Strategic Communication: An Imperative for the Global War on Terrorism Environment

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In a recent speech, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld conceded the United States is losing the war of ideas, or as it is often referred to the war for "hearts and minds," in the Middle East: "And while al-Qaeda and extremist movements have utilized this forum [satellite television] for many years, and have successfully further poisoned the Muslim public's view of the West, we have barely even begun to compete in reaching their audiences."[1] The current Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) environment magnifies the challenges the U.S. faces in effectively conducting Strategic Communication to influence foreign audiences in favor of U.S. policies. Faced with this volatile and complex environment, U.S. Government Strategic Communication to date lacks credibility, top-level emphasis, thorough coordination, adequate resources and has thus far proven ineffective. Therefore, the elements of Strategic Communication, specifically Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information, must be significantly improved and better integrated to overcome these challenges and effectively influence foreign target audiences while safeguarding U.S. national will.

Background

Strategic Communication is a relatively recent term that lacks a universally accepted definition. For the purpose of this monograph, Strategic Communication is a term describing a national-level process of developing, coordinating and disseminating unified themes and messages through appropriate subordinate agencies to favorably influence target global audiences towards U.S. policies thus facilitating the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives. It is generally agreed that Strategic Communication consists of, as a minimum, Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and Military Information Operations.[2] Military Information Operations is

a very broad term that includes Electronic Warfare, Computer Network Operations, Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Military Deception and Operations Security. Most definitions of Strategic Communication, to include the definition used in this paper, address only open PSYOP, which is also referred to as International Military Information. This is appropriate since Strategic Communication seeks to influence target audiences and PSYOP is the core capability of Military Information Operations that likewise influences foreign target audiences.[3] Just as there is no single definition of Strategic Communication, there is no single government organization responsible for Strategic Communication.

During the Cold War, various government departments and agencies performed portions of the Strategic Communication mission. The United States Information Agency (USIA), which was merged into the State Department in 1998, performed well many of the functions of Public Diplomacy. The White House, National Security Council (NSC), the Department of State (DoS) and Department of Defense (DoD) as well as other government departments and agencies performed Public Affairs to varying degrees. Several government departments and agencies performed strategic-level PSYOP while the U.S. Army was chiefly responsible for operational-level and tactical-level PSYOP. These Strategic Communication efforts were largely conducted independently of one another and without the benefit of an overarching government strategy. Further, they were usually conceived of after the fact to influence audiences to accept an established U.S. policy, and not as an integral part of the policy development process itself. Still, they worked reasonably well during the bi-polar Cold War. The Global War on Terrorism environment is a different story.

Global War on Terrorism Environment

The 2006 National Security Strategy asserts that "winning the war on terror means winning the battle of ideas."[4] The current GWOT environment presents many challenges to U.S. Government Strategic Communication, which complicate winning the battle of ideas.

Perceptions of Hegemony. The current environment is a uni-polar world where the U.S. lacks a strategic competitor. Many regions

of the world have reacted with fear and distrust of U.S. goals, policies and actions. In the 2002 National Security Strategy the U.S. reserved the right to attack preemptively[5] – a clear indication of global hegemony, and possibly imperialism, in the view of many other countries. The willingness of the U.S. to "go it alone" or work with "coalitions of the willing" while foregoing traditional allies is frequently interpreted as arrogance or wanton disregard for world opinion. The recent U.S. reliance on military/hard power over diplomatic/soft power solutions, especially in Iraq, has created intense resentment among friends and foes alike and reduced overall U.S. credibility and influence.[6]

Global Transparency. The explosion of communication technology and its availability at affordable prices has shifted the competition from controlling limited information to commanding limited attention.[7] In the Middle East, those hostile to the West have succeeded in commanding the attention of their audiences through satellite television, FM radio, the Internet and cell phones. The speed of information transmission has also placed the U.S. Government at a disadvantage. Government leaders are asked to comment on breaking stories before they have a reasonable chance to ascertain the facts. Being on the informational defensive permits hostile forces to set an agenda that may result in negative impacts on U.S. opinion and national will.

