



Psychological Operations

Learning Is Not a Defense Science Project

Curtis D. Boyd

Joint Special Operations University
357 Tully Street
Alison Building
Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

<https://jsou.socom.mil>
<https://jsou.socom.mil/gateway/>



JSOU Report 07-4
March 2007





Joint Special Operations University and the Strategic Studies Department

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) provides its publications to contribute toward expanding the body of knowledge about joint special operations. JSOU publications advance the insights and recommendations of national security professionals and the Special Operations Forces (SOF) students and leaders for consideration by the SOF community and defense leadership.

JSOU is a subordinate organization of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The JSOU mission is to educate SOF executive, senior, and intermediate leaders and selected other national and international security decision makers, both military and civilian, through teaching, outreach, and research in the science and art of joint special operations. JSOU provides education to the men and women of SOF and to those who enable the SOF mission in a joint environment.

JSOU conducts research through its Strategic Studies Department where effort centers upon the USSOCOM mission and these operational priorities:

- Preempting global terrorist and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threats
- Enhancing homeland security
- Performing unconventional warfare and serving as a conventional force multiplier in conflict against state adversaries
- Conducting proactive stability operations
- Executing small-scale contingencies.

The Strategic Studies Department also provides teaching and curriculum support to Professional Military Education institutions—the staff colleges and war colleges. It advances SOF strategic influence by its interaction in academic, interagency, and United States military communities.

The JSOU portal is <https://jsou.socom.mil>.

Joint Special Operations University Brigadier General Steven J. Hashem, President

Editorial Advisory Board

John B. Alexander
Ph.D., Education
*The Apollinaire Group and
JSOU Senior Fellow*

Joseph D. Celeski
Colonel, U.S. Army, Ret.
JSOU Senior Fellow

Gilbert E. Doan
Major, U.S. Army, Ret.
*JSOU Institutional
Integration Division Chief*

Thomas H. Henriksen
Ph.D., History
*Hoover Institution Stanford
Univ. and JSOU Senior Fellow*

Russell D. Howard
Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Ret.
*Director of the Jebesen Center for
Counter-Terrorism Studies, The
Fletcher School, Tufts University
and JSOU Senior Fellow*

George Emile Irani
Ph.D., International Relations
*Toledo International Center for
Peace and JSOU Senior Fellow*

John D. Jogerst
Colonel, U.S. Air Force
USAFSOS Commandant

James Kiras
Ph.D., History
*School of Advanced Air and Space
Studies and JSOU Associate Fellow*

Brian A. Maher
Ed.D., Education
JSOU Vice President

Michael C. McMahon
Lt Colonel, U.S. Air Force
*JSOU Strategic Studies
Department Director*

William W. Mendel
Colonel, U.S. Army, Ret.
JSOU Senior Fellow

Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro
Major General, Brazilian Army, Ret.
JSOU Associate Fellow

Kenneth H. Poole
Colonel, U.S. Air Force, Ret.
JSOU Senior Fellow

James F. Powers, Jr.
*Director of Homeland Security,
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
and JSOU Associate Fellow*

Stephen Sloan
Ph.D., Comparative Politics
University of Central Florida

Robert G. Spulak, Jr.
Ph.D., Physics/Nuclear Engineering
*Sandia National Laboratories
and JSOU Associate Fellow*

Joseph S. Stringham
Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Ret.
*Alutiq, LLC and JSOU
Associate Fellow*

Joseph A. Stuart
Ph.D., Educational Leadership
JSOU Dean of Academics

J. Paul de B. Taillon
Ph.D., International Affairs
*Royal Military College of Canada
and JSOU Associate Fellow*

Graham H. Turbiville, Jr.
Ph.D., History
*Courage Services, LLC and
JSOU Senior Fellow*

Jessica Glicken Turnley
Ph.D., Cultural Anthropology/
Southeast Asian Studies
*Galisteo Consulting Group
and JSOU Senior Fellow*

William S. Wildrick
Captain, U.S. Navy, Ret.
JSOU Senior Fellow



Psychological Operations

*Learning Is Not
a Defense Science Project*

Curtis D. Boyd

JSOU Report 07-4
The JSOU Press
Hurlburt Field, Florida
2007



Comments about this publication are invited and should be forwarded to Director, Strategic Studies Department, Joint Special Operations University, 357 Tully Street, Alison Building, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544. Copies of this publication may be obtained by calling JSOU at 850-884-2764; FAX 850-884-4732.

The Strategic Studies Department, JSOU is currently accepting written works relevant to special operations for potential publication. For more information please contact Mr. Jim Anderson, JSOU Director of Research, at 850-884-1569, DSN 579-1569, james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil. Thank you for your interest in the JSOU Press.

This work was cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

ISBN 1-933749-07-5

The views expressed in this publication are entirely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views, policy or position of the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, United States Special Operations Command, or the Joint Special Operations University.

Contents

Forewordv

About the Authorvi

1. Introduction..... 1

2. Cultural Blindness, the Need for Nonlinear Warfare..... 5

3. Operational Confusion, Mistaken Identity 9

4. Definitional Delirium, Enthusiasm Exceeds Capability 15

5. Terminology, the P Word..... 19

6. Conclusion, P for Partnership 25

Endnotes..... 31

Recent Publications of the JSOU Press

Russian Special Forces, August 2005, Graham H. Turbiville, Jr.

The Evolving Requirements of the Canadian Special Operations Forces, September 2005, J. Paul de B. Taillon

Operationalizing COIN, September 2005, Joseph D. Celeski

Theoretical Perspectives of Terrorist Enemies as Networks, October 2005, Robert G. Spulak, Jr. and Jessica Glicken Turnley

Logistic Support and Insurgency, October 2005, Graham H. Turbiville, Jr.

Dividing Our Enemies, November 2005, Thomas H. Henriksen

The War on Terrorism, December 2005, James A. Bates

Coast Guard SOF, February 2006, Gary R. Bowen

Implications for Network-Centric Warfare, March 2006, Jessica Glicken Turnley

Narcoterrorism in Latin America, April 2006, Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro

The Changing Nature of Warfare, the Factors Mediating Future Conflict, and Implications for SOF, April 2006, John B. Alexander

Civil-Military Operations and Professional Military Education, May 2006, James F. Powers, Jr.

Blogs and Military Information Strategy, June 2006, James Kinniburgh and Dorothy Denning

2006 JSOU/NDIA SO/LIC Chapter Essays, June 2006

Executive Report, JSOU First Annual Symposium (2–5 May 2006)

One Valley at a Time, August 2006, Adrian T. Bogart III

Special Operations Aviation in NATO, September 2006, Richard D. Newton

Beyond Draining the Swamp: Urban Development and Counterterrorism in Morocco, October 2006, Stephen R. Dalzell

Filling Special Operations Gaps with Civilian Expertise, December 2006, James F. Powers, Jr.

Educating for Strategic Thinking in the SOF Community, January 2007, Harry R. Yarger

The Israeli Approach to Irregular Warfare and Implications for the U.S., February 2007, Thomas H. Henriksen

Foreword

Colonel Curtis Boyd's paper on psychological operations (PSYOP) wades into the difficult realm of "influence operations," strategic communications, and information operations. These areas of national security are much more difficult to deal with, and understand, than the traditional concept of conventional military operations. The difficulty of these issues is exactly why, according to COL Boyd, the United States (U.S.) has been less than effective over time trying to master and utilize PSYOP and is struggling with strategic communications in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). As more and more security experts, the political leadership, and senior military leaders come to realize that success in the GWOT cannot come solely from traditional or kinetic military actions, the importance of the "softer" and indirect methods looms larger.

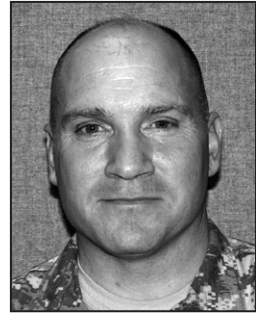
Consequently, the discussion of PSYOP's role in the security "quiver" of the U.S. and its allies may never be timelier. COL Boyd unflinchingly discusses the interaction between the PSYOP, Public Affairs, and information operations communities and offers insight into a way forward to better utilize PSYOP, especially within the U.S. Army. Underpinning his assertion is the desire to reduce stovepiping between three agents-of-influence activities to ensure a unified, consistent message combined with the importance of increasing PSYOP's role within "big Army." Effecting these changes requires the integration of trained PSYOP personnel not only within various headquarters elements of the Army but also combatant commands.

