PSYOP and the Information Age: Assessing US Army Employment of Psychological Operations in the Contemporary Operating Environment.

A Monograph
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Abstract

PSYOP AND THE INFORMATION AGE: ASSESSING US ARMY EMPLOYMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY OPERATING ENVIRONMENT by MAJ Mark S P Berry, LG, British Army, 56 pages.

As with a local insurgency, the Global War on Terror requires the US and her allies to win the support of neutral, wavering and hostile audiences in addition to defeating an enemy. At the tactical and operational levels of war, those audiences comprise the populations among which the US Army and its enemies operate. The populations face competing demands for support both from US and from its enemies. In what is sometimes referred to as a war of ideas, populations caught between opposing ideological standpoints must, as a minimum, be influenced not to support enemies of the US. From a tactical and operational perspective, in order for the US to achieve operational success, the requirement to influence those in the middle ground has never been more acute. The increased importance of influence in US military operations is matched by an increased opportunity to do so. The Information Age, with its prevalence of communication technology and resultant dissemination of information, presents the US Army with more opportunities than ever before to communicate with, persuade, and influence the populations that comprise this middle ground. In spite of this, Psychological Operations, the US Army's primary capability for influence, is widely misunderstood and under employed.

This monograph assesses the operational impact of failure to reflect the increased importance of, and opportunities for, Psychological Operations in modern military operations. By examining Joint and US Army doctrine, US Army organisation and structure, and finally, operational employment of Psyops, the monograph identifies a reluctance to acknowledge the potential of Psychological Operations. The monograph explores the factors that contribute to this reluctance and indicates that it is the inherently psychological nature of warfare, not the context of the Information Age, which demands a greater focus on Psyops. By focusing on the psychological aspects of operations, the US Army will see beyond the enemy to influence audiences in the middle ground – the key to long term operational success. The monograph concludes that failure to make Psychological Operations a key pillar in the staff structure is a critical inhibitor to the complete integration of Psyops in modern combat operations, and recommends raising the profile of Psyops in structure, planning and operations in order to amend this failure.

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Introduction

The role of the military throughout the ages has been to force the will of their government (or in earlier times, king) upon their enemies. Carl von Clausewitz immortalized this role in his much quoted remark: "war is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."[1] Clausewitz emphasises this role of influence over adversaries when he states that the aim of an army in a limited war is "to make the enemy insecure, to impress our greater strength upon him and to give him grave doubts about his future."[2] The age in which Clausewitz wrote was characterised by very limited communication ability. Force was the only means of influence, with limited amplification of that message through word of mouth. Over the course of the 20th century, technological developments have changed the way in which individuals, communities and governments have been able to communicate. The aim of this literature review is to identify the themes in post-World War II literature concerning the adoption of these developments, and perceptions of how they have been integrated into the core military activity of influencing an adversary.

The Role of the Field Staff

The element responsible for planning, controlling and coordinating an army is its field staff. This structure, therefore, reflects the capabilities of an army. The field staff structure must also reflect its context (the environment in which it operates).[3] Where the environment changes,

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[1] Von Clausewitz, Carl, *On War*. Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Indexed Edition. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, 1989. p75

[2] Ibid, p 92. This remark is not pertinent to a total war in which the enemy's future is not uncertain: total war aims to annihilate the enemy completely.

[3] "The primary organizational principle [in Information Age organisations] is a matching of the system structure to the environment and function it performs." Bar-Yam, Yaneer. *Making things work: Solving complex problems in a complex world.* NESCI, Knowledge Press. 2004.

the structure must adapt to reflect its environment, if it is to operate effectively.[4] In order to identify how militaries have sought to influence adversaries, this monograph examines the development of the army field staff structure within the development of its context – the operational environment. The monograph focuses on the influence function developed in World War II – Psychological Operations (Psyops),[5] and Information Operations (IO), the modern extension of which Psyops is now a part.[6] Particular emphasis is made on these influence elements (Psyops and IO) and their synergy with other combat operations. Ultimately, the monograph demonstrates that the field staff structure has failed to adapt to reflect its current environment: the Information Age.

Ages of Communication

The modern field staff structure is accepted as originating from the staff structure developed by the Prussian army in the early 19th century.[7] From this period until the present, three distinct contexts (or ages) emerge, each characterised by a different communication capability. The first age covers the 19th Century, including the Prussian development of its new

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[4] Hittle provides an example of early adaptation in the Prussian army: new staff positions were added to the Prussian general staff to exploit the new invention of railroads in Europe. Hittle, J.D. *The military staff: Its history and development*. Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Company. 1961. p 72.

[5] Throughout this monograph I have used the British term "Psyops" in order to remind the reader that this analysis of a US Army capability is made by a British Army officer. The US term PSYOP is used in direct quotations from US sources and wherever the use of a British term may cause confusion.

[6] Information Operations is the coordinating function for the employment of 5 core capabilities: electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception and operations security. US Army doctrine states that these core capabilities are used "to affect or defend information and information systems and to influence decision making." US Army. "Information Operations: doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures." *FM 3-13*. Headquarters, Department of the Army. November 2003. p 1-13.

[7] Hittle (1961) p 51. The Prussian staff structure was developed in reaction to defeat by Napoleon at the battle of Jena, 1806. p 70: "the Prussian staff system in 1828 possessed all of the essential elements of a modern staff system." p 153 identifies Spenser Wilkinson's "*The Brain of an Army*" (1890) as exerting great influence in the development of the British and US Armies. The work drew on Moltke's design to advocate the importance of a staff structure.

field staff structure. Limited communication ability (written messages, horse-delivered post and in the latter half of the century, limited telegraph communication) characterised this age, restricting an army's ability to influence its opponent. Influence was restricted to action (application of force) or threat of action. Messages to reinforce this influence through psychological effect could be employed only in direct (to government) or highly localized (to populations close to military action) roles. Thus, psychological operations in this era were greatly limited by the means of communication. This first age will be referred to as the "Pre-Wireless" age.

An epoch-changing event occurred with the invention of wireless telegraphy (associated here with Marconi's first radio broadcast, in 1896), and in the early 20th century the invention of the television heralded further penetration of information into society. Thus the "Radio and Television Age" began with Marconi's invention and saw the birth of mass communication. Influence was no longer restricted to action. Psychological influence was now possible on account of the increased ability to communicate with a target audience. Governments could now influence large audiences by disseminating messages through these media of mass communication.

The final, contemporary age, the "Information Age", begins with the first public operation of the internet (August 6th, 1991). Less than 20 years into the Information Age it is clear that this age is characterised by the pervasive nature of information and communication systems in everyday life, and by the speed of technological development.[8] These dramatic changes in communication capability affect a government's ability to reach and influence an audience both within and beyond the range of their employment of force. Consequently these

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[8] Axelrod, Robert and Michael D. Cohen. *Harnessing complexity: organizational implications of a scientific frontier*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. p 23-4.

changes should be reflected in clear changes in the field staff structure, notably in the area of influence.

Background

The Rejection of Psychological Operations

Psychological Operations and Information Operations are misunderstood and mistrusted in both military and civilian realms, directly resulting in the staff structure failing to adapt to reflect the dramatic changes detailed above. The origins of this mistrust lie in the association of Psyops with "evil" regimes (notably Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union), and a subsequent assumption that Psyops does not conform to western, democratic values. The secrecy behind some Psyops operations, association with (covert) Special Forces and confusion over its correct employment have perpetuated this mistrust. The considerable literature published in the aftermath of World War II demonstrates that awareness of the potential value of Psyops was tainted by association with the regimes mentioned above and their (often highly successful) employment of propaganda. Most notorious was the use of information by Goebbels and his Ministry of Propaganda. So strong was the distaste among Americans for a capability associated with 'evil' regimes that the Soviet Union was able to leverage this distaste against Americans when denigrating the American radio station Voice of America.[9]

Distaste for the principle of Psyops (and by association, influence operations) has resulted in failure to integrate the concept completely into 'normal' modern military operations despite assessments of its operational advantages during World War II. This problem of rejection of Psyops by both military and civilians is evident in the earliest writings on the subject. A letter from General Albert C. Wedemeyer to General Omar N. Bradley complains that Psyops was an

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[9] Kumata and Schramm in Daugherty, William E. *A psychological warfare casebook*: Baltimore. The John Hopkins Press, 1968. p 738-41.