Globalization. The increasing interdependence of nations is shrinking the world and is bringing cultures into closer contact. Many in the Middle East fear that Western cultural influences will have a negative effect on Middle Eastern culture and the Islamic faith. As the chief proponent of globalization, the U.S. receives the lion's share of hostility and blame for the perceived negative cultural effects.

Middle East Fault Lines. Just as Communism in Europe and Asia was not monolithic during the Cold War, Islam is not monolithic in the Middle East. Beyond the obvious division between Sunni and Shiite, there exist fissures along national, regional, ethnic, tribal and clan lines, however, dislike of U.S. policies transcends these divisions. The United States is frequently viewed as inserting itself on the wrong side of intra-Muslim conflicts.[8] There is also a chasm

between many of the ruling regimes in the Middle East and the people they lead. The U.S. is viewed by many in the region as supporting apostate regimes that serve U.S. energy interests while ignoring the needs of the governed.[9]

Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. The on-going Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues to fuel a great deal of anger in the Middle East. The U.S. is viewed as consistently siding with Israel and against Arabs.[10] The recent election of a Hamas-led Palestinian government complicates the situation further. The U.S. does not recognize the Hamas-led government due to its ties to terrorism and its advocacy for the destruction of Israel. Many in the region view the non-recognition of a fairly elected government, and the consequent withdrawal of funding, as further evidence of U.S. hypocrisy towards the Muslim World.

Anti-Americanism. A 2005 opinion poll conducted by Zogby International showed that the U.S. continues to be viewed unfavorably by overwhelming majorities in Egypt (85%), Jordan (63%), Lebanon (66%), Morocco (64%), Saudi Arabia (89%) and UAE (73%). The poll concludes: "Overall, favorable attitudes toward the U.S. have rebounded since 2004, but are still slightly lower than the already low 2002 ratings. Negative attitudes toward the U.S. have hardened due largely to Iraq and 'American treatment of Arabs and Muslims.'"[11] These highly unfavorable attitudes mean U.S. Government Strategic Communication will lack credibility and message authority with substantial portions of Middle Eastern target audiences.

Given this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous GWOT environment in which a war of ideas is being fought, current U.S. Government Strategic Communication is wholly inadequate.

Public Diplomacy

United States Public Diplomacy is in a state of crisis. The crisis is not only one of words and messages, but just as importantly one of policies, actions and credibility. Two recent Zogby International polls on Arab views of America offer strong evidence that the U.S. has neither fully considered the Public Diplomacy impacts of its

policies during the policy development process nor effectively communicated its policies to Middle Eastern audiences.[12,13]

Addressing the first point, Michael Scheuer, in *Imperial Hubris,* contends that many Muslims and Arabs view American policies as challenging God's word by opposing the concept of jihad, limiting and controlling Muslim charities and insisting on changes to Islamic educational curricula; attacking Islamic faithful and their resources by supporting any government that is not Muslim, supporting apostate governments in the Middle East, imposing economic and military sanctions on Muslims and seeking oil at below market prices; and occupying or dismembering Muslim lands by occupying Afghanistan and Iraq, creating East Timor out of Indonesia and consistently backing Israel versus the Palestinians.[14] These perceptions are reality for an increasing number of Arabs and Muslims as evidenced by recent opinion polls. The Defense Science Board (DSB) agrees that: "U.S. policies and actions are increasingly seen by an overwhelming majority of Muslims as a threat to the survival of Islam itself."[15] It is critical that the U.S. consider the effects of its policies, real and perceived, during the policy development process and not after the fact.