Ultimately, COL Boyd's thesis asserts the need for a cultural shift within the traditional military away from a "force on force" mindset and more towards nonlethal, psychological, and informational aspects of warfare. His emphasis on the importance of changing the culture correctly assesses the ingrained preference for violence as a basis for military operations. However, this kinetic preference may very well be hindering our prosecution of the GWOT. Hopefully, COL Boyd's treatise will lend clarity to future GWOT planning and long-range planning for nontraditional military activities.

Michael C. McMahon, Lt Col, USAF
Director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department

About the Author

Curtis Boyd was commissioned as an infantry officer in 1984 with follow-on assignments in 3-36 Infantry at Kirchgoens, Germany and 4-325 Infantry (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In 1994, he completed a 2-year PSYOP officer training program within the John F. Kennedy (JFK) Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg. Following language training in Monterey, California and completion of a master's program at the Naval Postgraduate School, he began a series of assignments in the 4th PSYOP Group, Fort Bragg as a detachment commander, group operations officer (S3), and battalion executive officer.



From 1999 to 2002, COL Boyd was assigned as an information operations officer in the Joint Special Operations Command, which was followed by a return to the JFK Special Warfare Center to command an Army special operations training battalion from 2002 to 2004. After command, he was assigned as the deputy director for the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, Directorate of Special Operations Proponency. During that assignment he was instrumental in the creation of active duty branches for Civil Affairs and PSYOP, the stand-up of an active duty Civil Affairs enlisted occupational specialty, and the activation of the Army's special operations recruiting battalion. COL Boyd is currently the Assistant Chief of Staff G3 at the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and PSYOP Command (Airborne), Fort Bragg. In July 2007, he will assume command of the 4th PSYOP Group (Airborne).

COL Boyd's military education includes the Joint Forces Staff College, Command and General Staff College, PSYOP and Civil Affairs Courses, Defense Language Institute, and Infantry Officer Advanced and Basic Courses. His civilian education includes a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Norwich University (Northfield, Vermont) and a M.A. in National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, California), Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict curriculum. Most recently, COL Boyd completed a fellowship (August 2005 to June 2006) at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.

1. Introduction

This paper intends to demystify Psychological Operations (PSYOP) by framing the analysis in terms of certain cultural biases, organizational challenges, and troubles with terminology. The objective is twofold:

- a. Make PSYOP more understandable by looking at how it is defined in today's information environment and its relationship to other information activities.
- b. Create an understanding that PSYOP is truth-based, is an amalgam of many media and marketing tactics and techniques, and requires a closer alliance with Public Affairs to communicate a more comprehensible message.

Redefining PSYOP would make it fit better into a future communications framework that aligns more readily with Public Affairs, assimilates information operations, and contributes significantly to strategic communications. PSYOP is the quintessential economy of force effort with a capacity to create effects far in excess of physical force alone. Ultimately, PSYOP represents the Army's most persuasive means of engaging and influencing an adversary across the entire spectrum of operations.

PSYOP is the quintessential economy of force effort with a capacity to create effects far in excess of physical force alone.

The final recommendations of the 2001 Defense Science Board Study stated that the 4th PSYOP Group is one among five interagency entities identified to provide expertise to the Department of State Policy Coordinating Committee for Managed Information Dissemination.¹ The 2004 Defense Science Board report had similar findings with regard to the importance of "open" PSYOP. The study argued that Public Affairs, public diplomacy (PD), and open PSYOP form the nucleus of our nation's strategic communication. The study, however, failed to recognize that open PSYOP is conducted by a tactical brigade (group) headquarters—many echelons removed from the Pentagon and Capital Hill.² The 4th PSYOP Group was instantaneously given national strategic significance without additional money, manpower, authorities, or anything in between. Not surprisingly,

a 2005 Defense Science Board study on stability operations rediscovered many of the same findings and reiterated the central place PSYOP has in pre- and post-combat operations. The importance of PSYOP had been mentioned almost 10 years earlier when Richard G. Stilwell, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, stressed that the 4th PSYOP Group has “valiantly filled the national gap” by producing “how-to-do-it plans,” which have been recognized in the national security community.³

The conventional wisdom respects the influential potential of PSYOP as a force multiplier and peacetime contributor, yet is confused as to why credible analyses and recommendations of national level studies are not acted upon and operational lessons not learned. The skepticism and suspicions regarding how, where, and when to include PSYOP are often misunderstood and misrepresented by preconceived notions that are more about what PSYOP is *not* than what PSYOP is. The many mysteries, gaps, or weaknesses in the understanding and appreciation for PSYOP stem from cultural, structural, institutional, and organizational weaknesses in the way the United States (U.S.) military maintains and employs PSYOP and other “agents of influence” to create a single unified message.

Agents of Influence

- PSYOP
- Public Affairs (PA)
- Information Operations (IO)

When PSYOP comes to work, the management expects instant gratification and miracles regardless of absent expertise in many headquarters and failure to integrate PSYOP early into planning. PSYOP is not witchcraft, “hocus pocus,” or voodoo. The PSYOP secret formula is people: talented and trained individuals in key places to formulate plans, introduce ideas, eliminate misconceptions, and create consensus of national level ideas or images that are introduced into the hearts and minds of people in places far from America’s shores.

The reality is that PSYOP does a lot with a little: few people, lack of dedicated external logistic or communications support, and little money. PSYOP units habitually internally organize to maximize media development skills, analytical and foreign language expertise, cultural knowledge, marketing techniques, and broadcast know-how into an information campaign intended to introduce U.S. ideas and images into the minds of foreign adversaries. U.S. Army PSYOP is the Department of Defense (DoD) single-source “one-stop-shop”

for analysis, media development, production, and dissemination of tactical and operational-level information intended to influence foreign audiences.⁴ In the final analysis, however, given the Army PSYOP limited budget and manpower and even with the documented importance of PSYOP, one has to ask why.

Why have the Defense Science Board's findings and other studies not been acted upon? Why are old lessons-learned repeatedly relearned? Why do accolades matter if one indiscretion or mistake seemingly erases all the goodness PSYOP has ever done? These questions can neither be answered solely by another defense science board study, relearning the same old lessons, nor resolved by an exhaustive search of the literature. The answers to the "why" questions can be best understood by considering three factors: culture blindness, operational confusion, and definitional delirium. Each factor creates a fog and friction that obscures the true nature of PSYOP, given certain internal cultural biases, organizational confusion, and structural weaknesses with terminology.

2. Cultural Blindness, the Need for Nonlinear Warfare

The Army's cultural view of the world envisions its role to be *close with and destroy the enemy*. As the preeminent land power, the U.S. Army will be the ultimate instrument of national resolve defending our freedoms and winning the nation's wars. The U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has a similar view. SOCOM enables an adaptive joint special operations force capable of finding, fixing, and finishing an asymmetric threat. In either instance, conflict and physical confrontation with an adversary is seen as inevitable.⁵

By comparison, PSYOP and other agents of influence seek a similar ethos with an intensity and precision designed to compel our enemy to surrender or submit to our will without the use of physical force. Polar opposites instantly emerge when you compare the ethos of "without force" to a combat focus of "find-fix-finish." PSYOP and its influential "nonlethal" partners are the apparent antithesis of the military's culture of physical force.

Like deterrence executed successfully, PSYOP will keep the Army from physical confrontation, ultimately allowing other instruments of statecraft to prevail. In this instance, "big" Army does not get into the game. The very nature of "not fighting" threatens the existence and

... PSYOP will keep the Army from physical confrontation, ultimately allowing other instruments of statecraft to prevail.

viability of the Army's physical warfighting potential—for example, forces, training, promotions, assignments, dollars, and programs. However, the reality is that information alone, without substance or tangible benefit to the target audience, lacks sufficient credibility to be of value. Action (physical) and information (psychological) each need the other to achieve maximum effectiveness. A distribution of nonlethal "influential" resources amongst U.S. Army formations can ensure commanders are reminded that nonlethal influence and deterrence is also an important mission of the armed forces.