"afterthought"[10] in military operations in World War II – a complaint that is echoed in contemporary writing on current operations.[11] The failure to overcome this distaste and scepticism is not simply a failure of the military, but is a reflection of what may be a US cultural weakness.[12] This thought is echoed by Carnes Lord only shortly after the term of President Reagan "The Great Communicator", whose office is considered as marking a resurgence in US Information Operations. Cultural rejection of Information Operations can even be found in today's military at an operational level.[13]

Response to Rejection

The response of many authors to this cultural rejection was to seek a name change in order to effect dissociation between psychological operations and the propaganda of World War II. Dyer suggests the term "political communication"[14], while Daugherty and Janowitz's seminal work published in 1968 contains several discussions of the use of the term psychological operations.[15] The discussion has continued until the present day with writers continuing to

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[10] Paddock, Alfred H. *US Army special warfare: its origins*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1982. p 58: Gen Wedemeyer (at the time, Director, Plans and Operations Division) posits that writing the Psychological Operations element of a plan after the plan itself has been developed "may be an unsound approach. It restricts psychological warfare activities … without due consideration of the psychological problem." Gen Bradley was Chief of the US Army Staff at this time.

[11] Dewar, James G. Applying IO in the real world. *IOSphere*, 2008. p 1-3.

[12] Paddock (1982) p 49; Carnes Lord accepts that there are "American cultural inhibitions in the area of psychological-political conflict" in Barnett, Frank R. *Political warfare and psychological operations: rethinking the US approach*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1989. p 21 -23.

[13] Dewar (2008); Interviews with the author: COL (Retd) K. Benson, COL C. Eassa, Maj L. Frias.

[14] Dyer, Murray. *The weapon on the wall: rethinking psychological warfare*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1959. p15.

[15] Daugherty (1968), pp12-18. Perusse refers to the "decided negative connotations" of the term 'psychological warfare'p32. Leonard S Cotterell "the term "psychological warfare" has proved a handicap" pp18-20

advocate a change of terminology.[16] Some writers accept that there is no ideal term and that association with propaganda can never truly be eradicated, advocating that the US Army continues with its current terminology.[17] The various terms referring to influencing an enemy through information have led to confusion in understanding the roles and missions of Psyops.[18] Further complication is added by the growing importance of Public Affairs whose mission of "informing" (but not influencing) is perceived as being dangerously close to the influence mission of Psyops (despite being strictly separated in their roles).[19]

Psyops and Truth

Throughout the literature on psychological and information operations runs a demand for strict adherence to the truth and use of correct facts. This is seen not just as sound operational practice, but as the most important element of Psyops.[20] Credibility of the source to the audience is crucial in Psyops, and this credibility is achieved through consistently telling the truth.[21] Daugherty takes the issue of credibility even further by arguing that truth is useless unless it is perceived as such by the target audience – thus he imposes a greater restriction on a psychological operation by the requirement to employ only *certain* truthful facts.[22] Modern day Psyops require

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[16] Boyd, Curtis, D. *Psychological operations: learning is not a defense science project.* Hurlburt Field, Florida. Joint Special Operations University, 2007. p 20: "psyops' pejorative connotations are almost insurmountable obstacles to effective and consistent interagency collaboration".

[17] Walker, Fred W. *PSYOP is a nasty term – too bad.* Air University Review, Sept- Oct 1977.

[18] Carnes Lord in Barnett (1989) p 16.

[19] JP 3-61, Public Affairs, I-3, Public Affairs mission is "to support the JFC by communicating truthful and factual unclassified information about Department of Defense (DOD) activities to UA, allied, national, international and internal audiences." Department of Defense. "Public Affairs." *Joint Publication 3-61.* Department of Defense. 09 May 2005.

[20] Crossman in Daugherty (1968), p38. Dyer (1959) p142: "truth is the Psywar operators' most effective weapon." p 61: factual accuracy is top of Dyer's list of 12 premises of political communications in society.

[21] Macdonald, Scot. *Propaganda and information warfare in the twenty first century: altered images and deception operations.* New York: Routledge, 2007. p 34-36.

[22] Daugherty (1968) p 41.

greater adherence to the truth than in the early days of its employment on account of the increased transparency of the Information Age. Fact-checking is increasingly easy as internet access increases, and a target audience can verify the credibility of a source through verifying his information.[23]

Adherence to the truth serves a second important function: achieving dissociation with the 'evil propaganda' of Nazi and Communist regimes. A strong theme in works on Psyops is that moral values underpin influence operations. The importance of conducting Psyops within the boundaries of these moral values is crucial to its credibility and acceptance by the originating nation.[24] With this emphasis Dyer highlights the need to present Psyops as a legitimate weapon in a country's arsenal.[25] They also aim to establish a clear distinction between the psychological operations of the US and those of regimes with incompatible values such as Nazi Germany or Communist countries, whose own psychological operations have not been guided by (western) moral principles, truthfulness, or transparency. However, Allied success in the use of Psyops in WWII came not only through overt ("white") operations, where the identity of the influencer was clear to the recipient of the message. "Grey" operations (in which the identity of the influencer was unclear) or "black" operations (in which the identity of the influencer was deliberately hidden, purporting to be from a different source) were used extensively by the Allies.[26] Authorized employment of deceit in psychological operations has muddied already unclear waters in the American psyche. What is acceptable practice in psyops (according to western

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[23] Rendon characterises the Information Age as a "ubiquitous, near-transparent information environment". Presentation to School of Advanced Military Studies by John Rendon, The Rendon Group, 14 Oct 2008.

[24] Dyer (1959) p 62, p 218; Linebarger, Paul M.A. *Psychological warfare*. Washington D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1954. p 43.

[25] Dyer (1959) p 17, p 218.

[26] Lerner, Daniel. *Psychological warfare against Nazi Germany, the sykewar campaign: D-Day to VE-Day*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 1971 p 262-280.

democratic values) is the subject of dispute among practitioners, government figures and civilians. The resultant mistrust of the capability remains deep seated in the American mind.

Psyops and Action

Psychological operations are not an end in and of themselves, but support the achievement of broader military objectives, just as military campaigns, following Clausewitz's logic, support policy objectives.[27] The relationship between message and action is a dominant theme in writing on Psyops. Messages that cannot be reinforced by action are worthless, and the credibility of a message is itself strengthened by action.[28] Historic deployment of force by a government is critical in ensuring the credibility of a psychological message.[29] The relationship between message and action does not stop here. Action itself conveys a message to an opponent. This may be achieved through the positioning of forces, indicating to an opponent that a government has both the force and the will to employ it. Dyer illustrates this with the example the psychological effect on the Axis of 6th Fleet's deployment to the Adriatic in 1942.[30] Individual actions at the tactical level also convey a message to an opponent, notably assassinations and acts of terrorism.[31] Acknowledgement that action itself conveys a message

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[27] "War is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means." Von Clausewitz (1989) p 69.

[28] Dyer (1959) p 61- 3; Paddock (1982) p 19; Wass de Czege, Hubert. "Rethinking "IO": complex operations in the information age." *Small Wars Journal*. 04 July 2008. http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/2008/07/rethinking-io-complex-operatio.php (accessed September 20, 2008). p10. Wass de Czege argues that the "importance of linking deeds, images and words to leverage the psychological impact of these" increases as technological advances increase. Failure in an enemy to understand these technological advances demands that the US Army communicates its technological advantage more effectively. In short, technological advantage becomes worthless if that advantage is not communicated to enemies.

[29] Bernstein goes further, suggesting that for true psychological effectiveness, the deployment must be recent. Bernstein, A. "Political strategies in coercive diplomacy and limited war" in Barnett (1989) p 145-158. Wass de Czege (2008) p 10.

[30] Dyer (1959) p 148. Dyer argues that the simple presence of 6th fleet conveyed US military posture and strength, and the potential to employ that strength against the Axis powers.

opens a further possibility: that of employing action specifically for its psychological effect on an opponent.[32] Linebarger asserts that the strength of Nazi warfare lay in waging war psychologically: the coordination of military actions and psychology in support of their political aims.[33]

Psyops in Context

With the birth of the Information Age our ability to communicate has increased exponentially. Information can be passed faster than ever before; access to information is at unprecedented levels and the technology to facilitate this has spread across the globe, in some areas bypassing both Pre-Wireless and Radio Ages. In his writings on the Information Age, David Alberts argues that with the devolution in information, control of information has also devolved. The field staff structure has not undergone changes which reflect the significant environmental change charted above. The expansion of the Information Operations cell (G7 cell) in the new, modular, US Army Division, begins to reflect this change, but stops well short of reflecting the dramatic changes in the environment.