U.S. policies, as they are developed, must be aligned with national values, interests and strategic objectives, and the programs and actions that ensue must reflect what is truly important to the nation. It appears that some U.S. policies towards the Middle East may not be in alignment with vital national interests and these policies should be reviewed; however, for those that are, the U.S. must rapidly implement a comprehensive system to develop, coordinate and disseminate credible messages that resonate with target audiences. Yet, attempts to do this over the past eight years have fallen far short. According to the 2004 DSB report on Strategic Communication, more than 15 private sector and Congressional reports conducted since October 2001 reached a consensus that Strategic Communication is missing, "…strong leadership, strategic direction, adequate coordination, sufficient resources, and a culture of measurement and evaluation."[16] These failures in Public Diplomacy begin at the top.

The President of the United States has not provided decisive leadership to put the proper emphasis on Strategic Communication at

the National level. As the DSB report on Strategic Communication asserts: "A unifying vision of strategic communication starts with Presidential direction. Only White House leadership, with support from cabinet secretaries and Congress, can bring about the sweeping reforms that are required."[17] The President failed in both the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies to even mention the power of information and the necessity of integrating information with the other elements of national power.

The recognition that Public Diplomacy must be improved and better integrated began under President Clinton. President Clinton recognized the need to integrate Public Diplomacy into the policy development process but his efforts to do so did not achieve the desired results. He folded the United States Information Agency (USIA) into the State Department through the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998: "The two bureau structure [Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs] will bring together all elements charged with presenting and interpreting U.S. foreign policy to public audiences. It will give Public Diplomacy practitioners greater access to the foreign policy formulation process."[18]   Although it seemed like a good idea initially, the advantages USIA provided were lost in the State Department bureaucracy. Almost immediately thereafter the Clinton administration realized it had a public diplomacy problem. Due to the communications revolution, almost all government departments and agencies were conducting Public Diplomacy. To resolve this, President Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 68 (PDD 68) near the end of his second term to create an interagency coordination mechanism for International Public Information (IPI), however, the NSC under George W. Bush terminated PDD 68 in early 2001 thereby leaving Public Diplomacy without the centralized direction, planning, coordination and synchronization needed.

President Bush's administration has attempted several Public Diplomacy initiatives none of which has provided the overarching strategic direction needed. The Coalition Information Centers established following 9/11 were ad hoc and never formalized even though they had some success providing consistent and coordinated themes and messages. In October 2001, DoD created the Office

of Strategic Influence (OSI) to: "…serve as the Department's focal point for a 'strategic information campaign in support of the war on terrorism.'"[19]   The OSI was subverted by a damaging leak to the press and shut down by Secretary Rumsfeld before it had a chance to prove its worth. Even if it had begun operations, OSI was still a DoD organization and would not have had the mandate to provide the interagency direction required to fully coordinate and synchronize Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information.

In September 2002, the NSC created the Strategic Communication Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) to develop and disseminate the President's messages to foreign audiences. The 2004 DSB report notes: "The PCC met several times with marginal impact."[20] The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the PCC drafted a national communication strategy, but the committee was disbanded in March 2003 and no strategy was ever issued.[21]

Next, the White House established the Office of Global Communications (OGC) in January 2003 – a new organization that again failed to engage in strategic direction, coordination and synchronization. According to the 2004 DSB Report on Strategic Communications: "…the OGC evolved into a second tier organization devoted principally to tactical public affairs coordination."[22]   The OGC was permitted to quietly fade away in March 2005.

The Muslim World Outreach PCC and DoS's Office of Policy, Planning and Resources are two recent initiatives designed to improve the ability of the government to set a new strategic direction for Public Diplomacy in the Muslim world. Although each organization has gotten off to a good start, they are not receiving any more senior leader advocacy, staffing or resources than previous Public Diplomacy organizations nor do they appear to be coordinating and integrating Public Diplomacy any more thoroughly than previous organizations.

The lack of senior leader emphasis to improve Strategic Communication is evident when one compares the recommendations contained in the 2001 DSB Report on Managed Information

Dissemination with the 2004 DSB report on Strategic Communication. Many of the recommendations such as issuance of an National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), increasing foreign opinion research, harnessing the best practices of civilian media, increased staff and funding for Public Diplomacy and others appeared in the 2001 report and were basically unchanged in the 2004 report.