Survival in a cultural climate led by warriors whose *raison d'être* is warfare (dominated by physical force) often results in agents of

influence lacking credible presence, influence, and impact. This proclivity is manifest in the absence of PSYOP staff officers in the organizational structures of the Headquarters Department of the Army, the Army Staff, and the United States Army Forces Command where no active-duty PSYOP officer or enlisted authorizations exist. PSYOP missions, methods, and messages are routinely misunderstood and organizationally misrepresented.

The primacy of the physical, lethal, and material aspects of military operations (so-called “big” Army) dominate war planning, exercises, and operations. It subordinates nonlethal, psychological, and informational aspects of shaping activities and preparing the battlespace to a secondary consideration and, more commonly, an afterthought. If the agents of influence remain disconnected and stovepiped, complicating a clearly coordinated and convincing message, business for warfighters will likely continue to boom. In the Army, PA works for the commander on his special staff, PSYOP for the operations director (G3 or G7), and IO in an independent staff section (G7 or G3 effects director) separate in function and organization. To comprehend how structure and organization become obstacles to creating a single unified message, add two areas where PSYOP is minimized:

- a. PSYOP assignments or expertise to informational stovepipes among the agents of influence in different staff sections
- b. PSYOP authorizations in Army service component and functional commands.

Incessant in-fighting among PSYOP officers and IO staff officers, involving squabbling over who is in charge of whom, who writes themes, who provides target analysis and who tasks for measures of effectiveness, combined with PA communicating themes, sending messages, and supporting objectives that lack coordination with PSYOP themes and objectives is not good for military operational effectiveness. These conflicts and disconnects among agents of influence have not gone unnoticed by senior defense and military leadership.

Improving the performance and precision of PSYOP and other agents of influence is good for the Army in both the short and long term. Any conscious or unconscious effort to suppress, counteract, or complicate the use of PSYOP and other information and media activities in ongoing or future operations would be detrimental to

the force as a whole.⁶ Employing PSYOP and its supporting agents of influence does in fact provide the joint force commander greater affect across the entire continuum of conflict, influencing the psychological and physical aspects of the battlespace. While this shift in operational focus (physical to psychological) might be an uncomfortable proposition for the “big Army” that ordinarily dominates the more physical side of the roster, the ability to shape and reinforce the psychological capacity and potential of joint forces requires closer consideration and reprioritization. The major players and the field may change momentarily, but the purpose of conventional forces will not be at risk. The main effort of formations may vary from physical to psychological or virtual on the future nonlinear battlefield. Ultimately, more effective use of PSYOP will assure the Army is the coveted full spectrum force.

With Secretary of Defense final approval of a United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)-developed plan directing realignment of PSYOP forces, two thirds of the Army’s PSYOP capability currently under the command and control (C2) of the USASOC will transition back to the conventional Army under the C2 of the U.S. Army Reserve Command.⁷ This transfer of forces to the regular or conventional Army is an important step in the reintegration of PSYOP into Army-wide planning, programming, exercises, and operations. This realignment creates greater full spectrum potential for the Army of the future, whereby conventional Army and PSYOP forces are designed to engage early, often, and convincingly. An improved availability and responsiveness of PSYOP to meet the operational needs of our warfighters is a step closer to creating an Army and joint culture that can fight in multiple dimensions simultaneously: physical, psychological, and virtual. Moreover, PSYOP, like other combat support assets, will provide our conventional and Special Operations Forces commanders a critical facilitator in the Army’s effort to find, fix, and finish our adversary.

3. Operational Confusion, Mistaken Identity

PSYOP and PA. Truth is an essential ingredient required for maintaining message credibility and media capacity for influencing audiences. Army PA boasts an almost exclusive claim to the objective truth as defined by the DoD “Principles of Information.” By U.S. Government policy, PSYOP claims similar truthfulness, yet PSYOP lacks the doctrinal basis to secure it and suffers from a common misperception that it is used for black propaganda, deception schemes, and spreading disinformation.

Statements from various policy and defense documents such as Joint Publication 3-61, Public Affairs—“Joint PA will tell the DoD story, provide timely and truthful information, fostering public trust and support using global influence and deterrence”—must be carefully evaluated relative to the framing and packaging of both the originator and preexisting opinions of those receiving the defense information. As Colonel William Darley, editor of *Military Review* and former PA officer for the Combined Joint Task Force 7 in Iraq argues, “public affairs is only effective in so far as it is perceived as pristine in its truthfulness, reliability and accuracy, especially in times where bad news may be the rule. Consequently, if public affairs is compromised through activities that will cast doubt on its candid forthrightness, it loses its only purpose and value to the military.”⁸

The information age has created many alluring traps for the integrity and truthfulness of PA and PSYOP alike. Competition for the truth, and audience attention to it, is steep

The information age has created many alluring traps for the integrity and truthfulness of PA and PSYOP alike.

among the many messengers, commercial media, DoD, and others. Technological advances in the information-communications industry have made the ability to “propagandize” and bombard our target audiences in real time (with multiple mediums as fact or fiction) an intoxicating reality. The dissemination or release of selected information (press releases), premeditated leaks, the embedding of reporters, framing of issues, repetition of themes, and staying on message have served as tactical traps for our supposedly most objective and

principled PA specialists, which fails to fully capture the unbiased truth. In an overseas environment, PA and international information program specialists (PSYOP) are almost indistinguishable from one another as they disseminate information for the public good side-by-side. In other words, tactical PSYOP and forward-deployed PA are different in name only. As such, PA and PSYOP disseminate information that might only be selectively “good” in order to frame or “spin” an issue in a way that would best suit their desires to achieve psychological or informational ends.

PA must not lose credibility with its domestic or foreign audiences nor the media; otherwise it may jeopardize its ability to keep the American public informed regarding the activities of their military forces. Truth and factual information are critical ingredients in PA credibility. “The mission of joint public affairs is to support the joint force commander by communicating truthful and factual unclassified information about DoD activities to U.S., allied, national, international, and internal audiences.”⁹ Colonel Rhynedance, director of the Army PA Center, recalled an instance early in the Battle for Fallujah when a Marine Corps PA officer prematurely announced the beginnings of the first phases of battle, which turned out to be a ruse and therefore untrue.¹⁰ The media were furious. He said it best in retrospect, “It took us weeks and months to restore confidence, credibility, and trust with the local and international media.”¹¹ In today’s and tomorrow’s information environment, the ability of PA to rigidly adhere to their doctrinal Principles of Information is and will be consistently challenged given the advances of information technologies, journalistic tendency, and audience demands for timely and accurate content, which might at times put truth and credibility at risk.

The DoD Web site *defendamerica.mil* stretches the elasticity of the DoD principles of information, which likely distorts what would have otherwise been more pristine PA. In *Beyond the Front Lines*, Philip Seib describes the Web site “as an alluring propaganda tool... [This site] delivers material about the war on terror in the form it chooses.”¹² Whether one considers the application of certain press rules, predetermined leaks of information, or deceptive innuendos by select defense representatives as operational security countermeasures or counterpropaganda or even active (versus passive) PA, the boundaries defining the practices and principles of PA and PSYOP are getting less and less obvious. During operations overseas, PSYOP

and PA (foreign media operations) must cooperate and coordinate to develop and disseminate a culturally accurate, credible, and consistent message; the truth depends on it.

IO Components		
Core Elements	Supporting Elements	Related Activities
• PSYOP • Electronic warfare • Military deception • Operations security • Computer network operations	• Physical destruction • Information assurance • Physical security • Counter deception • Counter propaganda • Counter intelligence	• PA • Civil Affairs

PSYOP and IO. Complications most often experienced between PSYOP and IO need to be included in a discussion about operational confusion and agents of influence. IO are the integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, PSYOP, military deception, and operations security in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.¹³ The simplest way to think of the difference between IO and PSYOP is that IO is the integrator and PSYOP is the instigator. Misinterpretations of IO and PSYOP play themselves out in the landscape, language, and literature.