Increasingly, in the current Stability Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Army is attempting to influence behaviour in target audiences in order to achieve mission success. However, contemporary writing on the subject demonstrates that the US Army's primary means of influence, Psychological Operations, remain poorly understood by the majority of the military.[34] Message and action are inextricably linked, yet the field staff structure allows the two

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[31] Marighella, Carlos. Manual of the urban guerrilla. Translated by Gene Hanrahan. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1985 p 84 "each individual urban guerrilla operation is in itself a form of armed propaganda.... Inevitably all armed actions serve as propaganda vehicles that are fed into the mass communications system."

[32] Wass de Czege (2008) p 10.

[33] Linebarger (1954) p 41-43.

[34] Boyd (2007); Dewar (2008); Wright, Donald P. *The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005: on point II, transition to the new campaign.* Leavenworth, Combat

elements to be planned separately, encouraging mental separation of the two. Although some writers mention that changes in field staff structure will improve the synergy of Psyops with other combat operations, none discuss the need to change the field staff structure to reflect changes in the environment. [35] As technological advances continue to define the environment (Alberts admits that "we cannot stop, control or slow down the information explosion"), the US Army field staff structure must change to reflect its environment.[36]

Definitions

The purpose of this section is to establish the definitions of the terms central to this monograph: Psychological Operations (PSYOP / Psyops), Information Operations (IO) and Information and the audiences at which these are directed by examining US Joint and Army doctrine. Doctrinal definitions demonstrate that psychological operations are inextricably associated with action. However, in recent years this association has diminished and Psyops has become more closely associated with one facet of its role: the communication of information (the message). By understanding the nature of the current environment, the Information Age, and its effect on military operations, we see that military operations are themselves information. This information must be employed psychologically in order to maximise operational efficiency. By defining these key terms, this section establishes the parameters within which this monograph ultimately demonstrates that the field staff structure must be reorganised to synergise Psyops and other combat operations (the message and the action).

Studies Institute Press. 2008; Stagner, Randall K. *Denying sanctuary to the global insurgency: A primer to re-establish USG strategic communication (2007 revision)*. Fort McNair, Washington D.C., 2007. p 34.

[35] Boyd (2007), Wass de Czege (2008).

[36] Alberts, David S. *The Unintended Consequences of Information Age Technologies*. National Defense University, 1996. p 3.

Psychological Operations

Psychological Operations are defined as "operations planned to convey selected information and indicators to influence the emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behaviour of foreign governments, organisations, groups and individuals."[37] They seek to cause behavioural change in a target audience, and in so doing compliment other combat operations in compelling others to do the will of the United States. PSYOP are described by JP 3-53 as taking place in all three levels of war (strategic, operational and tactical). The strategic level may include military psychological operations, and may involve the use of military assets, but this monograph will focus on the operational and tactical levels of military Psyops, because it is at these levels that Psyops "are designed to strengthen US and multinational capabilities to conduct operations in the operational area."[38]

Influence in the contemporary environment is therefore no different from that of Clausewitz's era: an attempt "to compel our enemy to do our will" through actions (including direct use of force) or the threat thereof (messages or information to convey that threat).[39] Psyops comprise both action and message. This monograph demonstrates that the US Army must increase its emphasis on Psyops in the planning and employment of action. In so doing it does not intend to detract from Psyops' role of communicating information to an adversary, but aims to

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[37] Department of Defense. "Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations." *Joint Publication 3-53*. Department of Defense, 05 September 2003. p xiii. Other military doctrine defines these terms in such a way as to indicate that ultimately actions are the basis for influence: FM 3-13 pI-16 defines **influence** as aiming to cause "adversaries or others to behave in a manner favorable to Army forces" through **perception management**. FM 1-02 p415 defines perception management as: "Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator's objectives". US Army. "Operational Terms and Graphics." *FM 1-02*. Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 2004.

[38] Doctrine also shows that military assets are used in support of strategic PSYOP activities: "[Strategic level PSYOP] activities predominantly take place outside the military arena but can use DOD assets and receive support from military PSYOP forces." JP 3-53 (2003) p I-4.

[39] Von Clausewitz (1989) p 75.

broaden its application to include planning and directing other military operations. JP 3-53 highlights the dependence of both aspects (message and action) of psychological operations on communication to pass information, whether that information is a message or action itself.[40]

Confusion between Psyops and two other important areas of military operations has arisen in recent years as a result of their roles in communication, and a perception of overlapping or conflicting responsibilities. These areas are Information Operations (IO) and Public Affairs (PA).

Psychological Operations and Information Operations

IO aim "to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own."[41] As a coordinating function, with Psyops as one of its five components, there is widespread confusion among the military as to what constitute Information Operations, and what constitute Psyops.[42] Not all elements of IO seek to cause behavioural change in an adversary. As COL (Retd) Randall K. Stagner points out, "when a military commander calls for "IO," he almost always means the influence part of IO (PSYOP and MILDEC) and not the remaining bits, bytes, and wires portion."[43] He offers the OIF Operation Order as the best example of this confusion, in which "every IO paragraph… discusses influence activities [PSYOP & MILEC] to the exclusion of other IO functions [CNO, EW & OPSEC]."[44]

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[40] "PSYOP depend on communications to ensure proper execution of the mission and objectives." JP 3-53 (2003) p xiii.

[41] Department of Defense. "Information Operations." *Joint Publication 3-13*. Department of Defense, 13 February 2006. p I-1.

[42] Boyd states that this confusion is rife even within the military in an article in which he lists examples of confusion by MG David Grange, Donald Rumsfeld and former Marine officer Nathaniel Fick. "the practice of mistakenly identifying PSYOP activities as IO now permeates the army's institutional lexicon." Boyd, Curtis D. "Army IO is Psyop." *Military Review*, 2007: 67- 75. p 69.

[43] Stagner (2007) p 34.

[44] Ibid, p 34. The IO core capabilities are Military Deception (MILDEC), Computer Network Operations (CNO), Electronic Warfare (EW) and Operational Security (OPSEC). Department of Defense.

IO cater for combat operations against an adversary with similar organisational hierarchy, equipment and dependence on command, control, communication and computer (C4) networks as the US Army. The concept of IO is based on an era in which the US was committed against a conventional enemy (the Soviet Union and her allies). The concept was technically focused, aiming to degrade an enemy technical capability (his C4 architecture). In contrast, Psyops focuses on the cognitive domain, and is not restricted to a particular type of adversary, adapting its methods according to its target audience. Psyops is equally applicable against highly-technical as against technically underdeveloped enemies. Psyops is as useful against a hierarchically organised enemy as it is against a loosely organised enemy network. Detailed analysis of the role and organisation of each of the elements of IO is beyond the parameters of this monograph. However, the monograph presents the case for separation of Psyops from IO in order to create a separate influence function in the field staff structure which is not subordinate to IO or any other function.

Psychological Operations and Public Affairs

PA mission is to "support the JFC by communicating truthful and factual unclassified information about DOD activities to US, allied, national, international and internal audiences."[45] Doctrine acknowledges that PA and Psyops have complimenting roles (including overlapping roles: both counter enemy propaganda, both inform an audience) that demand close coordination, but requires separation between the two.[46] PA mission is fundamentally different from Psyops in that it does not seek to cause behavioural change, but aims to achieve its mission "without

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"Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations." *JP 3-13.* Department of Defense, 13 February 2006. p II-1.

[45] JP 3-61 (2005) p I-3.

[46] JP 3-53 states that "Although PA and PSYOP generated information may be different, they must not contradict one other or their credibility will be lost." JP 3-52 (2003) p I-9, while JP 3-61 demands that PA "should have no role in planning or executing [psychological operations]." JP 3-61 (2005) p xi.

attempting to influence or sway the audience."[47] Analysis of PA's role falls outside the parameters of this monograph. However, PA must be understood as a distinct role from Psyops. While the latter is a tool to conduct operations, the former is a tool to report on those operations in a neutral, unbiased voice.[48] In spite of this clear distinction, the use of information by both, and fear of crossing the boundary between the two causes a tension in commanders and staff that adversely impacts the employment of Psyops.[49] This tension must be overcome in order to avoid deterring a commander from employing Psyops.