Another clear indication of the lack of emphasis on Public Diplomacy is the stagnant level of funding. From 1993 to 2001, overall funding for educational and exchange programs fell from $349 million to $232 million adjusted for inflation.[23] The total budget for "Foreign Information and Exchange Programs" fell from $1.16 billion in FY 1998[24] to $814 million in FY 2000.[25] Following 9/11, they increased only modestly and were funded at $972 million in FY 2005.[26] Contrast these figures with the $74.96 billion FY 2005 supplemental appropriation for DoD[27] and one can see the relative lack of emphasis on the information element of power compared to the military element.

Another area lacking emphasis is foreign public opinion research. The 2004 DSB Report highlighted the need to listen to foreign audiences and concluded: "Much of the current U.S. effort concentrates on delivering 'the message' and omits the essential first step of listening to our targeted audiences."[28] DoS currently spends approximately $5 million per year on polling. The Government Accountability Office's survey of expert opinions suggested that $30 million to $50 million annually is needed for polling to provide strategic direction while measuring the effectiveness of current programs.[29] The U.S. has responded with half-hearted organizational solutions, as detailed above, while credibility continues to erode. The best coordination, integration and dissemination of Strategic Communication messages will be meaningless if the message fails to sway the target audience(s).

The 2004 DSB report highlights that the U.S. is failing to reach Middle East target audiences because it is still disseminating information to "huddled masses yearning to be free" just as in the Cold War. "Today we reflexively compare Muslim 'masses' to those oppressed under Soviet rule. This is a strategic mistake."[30] In a February 2006 speech to the U.S.-Islamic World Forum in Qatar,

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes fell into this very trap.[31] Under Secretary Hughes, an experienced strategic communicator, spoke to a group of Muslim leaders about American women who effected change, and the people in Afghanistan and Iraq who are yearning for freedom. One has to wonder how the target audience viewed the credibility, content and message authority of the speaker.

The short term creation and termination of Public Diplomacy coordinating staffs and offices in the NSC and DoS, the lack of funding and staffing for these Public Diplomacy organizations, and the focus on message dissemination over development of credible messages are strong indicators that U.S. Government Strategic Communication still has a Cold War orientation and is ill-prepared for the GWOT environment. The Cold-War era focus of organizations and processes that is hampering Public Diplomacy is also evident in the Public Affairs realm.

Public Affairs

Advances in global information technology and the speed of information transmission in the GWOT environment have increased the influence of the media. As Kenneth Payne asserts, "The media, in the modern era, are indisputably an instrument of war"[32] as a country must win domestic and international public opinion while defeating enemy forces. Public Affairs (PA) doctrine and capabilities are little different from the Cold War era and are insufficient for winning and sustaining public opinion in the GWOT environment. Public Affairs capability must be greatly enhanced from the strategic through the tactical levels and the lanes in the road between Public Affairs, Public Diplomacy and Military Information Operations must be better defined and understood by all practitioners of Strategic Communications.

At the strategic level, PA is the domestic dissemination of information and opinion designed to bolster support for any Administration's policies among the American public. Public Affairs efforts are not succeeding in bolstering support for the administration's policies in Iraq. USA Today/Gallup polls from 2003 through 2006 show that Americans' approval of the way President Bush is handling the war

has gone from 76% in April 2003[33] to 32% in April 2006.[34] Even more alarming, 63% of Americans believe the Bush administration has not clearly explained what the U.S.'s goals in Iraq are.[35] Whether the domestic audience agrees or disagrees with administration policies is understandable, however, the domestic audience's belief that the administration has not clearly articulated its goals in an important policy area is a clear Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy failure.

At the operational and tactical levels, PA capabilities have not kept up with the explosion of information. Current Public Affairs staffing levels within the DoD are comparable to Cold War levels. According to Kenneth Payne "…the purpose of the public affairs staff is just that – to control the dissemination of information so as to maximize the military and political advantage to U.S. forces."[36] The embedding of journalists with units has increased the flow of information, and although embedding has the advantages of restricting what reporters see and cover, it also means public affairs staffs must be prepared to respond to breaking news with accurate answers almost immediately. Current levels of PA staffing do not permit this and the consequence is reduced credibility as civilian and military leaders look unprepared or vacillating.[37] Public Affairs doctrine has not changed significantly to address the new environment.