The combatant commands and the interagency usually do not include references to “PSYOP” when they have a need to influence populations in their area of responsibility. Theater Security Cooperation Plans routinely misconstrue PSYOP for IO, and IO is wrongfully attributed to themes and messages characteristic of PSYOP methodology and doctrine. IO is not an operational capability. IO is a planning and integration concept that synchronizes each of the five core capabilities consistent with other military plans and actions. Equating “IO themes, actions, or events” as synonymous with PSYOP reinforces confusion and leads to disappointment over the inability of warfighters or others to employ IO (due to its inherent lack of capability, particularly at the tactical level). Moreover, the few authorizations for PSYOP staff officers in the conventional Army and

shortage of PSYOP staff planners at the operational and strategic level further exacerbates this miscalculation, assuring that frustrations with PSYOP are likely to persist.¹⁴

Many flag officers and senior Pentagon officials cannot comfortably use the term PSYOP in Washington forums (and elsewhere), and IO has become the more appropriate and subtle substitute. Three examples follow:

- a. Brigadier General David L. Grange (U.S. Army retired), former commander 1st Infantry Division, wrote that in Bosnia he used IO and PSYOP interchangeably. He suggested IO was capable of influencing audiences in ways only PSYOP could.
- b. Similarly in Bob Woodward's 2004 book *Plan of Attack*, about the war planning for Iraq, he points out how Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld referred repeatedly to PSYOP as IO. Rumsfeld spoke confidently of leaflet drops and Commando Solo broadcasts as IO preparations weapons against Saddam and his cronies.
- c. *One Bullet Away*, the story of Nathaniel Fick's experiences as a Marine platoon leader in Iraq, stated that as he and his recon platoon crossed into the southern portion of the country, 9 out of 10 Iraqis surrendered without fighting. He contends the surrender was the result of an "intense IO campaign that dropped leaflets and broadcasted surrender appeals from HMWWV-mounted loudspeakers."¹⁵

In a recent article published by 1st IO Command, the author argues that everything the Army does that fails to fit neatly or categorically elsewhere is IO. If IO is everything, then IO is nothing. IO is better understood as a battle operating system or a concept of operation. He advises that the use of IO as a catch-all repository for the Army's terminology does not help clarify anything.¹⁶

PSYOP could stake a similar claim with a far more effective argument. Every military operation has a psychological impact, whether intended or not. Calling every military operation a PSYOP act is plausible, whereas calling all military operations a type of IO (which would suggest that a military operation is a network attack, electronic attack, operations security) is simply not plausible. It is more believable to consider a military operation having an equivalent

psychological-persuasive-influential-behavioral effect than it is to consider the military operation as being synonymous with IO.

To improve interoperability and maximize the potential of IO, the Army should reconsider the future role of PSYOP as a preeminent element of IO in the war on terror. For the Army, IO is inherently more psychological and less technological, whereby the elements of IO are synchronized to produce an observable or measurable behavioral change. Joseph Nye, former dean of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government and Assistant Secretary of Defense, would argue that Army IO has more of an attractive appeal given the “face-to-face” component, whereby influence is dependent on a calculated combination of deeds and words to achieve the desired political-military end.¹⁷

The tools and techniques of electronic attack and computer network operations are meant to deny, degrade, or diminish the decision-making abilities of the intended target. Similarly, operations security and deception tactics intend to counter the adversary’s real or perceived knowledge of friendly activities and intentions. In sum, IO as an effects-based operation seeks to shape the battlefield in a manner consistent with friendly plans and actions, which confuse, counter, complicate, and compromise the adversary “personal” decision-making capabilities. Army IO has the personal touch, which designates PSYOP as the main effort when seeking to dominate the human dimension of the information battlespace, making it more of an operational necessity. When winning our nation’s wars requires Army ground forces to dominate the land, PSYOP is the Army’s most relevant and attractive enabler.

In the battle for the hearts and minds, success hinges on our ability to operate comfortably in the psychological battlespace within the gray matter and decision-making apparatus of our adversary. Here we engage and influence our enemy with images and ideas on the human terrain. The viability of the Army IO construct that considers PSYOP on par with the other four core capabilities of IO should be reevaluated, with the analysis potentially providing a basis for IO reorganization, reprioritization, and operational refocus. IO is less an operation and more an application of talents, tools, and techniques with human intent and appeal.

Efforts to address the IO landscape and establish PSYOP roots have not been well received. The Directorate of Special Operations

Proponency (DSOP) at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School has been unsuccessful in obtaining the IO proponent's concurrence with adding IO personnel authorizations to PSYOP tables of organization. Similarly, a request to increase PSYOP billets at 1st IO Command failed to generate required adjustments as well. The status quo will not maximize the influential potential of PSYOP or IO alone. Partnership is key.

Dissatisfaction and frustration will persist among U.S. senior government and military officials until Army PSYOP and IO partner to maximize the human dimensional potential of the Army. Both IO and PSYOP will have to compromise on organizational change, manpower authorizations, and doctrinal direction. If IO were to conduct itself as an application (rather than an operation) of PSYOP, the friction and disconnects would be lessened and synergy would occur. If the Army would conduct IO to psychological effect, the Army would be more culturally adept, credible, and influential anywhere along the operational continuum as DoD's most vital full spectrum force.

4. Definitional Delirium, Enthusiasm Exceeds Capability

PSYOP is a Title 10 function of the U.S. Army. The Air Force and Navy are neither fully resourced nor directed to raise, train, equip, or sustain a PSYOP force. Therefore, the PSYOP definition will be exclusively within the Army's domain. This is not to suggest PSYOP is or is not joint or multiservice. PSYOP is inherently joint, yet the capabilities to execute PSYOP for the DoD exist predominately in the Army. PSYOP leverages the analysis, dissemination, and distribution potential of technical and knowledge-based capabilities of the other services (i.e., Commando Solo, U.S. Air Force aerial broadcast platform). The Army has 1,200 active-duty PSYOP soldiers and twice that number in the reserve component. Those PSYOP forces conduct operations planned to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences for influencing their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.¹⁸ More simply stated, PSYOP is "communications to influence human attitudes and behavior."¹⁹

The targeting of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals is paradoxically the most complicated feature of the PSYOP definition. The desire to be forthright and accurate in the description of PSYOP can be applauded on the one hand and criticized on the other for failing to delineate who will have the authority to influence foreign audiences of strategic significance. The ability to influence foreign governments and individuals is far more strategically significant than tactically feasible with the forces directed to conduct such an operation. Tactical PSYOP has mass appeal, propaganda of deed and word, which routinely targets the general public—more homogenously, one size fits all.

By definition, tactical commanders have been frustrated by the lack of tactical PSYOP authorities, given unrealistic PSYOP product approval processes designed for products of "strategic national level" policy significance rather than sufficient for tactical immediacy and importance. Imagine, in the current policy construct, that a brigade commander does not have the authority to approve the development

and dissemination of a message (print and audio) to the local Afghans about avoiding a specific unexploded ordnance. Such situations often happen, the limitations of which originate in the definition and reside in policy. Therefore, by definition the boundaries of Army PSYOP are not well defined. The reach of Army PSYOP extends well beyond the tactical battlefield to levels of war not routinely attributable to what would otherwise be considered exclusively within the domain of the tactical force or even an Army brigade; the definition must be more mission oriented whereby what is feasible, acceptable, and suitable to that level of expertise and required for operational effectiveness can be appropriately manned, trained, equipped, and mission focused.

In this analysis, the cliché “thinking outside the box” has little usefulness given that demystifying PSYOP requires a more insightful look *inside* the box where three groups reside:

- a. Two PSYOP reserve groups focus almost exclusively on tactical operations.
- b. One active-duty group has a dual responsibility—providing tactical support to Army SOF, the regular Army rapid deployment forces, and Marine Expeditionary Forces and operational support to the combatant commands and theatre special operations commands.

