertise resides within military IO channels. The DSB also recommended increased funding be allocated to both SOCOM and STRATCOM

Information Operation SC efforts. This also clearly falls within the USD-I's area of responsibility. So why should oversight of DoD SC efforts not reside with the USD-I?

To answer that we have to look at the other major player for DoD Strategic Communication work - Public Affairs. A major component of SC planning and execution is performed by military PA personnel around the world. As discussed earlier public affairs officers have a very difficult time maintaining legitimacy if they are seen as operating in the same office as PSYOP officers. Therefore, by placing the SC responsibility with the USD-I, the larger problem of fully integrating PA with IO would only be compounded and made worse.

Placing responsibility for the DoD SC mission would also be inappropriate under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD PA) because of the scope of effort and the level of IO input required. The friction of having the PA fully responsible for SC integration would be insurmountable in light of the level of effort required. Most PA organizations are not built to tackle sustained planning projects that require execution and tasking authorities. In addition, PA has also been known to secretly undermine DoD efforts that it sees as contradictory to its own interest (e.g. the Office of Strategic Influence referenced earlier). For this reason it may not be wise to ignore PA's concerns when it comes to the needed separation between IO and PA chains of command.

This relates to the three problem P's for SC: Personality, Politics, and Policy. Placing the DoD SC responsibility fully inside the IO world (USD-I) or fully inside the PA world (ASD-PA) violates all three P's. Creating self-inflicted friction by violating one or two of the P's may be necessary, but to violate all three P's would be a disaster. Therefore the policy branch appears to be best suited to bridge the gap between PA and IO. The USD-P can act as a fair arbiter when differences arise between information operations and public affairs. USD-P can also focus the

integration of SC strategic vision into the total DoD planning function. The challenge of assigning responsibility of DoD SC to USD-P is ensuring the COCOMs have full time SC offices able to support the increased focus on the SC mission. With increased focus comes the risk that multiple and sometimes simultaneous SC related tasks can come from different Under Secretaries as they each begin working issues for the SecDef. This is where JS can provide a synchronizing function to ensure that conflicting and onerous requirements are not levied on COCOM or service staffs by the various civilian leaders. It is not unimaginable that different civilian leaders working for the SecDef may need to cross the numerous commands or offices in order to guide military SC operations. To prevent confusion the Joint Staff SC office can act as the clearing house for all military SC taskings. The bottom line is that the DSB's analysis of the SC problem and its recommended organizational solutions are exactly what the USG needs. In order to match the direction offered by the DSB the military should adopt an SC infrastructure that supports the DSB's vision. As referenced earlier the Joint Staff is already establishing the office structures needed to satisfy increased SC tasks. What is needed now is for Combatant Commands to follow that lead and build dedicated SC offices to perform the mission every day.

## **A Combatant Command Strategy - Strategic Communication**

So how can a COCOM staff build an organization that supports the SC mission based on the recommendations from the DSB? The Defense Sciences Board indicated that SC embraces five core instruments in order to implement SC objectives: PD, PA, IO, International Broadcasting (IB), and special activities. Although the DSB made no attempt to explain the term "special activities," it can be assumed that it refers to special capabilities or functions within the USG that are beyond the sensitivities and scope of their report. If it is true that these five core instruments comprise the strength of SC implementation, then it is worthwhile to understand

the current strengths and weaknesses of each. Because there are obvious military components to PD, PA, IO and to lesser degrees IB, those areas should be analyzed for DoD leveraging in SC strategy (DSB, December, 2004, p. 67).

A quick way to gage the strengths of each area is to look at the resource allocation each core instrument has received in recent decades. Dramatic changes to missions or funding can have disastrous effects to USG core capabilities. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the USG PD and IB organizations have suffered due to the intense budget cuts of the 1990s. These USG mission areas were not seen as priorities once the USSR ceased to exist. In fact the annual budget for DoS information and IB programs is approximately one quarter of one percent of the DoD budget (DSB, September 2004, p. 76). The current state of DoS PD efforts is abysmal and in crisis. IO funding, on the other hand, has seen a growth in funding due to the focus the military placed on it since the late 1990s. PA also maintained adequate funding levels in recent years because PA programs span every department in the USG and are seen as vital to an organization's livelihood. So in total the PD and IB functions in government are currently weak, and the IO and PA functions are currently stable (in relative terms). In the short term, efforts to fix SC should therefore concentrate on the strengths of military information operations and public affairs. In the long term, public diplomacy and international broadcasting capabilities must be improved in order to compliment the strengths of IO and PA.