Current PA doctrine is very much business as usual. The May 2005 version Joint Publication 3-61, Public Affairs, states: "Military Public Information [one of the three primary functions of Public Affairs] is still largely a matter of coordinating media relations. Commanders and their PA staffs should be prepared to respond to media inquiries, issue statements, schedule interviews, conduct briefings, arrange for access to operational units, and provide appropriate equipment, transportation and communications support to the media."[38] These functions are little different from what PA staffs have historically performed. This reactive posture permits the enemy at worst or the media at best to frame an issue. Once an issue is framed, the government or military has lost the initiative on what judgments people will make about it.

Consider the battle for Fallujah in April-May 2004 as a case in point. According to Ralph Peters, "In Fallujah, we allowed a bonanza of hundreds of terrorists and insurgents to escape us – despite promising

that we would bring them to justice. The global media disrupted the U.S. and Coalition chains of command. Foreign media reporting even sparked bureaucratic infighting within our own government. The result was a disintegration of our will… We could have won militarily. Instead, we surrendered politically and called it a success. Our enemies won the information war."[39]

Public Affairs professionals at all levels failed to effectively counter enemy propaganda while reassuring and maintaining the trust and confidence of the U.S. population – a mission delineated in joint doctrine.[40] Part of the difficulty in maintaining the trust and confidence of the U.S. population lies in the internal Public Affairs debate over "informing" versus "influencing."

Many PA practitioners believe their only role is to inform the domestic and international publics with accurate, truthful information and provide access to government and military officials and operations to confirm what is reported. All should agree that PA must always present truthful, credible information, however, if Public Diplomacy and open PSYOP only target foreign audiences, then who besides PA can counter the enemy's or the media's shaping of U.S. domestic opinion? The war in Iraq highlights this issue.

A survey of U.S. domestic newspaper, television, and Internet news finds an overwhelming focus on reporting car bombings, suicide bombings and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonations and the attendant casualties. Additionally, one sees reporting on the increasing organization, sophistication and success of insurgent attacks. Bruce Jentleson makes the point that: "How an issue is cast ('framed') affects the substantive judgments people make – and the media play a key role in this framing. The media also influence…the criteria by which the public makes its judgments about success or failure."[41] An April 2006 Pew Research Center poll sheds light on the effect media "framing" can have on domestic support - in April 2003, 61% of Americans felt the military effort in Iraq was going very well compared with only 13% in April 2006.[42] Public Affairs organizations must devise new means and methods to better "frame" issues for domestic and international audiences on policy successes while countering enemy disinformation in order to reverse these trends.

Further, the U.S. Government must clarify the roles, responsibilities, authorities and relationships between Public Affairs, Public Diplomacy and Information Operations to not only influence foreign target audiences, but to safeguard U.S. national will. A failure to do so may result in strategic defeats in the future. Similar to Viet Nam, enemy propaganda as well as the media's framing of the security and stability issue in Iraq could create a credibility gap for the administration and shift public opinion against the war.[43] This appears to be occurring as evidenced by negative opinion polls, partisan attacks against the Bush administration's handling of the war, and the growing demonstrations at home calling for the removal of U.S. troops. A strategic loss in Iraq, due in large part to a failure of Strategic Communication, would have dire repercussions for the use of military force in future GWOT engagements. With so much at stake, those responsible for U.S. Government Strategic Communication appear not to recognize the gravity of the issue.