It is not surprising that tactical PSYOP forces are uncomfortable operating outside their box in an effort to accomplish the mission and create a single unified message. Key factors are the mistaken identity as PSYOP relates to IO, PA aversion for PSYOP association, and the general structural and organizational scarcity of PSYOP expertise at component-level headquarters, institutional Army, and theater special operations commands. The operational focus of today’s three Army PSYOP groups ranges from support to full spectrum operations with an ability to function effectively from the tactical to the strategic level. Inside and outside the box, finding and fixing the total Army PSYOP force involves more accurately delineating the mission of active and reserve component PSYOP forces to ensure full spectrum operational relevance.

The anticipated needs of the two reserve component groups as they transition to the conventional Army follow:

- a. In-stride modifications to compensate for differences in accessions and retention strategies
- b. Modifications of training standards and qualifications
- c. Compensation for inadequacies of structure and organization to maintain operational readiness and effectiveness across the entire force in an effort to sustain continuity of operations.

The equipment, exercise support, program development, force integration, and PSYOP production and dissemination authorities will require close scrutiny and careful adjustments to ensure responsiveness and full interoperability with regular Army formations.

Inevitably, the most critical modification involves a rewrite of the PSYOP definition to accurately delineate tactical-through-strategic-PSYOP missions. A layering of the definition will clarify tactical, operational, and strategic level PSYOP to differentiate and allocate institutional, organizational, and operational capabilities and resources and most importantly, delineate mission focus. By redefining PSYOP in this manner, capabilities with expected performance and outcomes will purposefully be realigned to avoid creating expectations where capacity and authorities are lacking. The 2004 Defense Science Board's "open" PSYOP (tactical) best categorizes reserve component (tactical battlefield) PSYOP (aligned closely with foreign PA) and a small portion of the active-duty tactical PSYOP force, which reflects a total Army PSYOP force whose attribution and credibility are never in question and deviation from the truth is a matter of policy and principle. The projection of facts and accuracy of information for facilitating behavioral change is sufficient to achieve the desired effect in support of the tactical maneuver commander anywhere and anytime in our Army.

Operational PSYOP forces are those active-duty forces assigned to regional PSYOP battalions who provide the linkage between tactical action and strategic interest and intent. The active-duty PSYOP group of the future should resemble the other two non-Special Forces "regimental" single-brigade headquarters in Army Special Operations Command in order to sustain credible PSYOP (media) product development, media production, and dissemination. The ultimate support is to the theater combatant commands, special information activities, and theater transregional and security cooperation initiatives.

Accordingly, operational or regional PSYOP forces will require greater sophistication and maturity in order to more effectively communicate with foreign target audiences. Their target of influence will be foreign groups and organizations, the classification of which will be essential to operational effectiveness. In other words, regional PSYOP battalions will more discretely segment the market than is done today in order to tailor the product more specifically for groups and organizations based on cultural factors, specific demographics, and social-psychological needs. And finally, strategic PSYOP should be the providence of combatant command and interagency efforts that are well removed from the regular Army PSYOP formations and are reinforced by operational PSYOP efforts promoting U.S. interests, intent, and values to foreign governments and individuals.

5. Terminology, the P Word

Environmentals. “PSYOP” in the contemporary information environment is a term like “media” or “journalism”—that is, it has a negative connotation on occasion and has become inextricably tied to “spin” and political “doubletalk” akin to deception, disinformation, and other lies or falsehoods.²⁰ Both World War I and II demonstrated similar fluctuations in the level of comfort, confidence, and sensitivities to the use of terms and activities like propaganda and psychological warfare (PSYOP) during pre- and post-combat operations.

If it is easy to understand why the “War Department” name changed to the “Department of Defense” following World War II, it should be equally easy to understand the potential need to change the PSYOP name today. Moreover, not surprisingly it was not long until the public sentiments manifest in legislation enacted to prohibit the use of government propaganda against American citizens in peace and war given post-war suspicions. The Smith-Mundt Act (1948) effectively established legal limits against the conduct of psychological warfare (propaganda) against citizens of the U.S.²¹ During the interwar years, PSYWAR departments were fiscally constrained, if not eliminated, and the expertise effectively dispersed to ensure no credible accusations about the use of propaganda in peace existed despite legislation to control it.

As the Cold War progressed and Soviet expansion into Southeast Asia became more problematic, the utility of PSYWAR in a peacetime environment reemerged as an important consideration. Appreciation for the utility of PSYWAR in peace began to take shape in 1952 with the establishment of the Psychological Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. To improve operational effectiveness, the name PSYWAR was then changed (1962) to PSYOP to establish a term that was more inclusive of full spectrum operations—activities before, during, and after combat operations—which created greater opportunity for military nonlethal foreign influence outside of combat operations. The Cold War presented a real danger, whereby civil and military agencies maximized the full potential of the hard and soft elements of power intended to undermine and eliminate communist expansionism. In the information environment of the Cold War,

PSYOP lacked transparency and supported full spectrum military and interagency operations with few critiques and the visibility characteristic of today's environment.

Terminology Troubles. Absent the veil of a “clear and present danger” and a U.S. government agency that openly influences foreign audiences, the face of PSYOP becomes more obvious and subject to public view. In 1999, as the United States Information Agency was closing, then Secretary of State Madeline Albright disavowed any connection with propaganda, and this sentiment was similarly extended to PSYOP.

PSYOP's pejorative connotations are almost insurmountable obstacles to effective and consistent interagency collaboration despite accolades by many foreign-service officers

PSYOP's pejorative connotations are almost insurmountable obstacles to effective and consistent interagency collaboration ...

regarding the benefits of PSYOP in peace. While a handful of PSYOP officers work at the Department of State (DoS) today to coordinate a consistent message, those present are not assigned there full-time. Essentially, military PSYOP support to public diplomacy (DoS) is ad hoc and episodic. The reluctance of the DoS to request and permanently assign PSYOP officers has everything to do with the implications of association with PSYOP (or propaganda) at the national level. This stigma could be eradicated almost instantaneously with the use of a different term to represent PSYOP.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was repeatedly frustrated by the DoD and DoS inability to speak with one voice. He questioned the relevance of the term *PSYOP* in today's information environment and directed his Assistant Secretary of Defense for PA, Lawrence Derita, to study and answer this question by mid-summer 2006. Years earlier, Richard Stilwell had a similar recommendation when he said “how badly we need other terminology” to ensure continuity of operations during all military phases. Sometimes, he said, PSYOP are part of “public affairs [JUSPAO, Vietnam], civic action [Hurricane Katrina], troop information [Command Information Programs], civil affairs [Special Operations], public diplomacy [international information programs], humanitarian aid [foreign disaster relief], or political action [institution building and support

to elections].”²² No answer to the question—whether the term PSYOP was acceptable in the contemporary information environment—surfaced in either case.

PSYOP support to rotations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere continues. Tactically, PSYOP in support of the maneuver commander during Phase III, Combat, has no issues. During combat operations or periods of open hostilities, PSYOP for wartime use tends to be more divisive and coercive than less-hostile phases of military operations, which tend to be more ethically and culturally acceptable given the clear and present danger posed by visible enemy combatants and their supporters.²³ In combat, PSYOP support to deception and other half-truths is neither uncommon nor unexpected. The truth is more than a matter of policy; it is a matter of perception and usually a one-sided life-or-death proposition.

The 2004 Defense Science Board Study has over generalized and lumped tactical, operational, and strategic level PSYOP support into a single category, “open” PSYOP that is akin to “pristine” PA, a fully factual truthful message meant to inform rather than influence. Essentially, the Study argues that the nexus of public diplomacy, PA, and “open” PSYOP needs to cover the entire operational continuum and will disguise PSYOP in any form as “Military or Defense Support to Public Diplomacy,” “International Public Information,” or in some instances simply IO to lessen the scrutiny and accusations that might come with using PSYOP in a peacetime environment or under less than hostile phases of operations.²⁴ Unfortunately, the study approach is shortsighted, a mere band-aid on an “open” PSYOP wound. PSYOP does not need to be open or closed. The chameleon approach to PSYOP terms of reference is a temporary fix. PSYOP has practiced and nearly perfected the use of pseudonyms.