Psychological Operations and the Information Age

The Information Age presents unique opportunities for the synergy of Psyops and combat operations through ever increasing communication capabilities. Although the Radio and Television Age increased public exposure to information with the advent of radio broadcasts and moving images, technological limitations restricted that exposure. Equipment restricted communication to a very small number of individuals – only large broadcasting companies could afford the technology. That same equipment limited methods of communication, speed of communication and the amount of information that could be passed to an audience The resultant delays in passing information allowed content to be controlled, while limited media outlets allowed audiences to be compartmentalised.

The Information Age is characterised by the pervasive nature of information and communication systems in everyday life. The ability to transfer and process data (information) is at unprecedented levels. Both equipment and technology have devolved to the lowest levels – anyone with access to an internet connection can broadcast information. The immediacy and

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[47] JP 3-53 (2003) p I-9. This remark presents a contradiction by ignoring the fact that information influences the recipient regardless of the intention of the sender.

[48] Wright (2008) p 274.

[49] Wright (2008) p 289 "commanders and staff officers alike struggled to combined [IO and PA] into a comprehensive whole without violating the boundaries between [manipulating and informing]."

prevalence of information allows real-time or near-real-time access to events almost anywhere in the world by large, dispersed audiences. In this context events are reduced to information – data to be passed through the communication network. This context provides the US Army with the opportunity to reach and influence increasingly large audiences. In order to exploit this opportunity, the US Army must synergise its actions with its messages, increasing the impact of both.

Like other events in this context, military action must be understood as information. Dyer uses the example of 6th Fleet's deployment to the Adriatic in 1942 to demonstrate that military action conveys information, even in the case of a simple deployment.[50] Under the conditions of the Information Age, this action must be understood not as conveying information, but as itself being information. Carlos Marighella understood the value of actions as information and the value of broadcasting to large audiences. His book "Manual of the Urban Guerrilla" advises carrying out terrorist operations (particularly assassinations) for their psychological impact on the target audience. He encourages these acts in urban areas so that they are exposed to the largest number possible, thereby amplifying their effect, and increasing their effectiveness.[51]

The aerial bombing operation in Iraq at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom provides a contemporary example of action as information. Widely publicised as a "shock and awe" campaign, the bombing provided information to the Iraqis of the might of the anticipated ground invasion of Iraq by US and coalition forces. Information Age technology enabled this bombing campaign to be broadcast repeatedly in the media. The campaign was even discussed in the media before the bombing itself began. Through wide broadcast of the information (that a bombing campaign of "shock and awe" was about to begin), and through its synergy with action (the

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[50] Dyer (1959) p148. See also footnote 30.

[51] Marighella (1985).

subsequent prosecution of that campaign) the US Army was synergising actions and message. Modern military operations must reflect their environment by considering their actions (whether they are training, deployments or engagements with an adversary) as information. Modern military planners must exploit that information in the planning process – synergising actions and messages.

US Joint doctrine warns: "It is important not to confuse psychological impact with PSYOP. Actions... are not PSYOP unless the primary purpose is to influence the emotions, motives... or behavior of the [Target Audience]."[52] While this makes perfect sense, the US Army must not ignore potential opportunities to dominate an adversary; it must leverage every advantage it can. One advantage is the psychological impact of combat actions – an opportunity that must be exploited.[53] The psychological impact of combat operations demonstrates that Psyops are not a niche of military operations, but encompass all military actions. These actions should be planned and executed for their psychological impact on a target audience, as much as for their physical effect.[54]

The Audience

JP 3-0 shows that military operations have the potential to effect friendly, neutral and hostile parties psychologically.[55] Psychological operations must exploit this potential in order to maximise the effect of all operations. In accordance with US law psychological operations must not be targeted at US citizens, although they may be used to effect allies of the US. Throughout

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[52] JP 3-53 (2003) p I-2.

[53] "Every activity of the force has psychological implications that may be leveraged in the battle to influence a foreign TA." JP 3-53 (2003) p I-3. If the US Army does not exploit this psychological impact it fails to leverage an advantage over its adversary.

[54] JP 3-53 supports this by stating that PSYOP "Must be woven into the strategies and operations across the range of military operations." JP 3-53 (2003) p I-14.

[55] "All military operations can have a psychological effect on all parties concerned – friendly, neutral and hostile." Department of Defense. "Joint Operations." *Joint Publication 3-0.* Department of Defense, 17 September 2006.

this monograph references to the target audiences refer to the hostile and neutral audiences only.[56] The Information Age presents a significant challenge to Psyops in this regard since the prevalence of information and communication systems no longer allows audiences to be compartmentalised. Information intended to influence a foreign audience may well reach and influence a domestic audience. Under these circumstances Psyops must be guided by its intent. The secondary and tertiary effects are unpredictable at best, and even incalculable. Commanders must be content to employ Psychological Operations against enemy and neutral audiences without considering their impact on the domestic US audience.

The hostile audience constitutes an adversary's government, military, civilian population and her allies and is the most obvious target of Psyops in major combat operations. The neutral audience comprises the uncommitted elements: those that may support the adversary, or who are doing so but may be influenced to change their behaviour to support the US and her allies.[57] In Stability and Counter Insurgency (COIN) operations the neutral audience is arguably the most important to US success, and thus a critical target for psychological operations.[58]

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[56] Three Presidential Directives prevent the employment of PSYOP against the US population: Executive Order S-12333, *United States Intelligence Activities*; DOD Instructions S-3321.1, (S) *Overt Psychological Operations Conducted by the Military Services in Peacetime and in Contingencies Short of Declared War* (U); and National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 130, *U.S. International Information Policy*. US Army. "Psychological Operations." *FM 3-05-30*. Headquarters, Department of the Army, April 2005. p 1-12.

[57] Under "Unconventional Warfare" JP 3-53 presents an excellent description of the neutral audience including "the uncommitted", "hostile sympathizers" and "resistance sympathizers". JP 3-53 (2003) p VI-8.

[58] C. J. Lamb argues that Psyops are critical to the success of stability operations through "currying favor with the local population and neutralizing active support to insurgents and terrorists from the general populace." Lamb, Christopher J. *Review of PSYOP lessons learned from recent operational experience*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2005. US Army doctrine supports this by observing that "At its core, COIN is a struggle for the population's support... support of the people [is] vital to success." US Army. "Counterinsurgency." *FM 3-24*. Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2006. p 1-28.

Psyops aims to change the behaviour of its target audiences through conveying "selected information and indicators."[59] In the Information Age, where information is prevalent throughout the globe, action itself must be seen as information. The "information and indicators" conveyed to the target audience are both actions and messages. The efficacy of military operations in the Information Age depends upon the ability to synergise these actions and messages. The Information Age provides the US military with the ability to communicate more effectively to increasingly larger audiences. Failure to exploit the psychological impact of military operations is failure to leverage an advantage over an adversary. In order to leverage this impact, operations must be planned with their psychological effect as a core consideration. This is particularly important in Stability or COIN operations in which the local population must be engaged to ensure success. Psychological operations are not a specialist operation, compartmentalised from the remainder of combat operations. They are the entire spectrum of military operations: action and message carefully coordinated and employed in the information-dominated environment.

Structures & Doctrine

Within the above definitions, this monograph assesses the synergy of Psyops with other combat operations. In order to do so we must understand the doctrine behind Psyops and how Psyops fit into the US Army field staff structure. In analyzing US Army and Joint doctrine we see that current doctrine focuses heavily on the communication role of Psyops and makes little of the potential for Psyops planners to direct operations for their psychological impact. Although doctrine mentions advising the commander on the "psychological effects and consequences of other planned military actions and operations", the overwhelming emphasis is on Psyops products.[60] Doctrine also places Psyops within Information Operations (IO). This placement hinders the employment of Psyops and prevents complete synergy with combat operations.

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[59] JP 3-53 (2003) p ix.

[60] FM 3-05-30 (2005) p 1-7.

Finally, an examination of the staff structure and the organisation of US Army PSYOP shows that Psyops is not recognised as the valuable element of the US Army that it could be. However, small changes in the field staff structure at Divisional level reflect a heightened awareness of the importance of Psyops and an improvement in their integration with other combat operations.

Psyops faces two significant issues. Firstly, there is institutional reluctance to accept the potential and utility of planning military operations for their psychological impact. Secondly, Psyops struggles for recognition in the face of poor placement on the planning staff.[61] This section of the monograph examines the contribution of doctrine and organisation to these two issues. The latter may be divided into staff organisation and PSYOP force organisation. Since these in part derive from doctrine, the section first analyses US Army and Joint doctrine.