### **Strategic Communication - 'Do the Doable'**

This provides us context in which to consider building organizations capable of fully exploiting Strategic Communication opportunities. Knowing that there are weaknesses in our current Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting capabilities, we should understand that military information operations and public affairs offices need to be leveraged to offset those

vulnerabilities. The DSB stressed that increased funding must be given to our Public Diplomacy and international broadcasting missions in order to bring our SC infrastructure back to balance. Until funding improves for those influencing mission areas, it behooves the DoD to consider other viable ways to plan and execute USG SC. The DSB Task Force on SC made valid recommendations that worked within “doable” constraints. From their recommendations, we must question if the DoD can even build organizations that satisfy the intent of the DSB report?

A big concern for the DSB Task Force on SC was the ability of the USG to implement its recommendations. From the standpoint of the Task Force members, it would be a moot point to make recommendations if the USG did not have the ability to implement them. The foundation of the DSB philosophy can be summed up with the following quote: “We must adopt the practical principle of ‘do the doable’; otherwise, we waste our strategic communication resources on impossible goals, demoralize our allies and energize our enemies” (DSB, September 2004, p. 50). Each of the Task Force recommendations are definitely “doable.” It is just a matter of USG willingness to adapt to the new strategic environment. The Task Force went on to say: “The argument of this study is that the U.S. Government must take a dramatically more disciplined, methodical and strategic approach to global communication” (p. 53).

So how does the DSB recommend ‘doable’ actions for the DoD? The DSB focused on the civilian leadership at the highest levels of DoD. Once those changes take place, the uniformed leadership will always follow. Based on the changes already taking place on the Joint Staff (standing up an J-5 SC Office), it is apparent that the uniformed leadership is preparing for the USD-P to take lead on DoD Strategic Communication. Adding further proof, a draft Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSPC) definition for SC is also being prepared for inclusion in the next version of the JSCP (SCAWT, P.4). The fact that a standard definition is being considered

for inclusion in the next JSCP is very positive for future military efforts in this arena because it will require high-level uniformed consensus on military SC roles and responsibilities. It is also a huge step in the right direction for ensuring DoD implementation of the DSB recommendations. Once a definition is included in the JSCP, COCOMs can be tasked to include SC components into all military planning products, as per recommendation number seven from the DSB Task Force on SC. These DoD actions point to the preparation for the full implementation of the DSB Task Force recommendations.

How then can COCOMs organize themselves to support a unified SC effort? If the JS J-5 becomes the lead uniformed DoD office for SC activities, the COCOMs will need to provide a single AO link to provide a conduit for SC taskings. To satisfy the need for unity of command a single office in each COCOM will be needed to handle SC tasks. This office will be needed because of the speed of global information flow and because of the increased requirements levied by new SC offices in the Pentagon. This office would serve as the integration office for all JS taskings, recommendations, and SC planning projects. At first COCOMs would only require one or two uniformed personnel to meet the job workload. However, as other DSB recommendations are implemented (i.e. requiring SC annexes to all plans, adding the Center for SC, etc) the COCOM SC offices will have to grow in size to match the levels of coordination required.

A Combatant Commander would want to place the SC office inside the J-39 in order to capitalize on the synergies gained from using resident IO personnel and tools. In doing so, a great deal of synchronicity can be obtained with all the moving parts involved in the IO world. The SC office would have instant access to all IO planning (PYSOP, MILDEC, OPSEC, etc), all IO effects tools, all media analysis personnel, and a chain of command that understands the importance of SC. The IO office would have to establish rules of engagement to ensure that the

POLAD, PA and other interested parties are adequately represented in all appropriate decision making. This will be the toughest part of building a new SC office into COCOM command structures. The concept of SC is not easily explained to existing organizations, and a certain level of resistance will occur when a new office begins interacting with all levels of a command.

It should be remembered that PA is usually seen as an arm of government that speaks to the American people. Because of the speed in which information flows, every PA office in the USG now has the ability to target and influence people around the globe. As such, public affairs officers struggle with the new world information environment. This new information environment is driving difficult changes in public affairs doctrine and public affairs personnel requirements. In light of these difficulties, the wall existing between PA and IO would have to be addressed in some fashion that is acceptable to both parties. As referenced earlier, PA can not risk being seen as corrupted by PYSOP or MILDEC, but it must participate in SC efforts and cannot be excluded.