In the last 20 years, PSYOP has deployed as PSYOP (e.g., PSYOP Task Forces and PSYOP Support Elements) to Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom without issue or reference to the suspicious or potentially untruthful nature of PSYOP. Yet when any of these operations extended beyond the initial projections or timetables, PSYOP as PSYOP proved to be untenable. PSYOP in combat or during hostilities is effective when it forcefully communicates and can say “move or surrender or you will be killed” and then forcefully demonstrates and motivates if obedience is not reached by words alone.

Historians—for example, Daugherty (1958) and Dyer (1959)—have made the interesting observation that PSYOP and its predecessors are within cultural norms of “proper” warfare when the lives of civil society or threat to democracy are in danger. Yet “the psychological weapon has never been accepted as a permanent instrument of national security policy by the executive branch, the Congress, or the American people.”²⁵ Dr. Carnes Lord noted in *The Psychological Dimension of National Strategy*, “Americans have a general distaste for psychological manipulation and deception, and the idea of the black art can only be justified under the most extreme circumstances.”²⁶ Moreover, when that threat subsides, PSYOP seems to exceed the bounds of civility and therefore may be seen as antidemocratic, unconstitutional, and simply contrary to the good order and discipline of a civilized people.

When combat subsides, PSYOP conceals itself in a pseudonym to avert criticism and deflect false accusations. Operationally, this reflects more regional and operational level PSYOP; a more sophisticated “with, by, and through” PSYOP special operations approach. Post World War I propaganda organizations were more acceptably known within informational or cultural relations elements. Post World War II illustrated a similar dynamic whereby psychological warfare sections disbanded and reconstituted into Communications and Information Elements in order to facilitate consolidation, stability, and nation-building activities. Likewise, operations in Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and present day Iraq and Afghanistan have reflected situations in which PSYOP programs tied to raising a national army, humanitarian relief, disaster response operations, and weapon’s-buy back programs are hidden within IO or “no” name task forces. As Richard Stilwell would contend, tactical PSYOP has been incredibly obvious and comfortable alongside military combat operations, which has been historically evident in the World War I and II and conventional conflicts since.²⁷ As hostilities and open violence subsides, normalcy returns or irregular warfare commences, and the influential potential of PSYOP becomes increasingly more crucial. The preeminence of the political and social-psychological elements of daily life exposes PSYOP for its manipulative self, requiring a less obvious form of persuasion and a more palatable term of reference. Military “lethal” and combative capabilities become secondary to a softer more sophisticated and subtle approach to foreign influence

and behavioral change. More sophisticated and indirect PSYOP might retain access to the big Army “hammer,” but everything is not a nail ready to be struck for ensuring compliance.

In sum, PSYOP has been unencumbered in support of regional combatant commanders’ and U.S. country teams’ theater security cooperation initiatives by calling itself a Military Information Support Team (MIST). In South America, PSYOP support to a variety of military and government programs is done by MISTs.²⁸ Likewise in Europe, Asia, and Africa PSYOP support is conducted by international MISTs. Similarly, as contingency operations like Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq transitioned to less than hostile phases of operations, PSYOP Task Forces assumed a softer more sophisticated media production, development, and dissemination approach under the guise of Information Task Forces, which further relieved any accessibility challenges, misgivings, or suspicion that PSYOP typically elicits.

By association, IO and PA have periodically been painted with the “information for influence” brush, a pseudonym for PSYOP. Umbrella terms or other agents of influence—like strategic communication, strategic influence, public diplomacy, PA, and IO—contain the desire to communicate an appealing and persuasive message. However, if they openly associate with PSYOP, each compromise and potentially risk sacrificing credibility with their targets of influence.²⁹

Simply, PSYOP has become more persuasive using other names to refer to itself—that is, simply hiding in plain site. This more open and less obvious “PSYOP by another name” increases accessibility, reduces suspicion, and lessens the potential for guilt by association that would otherwise be the case if blatantly referring to itself as PSYOP in support of the Department of State. Thus far, PSYOP concealed as *military support to public diplomacy* and *international public information* has been sufficient to link the tactical and strategic “PSYOP” means of influencing foreign populations in peace. The global war on terrorism and the current information environment, however, present unforeseen informational and influence challenges for which disguises or euphemisms will not accommodate or conceal for long.

6. Conclusion, P for Partnership

While our leadership comfortably uses quotes like “we’ve got to win the hearts and minds” and “this is a battle of ideas” when referring to a key component of operational art to achieve success in the war on terrorism—the importance of “strategic” PSYOP—a direct reference is rare. If impressions matter in this war of ideas or battle to win the hearts and minds, who and how is anyone impressed by PSYOP?

In conclusion, one should comprehend now why lessons are hard to learn and recommendations hard to enact. The combination of cultural blindness, mistaken identity, and terminology troubles make learning an unending process: a perennial “defense” science project. Culturally the Army has not embraced the potential of PSYOP as a capability inherent in military force, which is a psychological message unto itself. As PSYOP becomes an official Army branch and the U.S. Army Reserve PSYOP realignment occurs, the U.S. Army will have the unmistakable organic capacity to be a more credible full spectrum military force and DoD’s most influential partner. PSYOP must form the basis for Army IO, tactically link with foreign PA, and provide sufficient terminology for itself to allow freedom of integration and interoperability with other agencies and activities of influence at the operational and strategic level. And finally, PSYOP by another name offers opportunity and greater potential for ease of operations, greater understanding, and more effective influence than previously considered. While the task may change, the practitioners may not. While occupational specialties need not change, others need to be more inclusive—for example, PA, IO, computer network operations, human intelligence, foreign area officer, and contracting.

The latest Lincoln Group news-article drama, the earlier Abu Ghraib photos and recordings, and the Office of Strategic Influence³⁰ calamity are representations of well intentioned PSYOP gone bad.³¹ Amateurs or novices in each instance misunderstood the magnitude of their actions and impact of their message. In any case, the concern was not what was said but who said it. Who were the Lincoln Group people and was their expertise sufficient to achieve the intended result versus similar implications of a PSYOP connection to Abu Ghraib?³² Inevitably, PSYOP in a general sense has been wrongfully accused

when information has gone bad regardless of source or explanation.³³ In some instances PSYOP is simply construed as bad PA. Moreover, the paradox in this instance is that PSYOP would seem to be doomed to bad press, because the very organization to counter disinformation about PSYOP refuses to have open association with them—PA. PSYOP forces have no choice but to be quiet professionals.

Nonetheless, the commercial contracting to produce PSYOP-like materials in foreign countries or to insert articles in foreign newspapers is nothing new. Once electricity was restored in Bosnia, for example, the PSYOP [Information] Task Force within NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) contracted with a local printing company to print the *Herald of Peace* newspaper. The intent was not only to allow IFOR PSYOP printing presses to focus on other products but also assist in improving the economy by contracting locally. The same situation occurred in Kosovo and earlier in Haiti during Operation Restore Democracy, where local news agencies were paid to run stories of interest to the local population—and neither ill intent nor bad press was present.

The impact or viability of PSYOP at the tactical level is not in question. Lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan repeatedly echo the need for more PSYOP forces and the ability to culturally and linguistically influence the local populace with ideas, images, and information that are consistent with U.S. national political and military intent. Likewise, studies by the Defense Science Board (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005), PSYOP Master Plans (1985, 1990), and National Defense University Study (2004) reiterate these same points; we lack sufficient forces and capabilities required to effectively influence foreign populations when and where we desire. As Edward Murrow, former director of the United States Information Agency, said: "The really crucial link in the international communication chain is the last three feet, which is bridged by personal contact, one person talking to another," which is the personal touch of tactical "battlefield" PSYOP.³⁴

By contrast, however, one has difficulty comprehending the legitimacy of strategic PSYOP given one might never find a senior-ranking government official who would ever admit having done it. As stated in 1999, Secretary of State Madeline Albright closed the United States Information Agency to ensure she and the rest of the Department of State disassociated themselves with any possibility that

propaganda was being developed and disseminated anywhere on behalf of the U.S. Government.³⁵ While one might argue that the U.S. cannot so easily separate itself from propaganda by simply eliminating an agency, the argument itself is beyond the analytical scope of this discussion. Because other methods or attempts exist to disguise the operational and strategic level of propaganda in the uniformed military, strategic and operational PSYOP probably does exist elsewhere by another name or could exist if done so discretely.