Doctrine

This monograph has already highlighted Psyops' two elements: influencing through information (communication of messages) and influencing through action. Both elements are closely linked, and both contribute to make Psyops a valuable tool for a military commander. This monograph demonstrates that in the Information Age both elements are linked more closely than ever before, as Psyops is capable not only of communicating information, but of creating that information as well. Psyops planners create this information by planning military operations for their psychological effect (these may be any operation: Combat, Stability, COIN etc). Psyops forces then communicate that information by broadcasting it to the target audience, thereby maximising the psychological effect of the action. Doctrine fails to acknowledge this potential in Psyops. Neither US Army nor Joint doctrine emphasises both elements of Psyops (action and message) equally. An overwhelming emphasis on Psyops' communication role obscures the few

[61] Psyops is one of 5 sub-elms (or "core components") of IO, and is consequently a sub-element of a sub-element. See footnote 44 for doctrinal description of the core components of IO.

references to its capability to plan operations for their psychological effect. This capability is not completely ignored – FM 3-05-30 states "PSYOP Soldiers also advise the commander on the psychological effects and consequences of other planned military actions and operations."[62] However, references to this role are limited. Doctrine must place greater emphasis upon this capability if Psyops is to be used to its full potential.

Vignettes in doctrinal handbooks provide further example of the institutional bias against Psyops' planning role. These vignettes, intended to illustrate the roles and capabilities of Psyops, focus entirely on communication and the Psyops 'product' (leaflets and other form of information transfer). Of the eight operational vignettes in JP 3-53, all describe methods of influencing an adversary through Psyops 'products' (leaflets, radio broadcasts, loudspeaker and television). No vignette provides an example of planning an operation for its psychological impact, and only one vignette deals with the psychological impact of a combat operation – *as a surprising side effect.*[63] This doctrinal emphasis on the communication role of Psyops indicates that its capability to plan military operations for their psychological impact is being overlooked. Admiral Eric T. Olson, US Navy, Commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), supports this assessment, stating that in recent years, US Army PSYOP has focused on its communication role to the detriment of its ability to plan and execute operations for their psychological impact.[64] ADM Olson's position is echoed by COL (Retd) Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., who argues that Psyops is increasingly defined through association with "the product."[65] Institutionally, the US Army is

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[62] FM 3-05-30 (2005) p 1-3.

[63] JP 3-53 (2003) p IV-1 "The detonation of several 15,000-pound bombs… also seemed to have a psychological effect on Iraqi troops." The wording of this vignette, taken from a Final Report to Congress on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf War implies that the psychological effect of combat actions on Iraqi troops may have been a surprise to the US – another indication that the psychological impact of combat actions is misunderstood at best, ignored at worst.

[64] Admiral Eric T. Olson, US Navy, (presentation to United States Command and General Staff College [US CGSC] Special Operations Forces element, October 22, 2008).

[65] Paddock (1982).

becoming accustomed to Psyops as a communication element in the execution of a plan, not as an advisory and directing element in the planning phase of a campaign. If this role is to be taken seriously, doctrine must be re-written to demonstrate a balance of the two capabilities.

Staff Organisation

The placement of Psyops on the planning staff is equally culpable for inhibiting its potential. Doctrine currently places Psyops within IO, alongside 4 other elements, an organisational failure which COL Stagner describes as presenting Psyops with its "greatest challenge."[66] This organisational challenge presents three problems: firstly, the misunderstanding of Psyops by military personnel, caused in part by the confusion described above. This is most serious in the case of commanders and senior planners, whose understanding of Psyops is crucial if they are to be synergised with other operations. Secondly, this unwieldy staff structure places a staff layer (the IO coordinator) between the J3 and the Psyops planners, a layer which itself may have little understanding of Psyops.[67] The misunderstanding of Psyops combines with the unwieldy staff structure to create the third problem – limiting Psyops' access to the commander: an issue with both immediate and long term consequences. Each of these three issues is now examined in depth.

This monograph has already highlighted the confusion between Psyops and IO. IO itself is not fully understood, further complicating the employment of influence in US Army operations.[68] Consequently IO is not considered a core element of military planning, but a sub-

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[66] Stagner (2007) p 45

[67] Boyd describes this layer as "an intermediate staff element ... with minimal practical experience, specialized training education and understanding of the influence mission – that degrades the speed and accuracy required to deliver a timely and relevant message to a foreign audience." Boyd (2007) p 70.

[68] "The doctrinal concept of information operations (IO) as a combat multiplier seems to be universally misunderstood at nearly every level of the army." Centre for Army Lessons Learned. CALL Newsletter 04-13 Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) CAAT II Initial Impressions Report (IIR)." *Global*

element. Psyops, falling under IO, therefore becomes a sub-element of a sub-element – hardly a position from which it will gain widespread understanding and respect. This problem is compounded when IO staff officers have little or no experience in Psyops.[69] By organising Psyops as a sub-element of IO, further confusion arises as the influence elements of IO (Psyops and MILDEC) are confused with its technical elements (CNO, OPSEC and EW).[70] COL Stagner illustrates this confusion with the Operational Order for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in which all IO paragraphs refer to the influence elements of IO to the exclusion of the remaining elements.[71] Both COL Stagner and COL Boyd argue that Psyops' association with the non-influence parts of IO dilutes its effectiveness.[72] In this organisational structure, it is no surprise that Psyops is misunderstood.

The second problem posed by the organisational challenge facing Psyops is that the coordinating function of IO places an additional staff layer between Psyops and the commander. While this has implications for Psyops' access to the commander, it can also hinder the use of Psyops. The IO cell may or may not be led by an officer with Psyops experience and understanding, as described above.[73] Ideally this officer will have experience in one of the core

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Security.org. http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/call/call_04-13_chap01-e.htm (accessed November 08, 2008). p 1.

[69] "FA30s [IO officers] lack adequate training in several areas [including] PSYOP." and "[Div IO officers] have only limited knowledge about the core, supporting, and related IO activities." CALL Newsletter 04-13.

[70] The reader's attention is drawn again to COL Stagner's remark: "when a military commander calls for "IO," he almost always means the influence part of IO (PSYOP and MILDEC) and not the remaining bits, bytes, and wires portion." Stagner (2007) p 34.

[71] Ibid p 34.

[72] "This mixed-bag approach to information has diluted the organizational effectiveness of both PSYOP and MILDEC." Stagner (2007) p 34. IO is an "additional staff coordinator [which] adds little value to PSYOP." Boyd (2007) p 70.

[73] See footnote 69.

competencies of IO, but even this is not guaranteed.[74] In accordance with the doctrine and structures mentioned above, the IO officer integrates IO into the commander's plan through the J3, placing a coordination layer between IO and the commander.[75] The IO coordinating function itself acts as a second coordination layer between the Psyops element and the commander. If the IO officer has experience and understanding of Psyops, this layer may be no hindrance in integrating Psyops into combat operations. However, without this experience and understanding, the coordinating function of IO becomes a barrier that must be overcome before Psyops are synergised with other combat operations.

The third and most serious effect of Psyops' position within the US Army staff structure is that Psyops is denied direct access to the commander (and to a lesser degree, his planning team). As we have already seen, the current staff structure places Psyops at the mercy of the characters and experience of the IO and J3 officers, in addition to those of the commander. In order to ensure that Psyops is considered early in the plan (as demanded by doctrine) the Psyops officer must have the trust of the commander and his planning team, and direct access to both.[76] In the current staff structure, with Psyops a sub-element of IO, it is denied this critical access. Like many organisational failures, this problem is not insurmountable; if key individuals on the planning staff understand the potential of Psyops this problem can be overcome. Stagner provides an example from OIF in which the USCENTCOM J-5 placed Psyops personnel directly

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[74] Lamb states that lack of knowledge of Psyops in IO officers was a cause of tension in OIF and OEF "In recent military operations… [PSYOP personnel were assigned to] IO staff officers who had little background in or knowledge of PSYOP." Lamb (2005) p 64.

[75] "The director of the J3 has primary staff responsibility for planning, coordination, integrating and assessing joint force IO." JP 3-13 (2003) p IV-3. At the joint level Psyops are integrated with other operations by an officer with no experience in PSYOP. Psyops contribution to plans are represented to this officer through the IO officer, who himself may have no experience in Psyops. This organisational weakness is mirrored in the US Army staff structure.