For most deliberate, long-term planning efforts, DoD public affairs officers participate fully within COCOM planning teams without restriction. Due to the nature of deliberate planning efforts, PA fits in extremely well with other offices and teams. The risk of cross contamination between PA and IO can be easily managed and is not an issue during most long-term planning efforts. Friction between IO and PA becomes an issue when a major crisis occurs, and PA must proactively exert its power and influence in getting the story out. It is at that time that the IO capabilities run at odds with PA doctrine and practice. To ensure that the perception that DoD public affairs officers are not being controlled by IO personnel, a separate entity is needed during crisis management. The most appropriate entity to handle this is one that does not violate the relationships that are built in the normal course of business.

## **RECOMMENDATION - THE SC CRISIS TEAM**

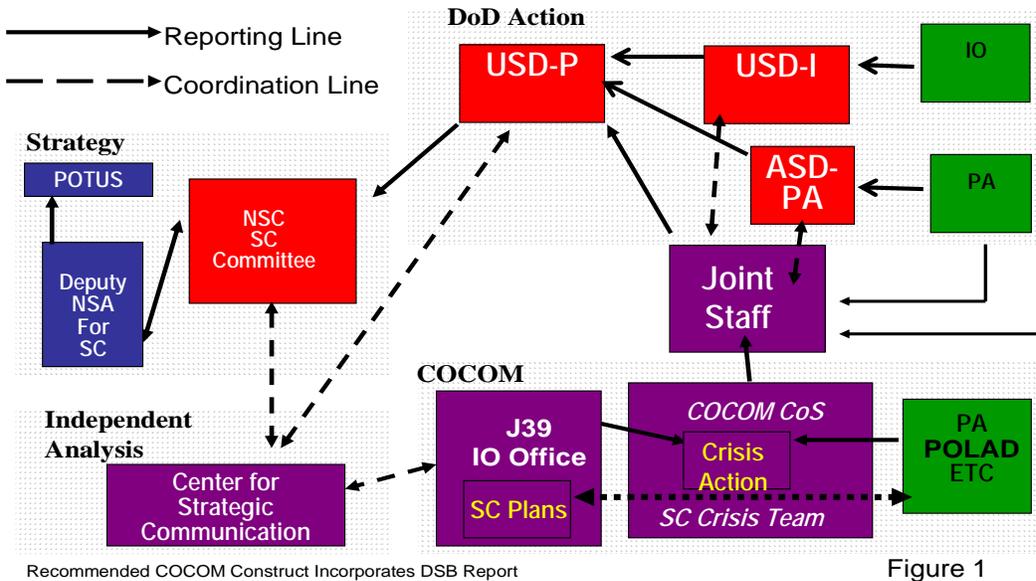
Therefore, using our COCOM J-39 model as a template, the same group of personnel should be assembled to form temporary 'SC Crisis Teams' during crisis scenarios. Although the SC Crisis Team will rely very heavily on J-39 expertise and personnel, the J-39 should not officially lead the SC Crisis Team. Again, the Combatant Commander can not risk the perception that IO controls the public affairs message during crisis. The world media would very quickly destroy any positive message that the USG sends out if it perceives that IO is calling the shots. In order to demonstrate that IO does not own the process a leader outside the IO chain of command should be selected to make COCOM SC decisions. Instead it should be led by the COCOM Chief of Staff's (CoS) office or some other COCOM leader that is separate and distinct from the primary SC AO's. This allows for IO and PA to remain distinctly separate while allowing the COCOM commander to maintain an active role in managing his crisis action SC efforts. The CoS (or equivalent) would be able to determine whether any PA conflicts of interest are valid and if so the best manner in which to mitigate them. The CoS would also have the tasking authority needed to direct both the J-39 and PA should it become necessary to force compliance from either. The IO portion of activity can also be downplayed or minimized by the CoS to any one asking questions about those type connections.

The SC Crisis Team should have formal documentation directing its organizational makeup, its rules of engagement and its mission statement. The identification of a commonly accepted mission statement is vital to ensure that all the SC players understand the same concept of operations. The mission statement will help bridge the gap between IO functions and PA doctrine. It should allow for maximum latitude for all players to bring their equities to the table while not infringing on the other players' lanes in the road. The mission statement should

indicate that PA integrity is paramount to the purpose of the SC Crisis Team. A possible mission statement for consideration could look like: “On order, the COCOM SC Crisis Team will stand up daily operations in order to integrate, synchronize, and coordinate COCOM SC efforts within the command. Upon activation, the COCOM SC Crisis Team will plan and execute the appropriate COCOM SC efforts in concert with all appropriate USG organizations in order to manage the specific crisis identified by the commander or by national command authorities. The COCOM Chief of Staff or his designate will lead all SC Crisis Team efforts for the duration of the crisis. This will ensure the integrity and distinctiveness of all PA, IO and POLAD efforts and will ensure that USG strategic values and goals remain a priority.”