Jerrald Post, a highly regarded scholar of the psychology of terrorism, contends that “there has been little attention to the potential of strategic PSYOP in undermining the enemy to prepare the battlefield” and “PSYOP should be the primary weapon in the war against terrorism.” Accordingly, PSYOP would in many ways reflect a method of “fighting fire with fire”; if terrorism is an inherently psychological phenomenon, it should stand to reason that PSYOP would and should be a primary method of attack or defense. One could easily argue that the first and most essential condition in an effective war on terrorism is to shape or prepare the psychological battlespace in a manner favorable to our intentions; PSYOP is integral to that effort. The war on terrorism is not a shooting war involving guns, boats, or planes; it is a psychological war involving ideas, images, ideologies, information, and intentions.³⁶

Post suggests further that psychological preparation of the battlefield is only the first step to winning the war on terrorism. Success in this global war requires domination of the battlefield involving continuous engagement, where hatred is eliminated and fear paralyzes our terrorist enemy.³⁷ We must regain the psychological advantage, retain the informational edge, and keep our message straight.

The old cliché “if you can’t beat them, join them” suggests that it might be time for a partnership of necessity rather than convenience. If information is central to our ability to shape the future battlefield, “unity of informational effort and purpose” is that necessity. The PSYOP, PA, and public diplomacy stovepipes or firewalls must come down, and collaborative bridges must be built. PSYOP must leverage the full potential of IO (information applications) tools, tactics, and techniques to create the influence necessary to isolate and eliminate aggressive non-state actors and transnational threats. Mistaken identities or dysfunctional alliances between PSYOP, PA, and IO can no longer be an option. Our best and most effective course of action

is to assimilate each of the agents of influence into a single Army career force.

PSYOP can no longer be trained and equipped in a one-size-fits-all proposition. Proposed solutions follow:

- a. Training must differentiate tactical, regional/operational and strategic expertise.
- b. Equipment programs and doctrinal authorities must address a need for greater capability and authority to conduct tactical PSYOP media production, development, and dissemination.
- c. Operational PSYOP must increasingly leverage tools and techniques previously assumed the proprietorship of IO in order to engage early, often, and accurately.

U.S. Army Reserve PSYOP force realignment cannot widen the gap between message developers and disseminators. The future strategic communication framework must account for tactical PSYOP (active and reserve) as the basis for “information for effect” that assimilates the talents of foreign PA into foreign media operations constructs supported by PSYOP regional/operational support sufficient to bridge the cross-cultural gaps between U.S. and foreign target audiences.

These realities demand an Army cultural change that is willing to fully integrate a nonstandard special and conventional PSYOP force with the capability and capacity to operate across the continuum of warfare (peace to combat and back to peace). That continuum is accurately defined and efficiently echeloned to function and integrate informative and multimedia operations at all levels of war (tactical through strategic). PSYOP is that force, but needs to be more than an “inch wide and a mile deep.” We need an active PSYOP presence in every maneuver headquarters and institutional training base as well as in the Headquarters Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Strategic Command, Joint Forces Command, Forces Command, and elsewhere to ensure PSYOP has a fully sufficient structural, cultural, organizational, and institutional presence to be a successful combat multiplier and peacetime contributor in the Army of the future.

To achieve this aim, we must build a strategic communication framework from the bottom up. The framework should be based on the policies, processes, principles, practices, and procedures of

PSYOP with the skills, talents, and tradecraft of public relations, marketing, and advertising specialists. They should have foreign cultural and language expertise and the analysis, planning, and integrating talents of seasoned veterans in a career field that understands and communicates our nation's interests and objectives. The DoD communications focus of this "strategic communication framework" is foreign audiences only. Ultimately, our ability to better comprehend PSYOP in the future envisions a career force that is easily identified with a strong active psychological and analytical base capable of operational preparation of the psychological, informational, and multimedia battlespace. The force should be reinforced by a knowledgeable reserve force.³⁸

In summation, five important points emerge from the preceding discussion. First, PSYOP is a nationally and strategically significant asset and does a lot with a little. PSYOP is an amalgam of the talents and techniques resembling media operations, mass-communications, marketing, advertising, sales, and public relations directed towards a foreign target audience.

Second, the majority of PSYOP activities and media products are unclassified and based on truth—open PSYOP. The conventional wisdom's understanding of PSYOP is consistently complicated by the preconceived notion that PSYOP is brainwashing and secret. This somewhat common misconception reflects degrees of truth that resonate from the history of PSYOP and is reminiscent of shades of white, gray, and black propaganda.³⁹ The basis of PSYOP truth is U.S. Government policy.

Third, foreign PA lacks the cultural, linguistic, and regional experience necessary to sustain credible foreign media operations. Doctrinal and organizational change is necessary to secure a credible PSYOP and PA partnership. What will be essential is the development and execution of interdisciplinary and combined training designed to validate operational constructs required for future foreign media interface.

Fourth, PSYOP is often confused with other information activities or organizations in the DoD like PA and IO, which further complicates any comprehension of PSYOP in a short simple explanation. PSYOP and IO are not interchangeable; PSYOP is an operation, and IO is an application.

And the final point, the present PSYOP definition is inadequate. The definition should differentiate tactical through strategic levels of effort and activity to ensure that the optimism and enthusiasm of the definition do not exceed PSYOP force capability. PSYOP cannot remain a “one-size-fits all” military capability or occupation. PSYOP must differentiate tactical, operational, and strategic levels of foreign media operations—conventional, special operations, and interagency. PSYOP must be comprehensible in the current and future information environment and strategic communication framework. Furthermore, PSYOP must be culturally acceptable inside and outside of the U.S. Army, and reference to it must simply roll off the tongue—easy to talk with and talk about. This paper is meant to make PSYOP more understandable by looking at how we define PSYOP in today’s information environment, how PSYOP copes with other information activities, and how defining PSYOP might make it fit better into a future communications framework that aligns more easily with other “agents of influence.”

The DoD has recognized the importance of PSYOP in the Army of the future. PSYOP is perceived favorably within our military as the ability to communicate with and legitimately influence foreign audiences with information at the right time, place, and intensity in the “war of ideas” or in the battle to win the “hearts and minds.” The approved manpower increases—which will double the active-duty force and increase by one third the reserve component PSYOP—are indicative of DoD confidence in the critical role of PSYOP in the war on terrorism. Furthermore, the establishment of PSYOP as an official Army branch signals our credible need to have a capability to engage and influence foreign audiences with information and actions sufficient to promote U.S. interests, support the joint force commander, and reduce the risk of death or injury to our troops in combat.