[76] "It is important that PSYOP planning is aggressively integrated early into commanders' plans." JP 3-53 (2003) p IV-9 and " Experience has repeatedly demonstrated that PSYOP planners must be involved throughout the planning process and bringing PSYOP in early to the process can significantly improve the PSYOP contribution to the overall operation." JP 3-53 (2003) p xii.

behind him at meetings in order to provide Psyops-focused input direct to the plan.[77] Such understanding is not present in all headquarters, with the result that Psyops is relegated to a position of sub-element of that staff and remains misunderstood.

The structural issues described above have both immediate and long term implications for Psyops. The immediate implications concern the application of Psyops in operations. In spite of the improvement in staff structure at Divisional level, the above mentioned barriers remain at Brigade level, where change in the staff structure has not been effected. Brigade remains the level at which the US army has the greatest degree of interaction with the population, and consequently psychological impact must be a guiding element in planning operations. Psyops is unlikely to be properly synergised with other combat operations in planning or execution until this, or similar, structural change is effected at Brigade level. The barriers described above greatly reduce the prospect of the commander and planning staff accepting that actions must be planned for their psychological effect.

The long term implication of failure to adapt the staff structure is that Psyops will fail to gain exposure (and critically, respect) among the key planning and command elements of the US Army, and institutional lack of understanding of this valuable capability will persist. The US Army currently has a depth of operational experience not seen in the last quarter of the 20th Century. This experience includes increasingly complex operations in which the support of the local populace is critical to mission success, and in which Psyops have been used with increasing effectiveness. It is imperative that the US Army exploits this experience to ensure that psychological considerations are given the position they deserve in US Army operational planning.

However, more recent developments in US Army structure, notably the change to modular divisions, resulted in an increase in the size of IO staff at Division level and the creation

[77] Stagner (2007) p 40.

of the G7 (IO) cell at Divisional Headquarters. This change made significant improvements to the integration of IO into combat operations, and enables the IO officer to have direct access to the Chief of Staff, through placing the IO officer on an equal level with, and not subordinate to, the Divisional G3. Psyops remains a sub-element of IO, but a change in the seniority of the PSYOP Staff Officer at Division to O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel) creates parity between the IO and Psyops officers at Division level.[78] This change has only taken place at the Divisional and not at the Brigade level, in spite of the diverse natures of Brigade Areas of Responsibility (AOR) in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the need to treat each area separately.[79] In order to reflect the environments in which each Brigade operates, and the importance of integrating Psyops with other combat operations, the above change in staff structure at Divisional level must be reflected at Brigade level.

PSYOP Force Organisation

The organisation of Psyops forces at the operational and tactical levels present no problems to Psyops' synergy with other combat operations. Psyops teams are sufficiently flexible to be deployed in different configurations and to different units, although each team is very small, and their ability to cover ground is limited.[80] In OIF, Tactical PSYOP Teams (TPTs) were "too few in number and capability for the immensity of the task in a nation of 26 million people."[81] In addition to these limited numbers, the proportion of the US Army PSYOP force which falls under

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[78] This change brought considerable improvement in the integration of Psyops and combat operations. LTC Mark Schmidt, interview by author, Fort Leavenworth, KS, February 10, 2009.

[79] "Centralized control of IO was impractical, as each Brigade had a different problem environment." CALL Interview with LTC Riggs, G7 officer, 4th Infantry Division 2005-6, conducted Feb 2007.

[80] "A Tactical PSYOP Team (TPT) [is] only a three-man team with a loudspeaker. What does that really give you, when you look at the overall size of the battlefield?" Schmidt, interview. According to US Army doctrine, a TPT is attached to a Battalion, while a Tactical PSYOP detachment is attached to a Brigade – only four TPTs. *FM-3-05.30.* (April 2005) p 3-9.

[81] Wright (2008) p 284.

the reserve component may contribute to a lack of synergy and to other problems such as the institutional wariness of PSYOP. These other problems will be discussed in the final section, "Other Factors Impeding Psychological Operations."

US Army Psychological Operations forces are currently divided into three PSYOP Groups (POG). Of these only one is active duty (4th POG). 2nd and 7th POG are both part of the Reserve Component. PSYOP personnel in the reserve groups (2nd and 7th) do not receive the same quantity of training as those in the active group, missing the language and regional specialisation so crucial to Psyops[82]. All three groups suffer from under-manning. Under-manning is itself a symptom of institutional lack of priority placed on Psyops. However, in a self-perpetuating cycle, under-manning is a failure that sends a message to the rest of the US Army (and Joint community) that US Army PSYOP is not worthy of investment. The 2003 Roadmap for Information Operations indicates that PSYOP troops are also under-equipped, a further indication that Psyops is considered unworthy of investment.[83] US Army PSYOP operational effectiveness could suffer if its importance in military operations is not acknowledged and investment in the force is made to reflect that acknowledgement.[84]

US Army doctrine allows commanders to relegate Psychological Operations to a planning afterthought, and even to ignore it completely.[85] The current staff structure does not allow this

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[82] Stagner (2007) p 44.

[83] "Over the last decade, numerous studies have documented the deterioration of PSYOP capabilities and have recommended remedial action. Well-documented PSYOP limitations persist. These include: the...insufficient numbers of experienced and well equipped PSYOP personnel." Department of Defense. "Information Operations Roadmap." 2003, p 15. Boyd supports this with his remark "there is an ongoing shortage of company-grade PSYOP officers at the tactical and institutional levels. (The combined active and reserve force fill for captains is less than 30 percent)." Boyd (2007) p 70.

[84] The required structural change at Brigade level, as described in the previous section, will not be possible without an increase in investment in Psyops. "there are not enough IO trained personnel available to cover all operational deployments down to Brigade level." CALL Newsletter 04-13.

[85] Nowhere does doctrine demand that a commander includes Psyops in his plan, resulting in the possibility that a commander could execute a plan without considering the psychological implications or effects of his actions.

failing to be overcome because this staff structure denies Psyops officers direct access to the commander or even to key figures (such as the G3) in the planning staffs. As a result, these key figures may never fully understand the capabilities and significance of Psyops. In addition to this, Psyops is represented to both commander and staff through an intermediary – the IO officer, a structural inhibition that further prevents understanding and respect for Psyops, and hinders its complete integration with other operations. Psyops doctrine also overlooks its role of planning operations for their psychological effect on a target audience. Instead, both Joint and US Army doctrine choose to focus on Psyops' role as a communication function, placing overwhelming emphasis on their ability to create 'products' for dissemination. This denies Psyops the ability to fulfil its potential in military operations by dismissing a significant element of its role - the capability to plan and execute operations for their psychological impact. Stagner proves that individuals who understand Psyops are able to overcome some of these barriers.[86] However, US Army institutional respect for, and understanding of Psyops will never advance if the correct employment of Psyops is dependent upon improvisation by staff planners. Current US Army experience, particularly in Stability Operations, demands that the staff structure and Psyops doctrine be revised in order to ensure that the US Army of the future builds on its operational experience to employ Psyops to its full capability in future operations.

Recent Operational Employment of Psychological Operations

As shown above, US Army and Joint Doctrine do not reflect the full potential of Psyops, hindering the use of psychological considerations as a guide for operational planning. At the same time, an outdated and confusing US Army field staff structure assists in maintaining Psyops as an afterthought in planning. To what extent does this impact operational effectiveness? Recent comments by senior US commanders suggest that the US Army has not yet learned to

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[86] Stagner (2007) p 40. See also p 26 of this monograph.

integrate Information Operations (IO), including its core component, Psyops, with other combat operations.[87] Focusing on Psyops, this section identifies the extent to which this is true. A combination of Post Operational Reports (PORs), interviews and publically available material (all unclassified) was used to assess the integration of Psyops in OIF and OEF. One National Defense University study indicates that while Psyops are a force multiplier in the warfighting phases of a campaign, during Stability Operations they become critical to success.[88] Stability Operations are a major component of both OIF and OEF. If these senior commanders are correct in their assertions, the US Army has failed in both operations to employ correctly a capability vital to success.

Analysis of the above mentioned material indicates that in spite of a steady increase in the understanding and integration of psychological operations with other combat operations, the US Army must make more of this critical capability. However, Psyops, as part of IO remains misunderstood by many in the US Army. Integration of Psyops with other combat operations is impeded by two key factors: firstly, by failure to integrate at the planning stage and secondly by failure to make Psyops the key planning consideration in Stability Operations. This section will examine Psyops at the operational and tactical levels of war, and their integration into other combat operations, in the planning phase, during warfighting, and finally during Stability Operations.