International Military Information

International Military Information capability must be substantially strengthened and completely integrated and synchronized with Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs to succeed in the GWOT environment. DSB studies in 2000,[44] 2001[45] and 2004[46] each addressed the importance of strengthening wartime PSYOP capabilities. The Information Operations Roadmap also laid out recommended improvements to PSYOP.[47] Many of these recommendations are being acted upon and increased troop levels and equipment upgrade programs are being funded in the Fiscal Year (FY) 04-09 Five-Year Defense Program (FYDP), however, these improvements may not prove sufficient in the current environment. Additionally, current improvements are not focused on improving peacetime PSYOP.

Significant increases in PSYOP forces and better dissemination methods may not lead to success if the message does not resonate and the messenger lacks credibility. SOCOM received a significant increase of $205 million over the FYDP beginning in FY 2004 for increased PSYOP and Civil Affairs forces. Further, a $45 million Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (ACTD) began in FY 2004 to develop better ways to disseminate information.[48]

Yet, no increases in funding have been allocated to the Research and Analysis Division of the 4th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne) to increase its ability to determine what messages will resonate with key target audiences. Further, as noted in the 2001 DSB study: "PSYOP broadcasts lack name recognition (brand identity), credibility, and professionally developed programming."[49] The 2004 DSB study highlights the credibility problem by stating: "Thus the critical problem…is not one of "dissemination of information," or even one of crafting and delivering the "right" message. Rather, it is a fundamental problem of credibility. Simply, there is none."[50]

This lack of credibility can be seen in the Iraq war. PSYOP forces have been operating in Iraq for over 3 years and over that time there has not been a decrease in support for the insurgents but rather an increase in support. PSYOP forces may consider the non-interference of the Iraqi general population with military operations a success, however, PSYOP campaigns have had virtually no impact on the insurgents or their leaders in terms of their willingness to persevere. Further, PSYOP efforts have not driven a wedge between the insurgents and the Iraqi population, rather, a recent poll showed that almost one-half of the Iraqi population support attacks on U.S forces while only 15% strongly support the U.S.-led coalition.[51] No amount of PSYOP forces or varied dissemination methods can overcome a lack of credibility.

Credibility must be established over the long-term during peacetime. The Overt Peacetime PSYOP Program (OP3) and Theater Security Cooperation Plans are two promising arenas that have fallen short of their potential. According to the 2001 DSB Report, "OP3 has suffered from a lack of funding and high-level attention within DoD. As a result, when (overt PSYOP) does occur, it is because of other funding sources such as mine awareness and counter-drug activities. OP3 has not fulfilled its intended potential to support U.S. foreign policy objectives."[52] OP3 has existed since 1984 and its lack of effectiveness demonstrates the lack of conviction about the importance of information programs in theater military planning during peacetime.

Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP) are focused on traditional military to military activities and largely ignore the elements of

Strategic Communication. The TSCP format does not include a separate category for information activities – PSYOP and support to Public Diplomacy fall under the "Other Activities" category. Although many of the TSCP activities are designed to influence foreign public opinion by promoting acceptance of U.S. strategic objectives,[53] an overarching theater information strategy does not exist to unite the activities. The most current PSYOP doctrine does address peacetime PSYOP in relation to TSCPs[54] – this is a step in the right direction but success will depend upon the implementation of this doctrine.

Conclusion

Strategic Communication is failing in the GWOT environment. Beyond poor coordination and limited dissemination means at all levels, Public Diplomacy is enmeshed in a credibility crisis that will not be solved in the short-term. Therefore, drastic changes must be implemented very soon. Public Affairs staffs are failing to effectively counter enemy propaganda, frame issues to give the U.S. Government an advantage and protect U.S. national will. Public Affairs must move from a reactive to an active posture. International Military Information must revitalize peacetime activities and seek new ways to influence insurgents that the U.S. will face more frequently in the GWOT environment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to improve U.S. Government Strategic Communication by strengthening Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and Military Information Operations.

> 1. Conduct a comprehensive, bi-partisan review of U.S. national interests in the Middle East. As part of the review, closely examine all strategies, policies and programs that affect the Middle East and ensure trace back to vital or very important national interests. Further, assess each policy for its impact on key foreign target audiences. Policies and programs that do not support vital or very important national interests and/or cause further damage to U.S credibility in the region should be modified or deleted. The goal

should be, over a ten-year period, to build U.S. credibility such that a majority of the populations in Arab and Muslim nations feel that U.S. policies towards them are fair and equitable even though they may not agree with all of them.