Endnotes

1. DoD, "Managed Information Dissemination," *Defense Science Board Report*, October 2001, 5; also DoD, "The Creation and Dissemination of All Forms of Information in Support of Psychological Operations (PSYOP) in Time of Military Conflict," *Defense Science Board Report*, May 2000, paragraph 1.3, 2.1, available from <http://cryptome.org/dsb-psyop.htm#chapter%202> (accessed 2 March 2007).
2. DoD, "Strategic Communication," *Defense Science Board Report*, September 2004, available from www.fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dsb/commun.pdf (accessed 2 March 2007).
3. General Richard G. Stilwell (U.S. Army, Retired), "Political-Psychological Dimension of Counterinsurgency," *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, eds. Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley, Jr. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), 328-329.
4. With the closure of the United States Information Agency (1999), active and reserve PSYOP are the only fully organized self-contained message developer, producer, and disseminator in the U.S. Government.
5. Department of the Army, FM 1, *The Army* (Washington, DC, 14 June 2005), 2-7, 4-9, and 4-12.
6. For a discussion of Army cultural bias or the general lack of appreciation for PSYOP, refer to Cynthia G. Efrid and Carl T. Sahlin, Jr., *Using the Information Instrument to Leverage Military Force: A Need for Deliberate Interagency Coordination* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, National War College, 1994), 26, 38-43.
7. On 23 May 2006, the USASOC transferred the Army Reserve Civil Affairs and PSYOP forces to the U.S. Army Reserve Command under the authority of a Memorandum of Agreement between the two headquarters. As of 1 October 2006, the Secretary of the Army signed a directive stating that U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs and PSYOP are no longer Special Operations Forces and have been officially re-assigned to the U.S. Army Reserve Command.
8. William M. Darley, "Why Public Affairs Is Not Information Operations," *AUSA Magazine*, 1 January 2005, available from www.ousa.org/webpub/DeptArmyMagazine.nsf/byid/CCRN-6CCSFT (accessed 2 March 2007).
9. Joint Publication 3-61, *Public Affairs* (Washington, DC, 9 May 2005), I-3.
10. "U.S. Psychological Operations: Military Uses Networks to Spread Misinformation," Democracy Now.Org, 2 December 2004, available from www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=04/12/02/1513248 (accessed 2 March 2007). This instance is not the first time PA has been involved in a military deception; the supposed amphibious landing during Operation Desert Storm represents another historically significant case.

11. COL George Rhynedance, Army Public Affairs Center (APAC) director, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland telephonic interview by author, 6 February 2006. Comment was that the less credible the PA message, the more attributable the message is to deception or PSYOP.
12. Philip Seib, *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover the World Shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 17.
13. Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC, 13 February 2005), 132.
14. To confuse matters further, Robert D. Steele proves the old adage that “you can’t judge a book by its cover.” In his *Information Operations: Putting the “I” Back into DIME* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2006), Steele makes IO synonymous with intelligence. Whereby one might assume from the title that the discussion is about the elements of IO, the focus is more on pushing an “open-source” intelligence agenda.
15. Nathaniel Fick (former Marine Corps captain and author of *One Bullet Away*) oral presentation for Harvard University, National Bureau for Economic Research, Economics of National Security, 7 March 2007.
16. Hampton Stephens, “It’s All Info Ops to Me,” *Defense Tech*, 6 April 2006.
17. See Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2004).
18. Joint Publication 3-53, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations* (Washington, DC, 5 September 2003), I-1.
19. Alfred Paddock, “No More Tactical Information Detachments,” *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, eds. Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley, Jr. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), 25.
20. For an interesting account of the DoD or government marketing/public relations (PR) effort, see Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush’s War on Iraq* (New York: Tarcher/Penguin Group, 2003); also Franklin Foer, “Flaks Americana, John Rendon’s Shallow PR War on Terrorism,” *New Republic*, 20 May 2002.
21. *Smith-Mundt Act*, *U.S. Code*, Title 22, Chapter 18, Sec. 1461 (1948), available from www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode22/usc_sec_22_00001461----001a.html (accessed 2 March 2007).
22. Stilwell, 330; see also Lynne Duke, “The Word at War,” *Washington Post*, 26 March 2006, D1; Thomas H. Taylor, “By Any Other Name,” *Perspectives* 5 (Spring 1989), 9; and Fred W. Walker, “PSYOP is a Nasty Term—Too Bad,” *Air University Review* 28 (September-October 1977).
23. John Brown, director of the School for Public Diplomacy at Georgetown University, points out that Americans have historically been sensitive to the use and misuse of propaganda.

24. For more on "strategic-level PSYOP," refer to William J. Clinton, "International Public Information," *Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-68* (Washington, DC: The White House, 30 April 1999).
25. Stillwell, 321.
26. Carnes Lord, "The Psychological Dimension in National Strategy," *Political Warfare and Psychological Operations: Rethinking the U.S. Approach*, eds. Carnes Lord and Frank R. Barnett (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1988), 22-23.
27. *Ibid.*, 319, 322.
28. Melvin E. Shafer, "Attacking Through the Mist," *Military Review*, March/April 1996, Vol. 76, Issue 2, 76.
29. Susan L. Gough, "The Evolution of Strategic Influence," *USAWC Strategic Research Paper*, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, available from fas.org/irp/eprint/gough.pdf (accessed 2 March 2007). See also Kim Cragin and Scott Gerwehr, *Dissuading Terror: Strategic Influence and the Struggle Against Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005).
30. Max Castro, "Propaganda Office Won't Win Over the World," *Miami Herald*, 13 August 2002, available from <http://commondreams.org/views/02/0813-06.htm> (accessed 2 March 2007).
31. For public relations defense contracts, refer to Matt Kelley, "3 groups have contracts for pro-U.S. propaganda," *USA Today*, posted 13 December 2005 9:54 p.m.; available from www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-12-13-propaganda-inside-usat_x.htm (accessed 2 March 2007). Also see "Pentagon rolls out stealth PR," *USA Today*, updated 15 December 2005 9:01 p.m.; available from www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-12-14-pentagon-pr_x.htm (accessed 2 March 2007). Another reference is Bill Van Auken, "Bush administration defends use of covert propaganda in U.S.," *World Socialist Web Site*, 17 March 2005; available from www.wsws.org/articles/2005/mar2005/prop-m17.shtml (accessed 2 March 2007).
32. PSYOP bad news stories are "PFC Lynndie England Videos, Sex as a PsyOp," *New York Post*, 13 May 2004, available from www.angelfire.com/co/commonsense/wakeup00.html (accessed 5 February 2006); Tom Allard, "Film rolls as troops burn dead," 19 October 2005, available from www.smh.com.au/news/world/film-rolls-as-troops-burn-dead/2005/10/18/1129401256154.html (accessed 2 March 2007); and Headquarters United States Central Command, "UPDATE: Alleged Misconduct by U.S. Forces," *News Release*, No. 05-10-74, 20 October 2005, available from www.arcent.army.mil/media_releases/2005/october/oct20_02.asp (accessed 2 March 2007).
33. For interesting insight into government public relations contracts, see James Bamford, "The Man Who Sold the War: Meet John Rendon, Bush's general in the propaganda war," *Rolling Stone*, 17 November 2005, available from www.rollingstone.com/politics/store/_/id/8798997 (accessed 5 February 2006). For another interesting account of the Rendon Group DoD marketing effort, see Franklin Foer,

- "Flaks Americana, John Rendon's Shallow PR War on Terrorism," *New Republic*, 20 May 2002.
34. Sherry Lee Mueller, "The Last Three Feet," The Power of Citizen Diplomacy, National Council for International Visitors meeting presentation, 16 February 2006; available from www.nciv.org/media/2006_nm_mueller.pdf (accessed 11 March 2007). See also Crocker Snow, Jr., "Morrow in the Public Interest: From Press Affairs to Public Diplomacy," April 2006; available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/murrow/snow.htm> (accessed 11 March 2007).
 35. Madeline Albright, "The Importance of Public Diplomacy to American Foreign Policy," *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, 10, No. 8 (October 1999), p. 8-9; Secretary Albright can be credited with the final dismantling of the United States Information Agency, an integral component of the U.S. Government's Cold-War propaganda apparatus.
 36. Jerrold M. Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 37 (n.d.), 105-110. For a similar use of "fighting fire with fire," see Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism 1040-1990*, "Toward a Doctrine of Special Warfare," 2002, available from www.statecraft.org/chapter2.html (accessed 8 March 2007).
 37. Post, 105-110.
 38. Refer to Cragin and Gerwehr (see endnote 28) and Steven R. Corman and Jill S. Schiefelbein, *Communications and Media Strategy in the Jihad War of Ideas* (Arizona State University, Consortium on Strategic Communications, 28 April 2006).
 39. Sam Gardiner, "Truth from These Podia: Summary of a Study of Strategic Influence, Perception Management, Strategic Information Warfare and Strategic Psychological Operations in Gulf II," 8 October 2003, available from www.usnews.com/usnews/politics/whispers/documents/truth_1.pdf (accessed 2 March 2007).