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[87] General Martin E. Dempsey, then Acting Commander, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) stated in a speech to the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) 07 Aug 08 that "we still have not got to grips with IO." Lieutenant General (Retd.) David W. Barno, US Army, Commander of Combined Forces Afghanistan (CFC-A) 2003-05 stated that despite IO underlying all elements of effort in Afghanistan, "a D-minus would be a generous mark of success" in this field (presentation to School of Advanced Military Studies [SAMS] August 20, 2008).

[88] Lamb (2005) "PSYOP is more critical to success in Stability Operations than in Major Combat Operations." And again, "PSYOP is critical to success in Stability Operations." p 139

Psychological Operations and Preparation for Operations

Like other combat operations, Psyops in the warfighting phase of a campaign are necessarily 'enemy-centric'. They aim to reduce the effectiveness of enemy forces by encouraging surrender of enemy troops, disobedience (or non-support) of military and civilian leadership, and by reducing the enemy troops' morale. Psyops achieves this by exploiting the enemy's natural desire for safety and by emphasising the danger or threat he faces. However, more than any other combat operation, Psyops is not exclusively focused on the enemy in warfighting phases. Engagement with the civilian population must take place concurrently if it is to be effective. During Stability Operations, Psyops must appeal to more subtle emotions in the target audience to win their support. This difficult transition can only be made if Psyops are planned from the earliest stages of a campaign, and the perspective of the target audience that will later be influenced by Psyops is considered during combat operations. Psyops cannot therefore remain exclusively enemy centric, even in the warfighting phases of a campaign, but must always consider the subsequent phases of the operation and prepare its various target audiences accordingly. "PSYOP cannot be used reactively.... it has to be planned from the beginning."[89] Psyops therefore provides continuity throughout a campaign – supporting enemy-centric operations while simultaneously projecting into the later phases of a campaign to achieve its objectives.

Both OIF and OEF indicate that Psyops were not integrated in the planning process, contrary to doctrine.[90] At the theatre level, the Joint PSYOP Task Force (JPOTF) failed to integrate their PSYOP campaign plan with the US Central Command (US CENTCOM)

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[89] Major Louis Frias, US Army, interview by author, Fort Leavenworth, KS, February 11, 2009.

[90] "Experience has repeatedly demonstrated that PSYOP planners must be involved throughout the planning process and bringing PSYOP in early to the process can significantly improve the PSYOP contribution to the overall operation." JP 3-53 (2003) p xii.

manouevre plan.[91] At the operational level, V Corps PSYOP planners integrated their plans with the manouevre plans, but were restricted in their planning horizon by V Corps's planning approach. In line with US Central Command (CENTCOM), V Corps planned their operation by phases, instead of working toward a final objective or endstate. This focus restricted V Corps Psyops planners to short term goals, and "did not approach the PSYOP problem as a whole."[92] The "problem as a whole" included the transition to Phase IV operations and the V Corps approach to the campaign during that critical phase.[93] Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) retained authority for defining conditions for transformation to Stability Operations, but did not view setting those conditions as part of their requirement.[94] The reluctance to address this phase is symptomatic of a more serious issue: failure to identify and remain focused on the real purpose of military intervention – setting the conditions for a return to normality. This issue will be addressed in the final section, "Other Factors Impeding Psychological Operations."

Psychological Operations and Culture

Just as preparation for operations requires ground troops to understand the terrain on which the operation will be conducted, Psyops practitioners must understand the terrain in which their operations will be conducted. Psyops conducts its operations to create effects in the human terrain – and Psyops planners must therefore understand the mindsets, cultures and sub-cultures of the region. Without a thorough understanding of the culture of their target audiences, Psyops

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[91] Colonel Charles Eassa, US Army, interview by author December 14, 2008.

[92] Ibid.

[93] This was by no means unique to V Corps. "The lack of preparation for IO in the immediate aftermath of regime change" was a failure across US Army planning. Wright (2008) p 286.

[94] Col C.Eassa. The problem was also shared by 1 Marine Expeditionary Forces (1 MEF). Despite including a PSYOP planning team early in its contingency planning for OIF, 1 MEF planning focused only on Phases I – III and did not address Stability Operations. Frias, interview.

planners and troops cannot expect to plan their actions or communicate their messages in a way that will resonate with those audiences.

Doctrine states that Psyops aim to effect behavioural change in a target audience.[95] Culture is the underpinning factor determining behaviour, and therefore provides Psyops planners with a vital insight into how their target audiences will react to given actions or messages.[96] Understanding of that culture will therefore assist Psyops planners to select the appropriate actions to take or messages to communicate.[97] In his assessment of recent operational employment of Psyops, Lamb states that "to formulate an effective overall campaign PSYOP personnel must have a deep understanding of the target audiences at all levels, including their culture and sub-cultures."[98]

Given the requirement to understand the culture of the target audience, how successfully has the US Army performed in recent operations? Wright argues that the US Army has fared poorly in Iraq, where "IO officers at all levels struggled to understand the basic elements of the culture with which they were trying to communicate."[99] Lamb asserts that Afghanistan is not much better, where, incredibly, only "*some* [PSYOP products] demonstrated sensitivity to Afghan culture" (emphasis added).[100] This failure may not be restricted to recent US Army operations.[101]

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[95] JP 3-53 (2003) p ix.

[96] "The military services must accept culture as the most basic environmental determinant of individual behavior." Findley, Benjamin F. Jr. "Blending Military and Civilian PSYOP Paradigms." In *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, by Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley Jr., 51-65. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1996.

[97] "In order to… persuade [target audiences] to take specific behavioural actions, psywar specialists needed to understand foreign cultures." While this statement is made in relation to the Second World War, it is no less true today. Jacobson, Mark R. 'Minds Then Hearts: "U.S. Political and Psychological Warfare During the Korean War." *Institute of Communications Studies (University of Leeds, UK)*. 2005. http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/2814/send-pdf.pdf

[98] Lamb (2005) p 31. Lamb goes on to state that understanding of culture is more important than understanding the geography of the environment.

[99] Wright (2008) p 288.

[100] Lamb (2005) p 47.

However, the US Army learned quickly from its mistakes in Bosnia, and there are increasing indications that cultural factors are being accepted as important in preparing for, planning and prosecuting operations.[102] In 2005 MG Chiarelli wrote that "understanding the effect of operations as seen through the lens of the Iraqi culture and psyche is a foremost planning consideration for every operation."[103] He continues to provide an example of how 1st Cavalry Division planning staff used their understanding of the Iraqi culture to see the negative effects of their actions on "fence-sitters" (potential, but uncommitted insurgents), and thereby mitigate these negative effects by including additional, non-traditional lines of operation in their plans.[104]

In spite of these apparent improvements, cultural understanding is not well applied across the US Army. This is attributable to failures in doctrine, separation of Psyops personnel from cultural expertise, a lack of concern for cultural issues in the US mentality, and a failure to understand the nuances of communication strategy.

Although Joint doctrine describes the importance of cultural understanding in relation to Psyops, and refers to it as a core part of the Psyops process,[105] US Army doctrine is less committed to cultural factors, paying lip-service to their importance, and including them among

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[101] During the Second World War, US Army PSYOPS "suffered from a lack of linguistic capability and cultural expertise." Jacobson goes on to argue that the same shortfall affected US Army PSYOPS in Korea. Jacobson (2005) p 86.

[102] Wright states that while early IO products were too heavily oriented towards American culture, later products were well aimed at the European audience. "The Army quickly learned the importance of cultural understanding as a critical component of IO." Wright (2008) p 277. "Pre-deployment training in religion, tribal influence, language and other cultural concerns… increased the force's ability to comprehend the human terrain of Afghanistan and address the motivations behind friendly, enemy and non-combatant behaviour." Coss, Colonel Michael A. "Operation Mountain Lion: CJTF-76 in Afghanistan, Spring 2006." *Military Review*. January-February 2008. 22 – 29.

[103] Chiarelli, Major General Peter W., and Major Patrick R. Michaelis. "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full Spectrum Operations." *Military Review*. July-August 2005: 4 – 17.

[104] Ibid.

[105] "tasks include... assessing the culture of potential audiences." JP 3-53 (2003) p IV-7.

many other factors as a planning consideration in checklist-fashion.[106] One area in which cultural understanding is recognised as important is in COIN operations. FM 3-24 states that "staffs should analyze the culture of the society as a whole and each major group within the society."[107] This statement belies the depth and complexity of culture. Hundreds (in some cases thousands) of years of culture cannot be condensed, analysed and properly understood as part of a step-by-step planning process. Analysis of this type will never be completely worthless, offering a planning staff some understanding of a foreign culture, but will not be capable of translating cultural subtleties into actions or messages with operational utility. It is certainly not enough to inform planning for psychological operations. Actions and messages crafted under these conditions are unlikely to resonate with a target audience, particularly if its culture is very different from the US culture.