2. In accordance with Robert Steele's report, Congress should legislate the "creation of a National Information Council (NIC), coequal to the National Security Council (NSC) and the National Economic Council (NEC)."[55] The DSB reports in 2001 and 2004 recommended that the President issue a NSPD to create PCC to enhance coordination of Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information, and to strengthen dissemination in each realm. As discussed in this monograph, these efforts are failing to achieve the desired effects. Informational initiatives take a back seat to the military, diplomatic and economic elements of national power and will continue to do so until Information is placed on an equal organizational footing.

The NIC should have membership commensurate with the NSC and should establish a PCC at the Deputy Secretary level to coordinate Strategic Communication across all departments and agencies. The NIC should develop a National Information Strategy (NIS) to provide overarching strategic direction. The NIC should have the authority and resources to coordinate the efforts of diverse government organizations involved in Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information to influence foreign target audiences over the long-term as well as to quickly counter enemy propaganda, misinformation and "America bashing" in the short-term. The NIC must also receive priority support from the intelligence community to determine "ground truth" on how the U.S. and its policies are being received as well as to attain detailed information about and prioritization of those foreign target audiences that can be influenced.

The legislation establishing the NIC must clearly address the "lanes in the road" between Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information. It should specifically address all prior legislation beginning with the Smith-Mundt Act that is limiting the effectiveness of Information organizations in the GWOT environment. It should also specify acceptable activities

that organizations may perform to protect a key friendly center of gravity, to wit U.S. national will.

> 3. Support the 2004 DSB report recommendation to create an independent, non-profit and non-partisan Center for Strategic Communication.[56] This center is critical to leveraging the private sector while providing a "degree of distance" for those individuals and organizations uncomfortable with government affiliation. Two of the many critical functions of the center will be first, to take advantage of the internet revolution in both civilian and military information dissemination while ensuring the highest standards of commercial media production and second, to assess the effectiveness of all information programs over both the long and short-term. This Center will play a key role in assisting the U.S. Government to rebuild its credibility, especially in the Middle East.

In conjunction with establishing the Center, conduct a review of all opinion research being performed by or paid for by all Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information organizations. Ensure opinion research does not overlap and ensure research is consistent and tailored to the needs of each individual organization.

> 4. Conduct a complete review of the personnel policies in DoS and DoD for civilian leadership of Pubic Diplomacy, Public Affairs, and International Military Information. One Under Secretary in each Department should be the focal point and principal advisor to the respective Secretary for all information activities and each major Information activity underneath be headed by an Assistant Secretary. In DoS, the International Information Programs Coordinator would be elevated to an Assistant Secretary position under the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. In DoD, create an Under Secretary for Information Operations. The Under Secretaries should be empowered to be both policy advisors and managers for the information activities in their charge.

> 5. Support the 2004 DSB report recommendation to triple funding and personnel for Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and International Military Information[57] activities as a starting point.

Convene a Blue Ribbon Panel to determine the amount of funding required for all information functional areas to put the information element of power on par with the other three elements.

6. Revitalize the OP3 program and ensure it is fully integrated with Combatant Command TSCPs. Amend the Joint Planning and Execution System (JOPES) to include a separate category within TSCPs for information activities. Combatant Commanders and Ambassadors should jointly develop respective Theater/Country information plans ensuring linkage to the National Information Strategy.

7. The Secretary of Defense should issue a DoD Directive mandating extensive language and cultural training for a core of Active Duty and Reserve forces aligned to high-risk areas in each Combatant Commander Area of Responsibility (AOR). Cross-assign these personnel to the embassy country teams in high-risk nations or in regions corresponding to their language. Mandate monthly language and cultural familiarity training for all service members in each Combatant Commander AOR.