The mission statement above would need to be tailored to each specific COCOM. A COCOM SC office that can satisfy the mission statement above can be seen below in diagram 1. As described in the diagram, for normal planning efforts a COCOM’s SC Office should reside in the J-39 SC office. The bulk of the workload would be distributed well within IO channels. When a crisis occurs, the IO personnel would still have the preponderance of SC expertise but would need to yield authority to the CoS in the SC Crisis Team. The SC meeting locations and procedures could stay the same to offer continuity for the staff, but the key is that the CoS becomes primary authority for unifying COCOM SC efforts. The COCOM SC staff would still act as the primary conduit for information flow between the COCOM and the JS. The only real difference is the virtual but temporary wall that must be erected to offer PA a separation from IO during crisis.

# Recommendation SC Crisis Team



The organizational construct option shown above is very analogous to the Joint Planning Group (JPG) concept described in Joint Pub 5-00.2, Joint Task Force Plans and Policy (p. IX-5). The primary differences between the two concepts is the level at which they are utilized and the nature of the offices involved. Like the JPG, the heart of the SC Crisis Team would be the issue planning teams and their efforts to provide steering recommendations during crisis action planning. As noted in the JP 5-00.2 the head of the JPG must ensure that the group is organized from the start with a clear, concise agenda and that it supports a daily schedule aimed at meeting crisis objectives. The head of the JPG (or in this example a SC Crisis Team) should “...not allow the JPG to get ‘bogged down’ with trivia or headed off on a tangent that does not support the CJTF’s guidance” (JP 5-00.2, p. IX-12). By having the COCOM CoS, or his designate, lead the SC Crisis Team, the combatant commander can assure that his organization is focused on the strategic big picture and not “bogged down” with parochial turf battles. The commander will

also ensure that he is fully aware of the SC priority of effort by leveraging his CoS on the SC Crisis Team.

The description above adheres to the principle of unity of command. It ensures unity of effort by bringing SC AO's into a separate but temporary command structure during crisis. It allows all levels of a COCOM command staff to be fully aware of SC priorities. In deliberate planning the concentration of effort resides in the J-39 IO branch where synergies are maximized. In crisis, the integrity and focus offered by the COCOM CoS is leveraged by the SC Crisis Team. PA's separation from the IO world is assured during these crisis periods when PA personnel are under the most scrutiny. Under all scenarios, SC inputs into the COCOM would still come into the command through a single AO in the J-39 IO staff, which adds to the continuity of operations. Standing up the personnel needed in a J-39 SC office will require additional manpower and resources but the return on investment is readily apparent. The COCOM must be willing to dedicate an SC staff for this mission area and also be willing to properly integrate it into the command structure.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper addressed one of the largest vulnerabilities in the GWOT today. The improper use of Strategic Communication capabilities can nullify every effort our government is currently engaged in. Every military success is irrelevant (in the long term) if the world community does not understand and accept our intentions as honorable. As long as we allow our enemies to successfully market their propaganda against us our status in world affairs will continue to erode. It is true that Strategic Communication is in crisis and it must be transformed. The DSB Summer Study is an excellent starting point for us to focus our efforts.

Now is the time to restructure our COCOM organizations to match the vision outlined by the DSB.

As described in this paper the importance of unity of effort can not be overstated. We can build our organizations to leverage unities of effort across the full spectrum of USG agencies. As described in this paper military support to public diplomacy must be dramatically improved. We can also build COCOM organizations that consistently integrate military support to PD into daily activities. As described in this paper we need to ensure that the world community respects the messages we send by ensuring our Public Affairs offices are distinct from our IO offices. We can do that too. And finally we need to build dedicated COCOM offices that consistently perform the planning function for long term SC efforts. As described in this paper we can certainly do that as well.

Fifty years from now our grandchildren will ask how we won (or lost) the Global War on Terrorism. Fifty years from now our grandchildren will ask why the Islamic world loves (or still hates) the United States. Fifty years from now historians will study what we do today and apply our teachings to the problems they face. It is important that we build our Strategic Communication infrastructure to last for the next fifty years to win the Global War on Terrorism. It is also important that we build our SC infrastructure to win the next fight after GWOT. The SC mission is one that never goes away and nor should the organizations that perform that mission. We should learn a very valuable lesson from the demise of the USIA and opt not to make the same mistake again. We should accept the fact that public diplomacy is a very important part of our National Security and fund it with the same dedication that we have to the funding of new weapons systems. We should accept the fact that Strategic Communication is vital to our long term objectives and build and maintain organizations that can perform it.

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