The second issue contributing to poor acceptance of cultural issues in the US Army is the separation of Psyops personnel from cultural area expertise. In the mid-1980s the US Army removed the officer component of Psyops from the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) speciality, thereby separating Psyops from "the specialty that had provided [PSYOP] its intellectual lifeblood" and dissociated Psyops from "the core of the area expertise (knowledge of foreign cultures) and the analytic capability of psychological operations."[108] This monograph does not advocate a reunion of US Army PSYOP with the FAO area expertise: FAOs are first and foremost intelligence gatherers – a distinct contrast to Psyop-ers, who are combat operators.

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[106] One example (of many) in which doctrine includes culture as a planning consideration *without accounting for the difficulty of truly understanding culture*, occurs in FM 3-13, which states that "PSYOP missions include... Exploiting ethnic, cultural, religious or economic differences." FM 3-13 (2003) p 2-4. The depth of experience and understanding required to exploit cultural differences is not reflected in the position of culture in this checklist, or anywhere else in the Field Manual.

[107] FM 3-24 (2006) p 3-6.

[108] Paddock, Alfred H. Jr., "No More Tactical Information Detachments: US Military Psychological Operations in Transition." In *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, by Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley Jr., 25 - 50. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1996.

However, the separation from the FAO area is indicative of a mental separation of Psyops from cultural understanding. This mental separation impacts the ability of Psyop-ers to truly understand their target audience, and relegates that understanding to the step-by-step planning process mentioned above. But, true cultural understanding, of the type which can inform a psychological operations product, requires direct assimilation of that culture. This can only be gained by living in a region and speaking its language. Ideally this would also be combined with academic study of that culture. The dissociation of Psyops from this critical skill is affecting contemporary operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the culture is so alien from that of the US. These and other very different cultures must be experienced 'first hand' if Psyop-ers hope to be able to truly understand them In his assessment of contemporary operations, Lamb writes that "PSYOP is often handicapped by having only indirect advanced access to a target audience."[109]

The dissociation of Psyops from the FAO speciality is perhaps an effect of the third condition causing poor understanding of Psyops in the US Army: understanding of foreign cultures does not easily fit the American mind, itself a product of its own "minimal-context culture."[110] The tendency of a minimal context culture is to isolate events from their surroundings. This tendency is a serious flaw in understanding foreign cultures and assessing the impact of those cultures on behavioural patterns. This is particularly serious when analyzing high context cultures such as those of the Middle East. The US Army must acknowledge and guard

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[109] Lamb (2005) p 45. Lamb goes on to say that Psyops must be able to "rapidly assess and segment target audiences" – a feat that cannot be achieved with any real depth unless the staff providing the analysis has significant first-hand experience of the region. Joint doctrine states that 4th POG is augmented by area specialists from the Department of the Army, "Virtually [all of whom] have lived in their geographical area of focus, some for many years." JP 3-53 (2003) p A-2. This level of expertise must be spread across the Psyops force and ideally among Psyops personnel in order to ensure that individuals with experience can deploy into operational units or planning staffs.

[110] Bathurst Robert B. "Chapter 8, Military Cultures Compared; Chapter 9, Threats and Enemies." In *Intelligence and the Mirror: On Creating an Enemy* by Robert B. Bathurst. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1993. p115.

against this weakness by reconnecting Psyops with the deep cultural understanding that can only be gained through study and experience.

The final cause of the US Army's poor performance in cultural understanding is a failure to recognise the limitations of communication, and the role culture plays in interpretation of action and messages. A common misperception is that cultural understanding facilitates crafting a message whose meaning will be applicable to a particular target audience given its cultural mores. While cultural understanding will of course increase the validity of a message to a particular target audience, it does not guarantee that the meaning will be interpreted correctly.[111] US doctrine is flawed in its understanding of this concept, assuming that meaning can be transferred with the message: "an important assumption underpinning US doctrine on information operations is that all audiences will essentially draw the desirable conclusion" (the same meaning that the originator ascribes to that message).[112] However, this fails to account for the influence of culture in determining how a target audience interprets a message – the originator is crafting the message from his own perspective.[113] In order to ensure that Psyops craft actions and messages that will resonate with the target audience, they must consider communication from the perspective of the meaning (the message received), and not the message sent. In order to make this assessment, the Psyops practitioner must have a deep understanding of that culture

Psychological Operations at the Operational Level of Warfighting

At the operational level of war in OIF, US Army PSYOP has had some of its most notable successes, particularly in the theatre campaign to bring about surrender of enemy

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[111] Corman, Steven R., Angela Trethaway and Bud Goodall. "A 21st Centruy Model for Communication in the Global War of Ideas: From Simplistic Influence to Pragmatic Complexity." Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University, 2007.

[112] Echvarria, Antulio J. II. *Wars of Ideas and the War of Ideas*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008. p 37.

[113] "This assumption overlooks how various cultures assess information depending on the sources." Ibid, p 38.

troops.[114] Colonel Stagner's description of Iraqi troop surrenders in OIF is an example of quintessential operational Psyops.[115] Leaflets instructing Iraqi soldiers how to indicate surrender (by creating a square formation with the unit's vehicles) were disseminated and resulted in several units surrendering to the coalition. In Colonel Stagner's example aerial photography reveals a formation, and is quickly and correctly identified by a US Air Force (USAF) Imagery Analyst as complying with coalition leaflets, and briefed up the chain of command. This example indicates integration of Psyops across services (USAF and US Army), regions (the USAF analyst was based in the United States) and combat operations (PSYOP, Air Operations, Reconnaissance and Intelligence).

Colonel Stagner observes that OIF was "the best ever integration of influence operations into a US theater of combat operations."[116] Even so, failures in integration at this level of war exist in both theatres. No examples exist of warfighting operations being planned and executed specifically for their psychological impact. Misunderstanding of Psyops persists throughout the US Army.[117] A former Division G7 (IO) officer in OIF describes the problem as "a general lack of understanding and appreciation for the potential effects of IO by commanders and staffs at all echelons."[118] In some cases commanders were not even sure how to employ the Psyops soldiers under their command, treating them as regular infantrymen and including them in raids and other duties.[119] Misunderstanding of the capabilities of Psyops was compounded by lack of

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[114] It should be noted that criticism of the effectiveness of the OIF IO campaign is usually a result of confusion between "the failure of [US Government Strategic Communication] at the national level with the actions of theatre PSYOP in OIF." Stagner (2007) p 40.

[115] Ibid p 41.

[116] Ibid p 39.

[117] "Many leaders do not understand how IO can be exploited in support of their operations". Appendix A to *4ID Initial Impressions Report from a Modular Division in OIF*, posted on CALL 07 May 2007.

[118] CALL interview with LTC Riggs.

[119] Colonel (Retd) Bryan N. Karabaich, interview by author, February 17 2009.

understanding of the target audience and a failure in operational level headquarters to recognise the diversity of their subordinate units' Areas of Operation (AORs).[120] The very different characteristics and natures of the population in each AOR rendered centrally produced messages inappropriate to outlying regions.[121] In the US Army, Psyops remains a poorly understood capability – a factor guaranteed to impede its integration with other combat operations.

The tendency to retain equipment for production of Psyops material at the highest levels also affected operational integration, reducing the tactical units' ability to produce their own material more relevant to their AOR, and slowing the production process. This was particularly noticeable after the JPOTF left theatre in November 2003, leaving Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) with no technical PSYOP support.[122] The resulting slow response to enemy propaganda, (which itself could be produced within 24 hours of an event) [123] made it "almost impossible to quickly or effectively react to enemy IO" at a critical period in the conflict – during the attempt to establish credibility in Iraq for the interim administration.[124]

Psychological Operations at the Tactical Level of Warfighting

At the tactical level of war, evidence suggests that Psyops are well integrated with combat operations through close coordination with other combat elements. An excellent example

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[120] "IO planners at commands above division level appeared to look at the Iraqis as a single, homogenous population." Baker, Ralph O. "The Decisive Weapon: A Brigade Combat Team commander's perspective on Information Operations". *Military Review*, October 2006. 114 – 133.

[121] "Tactical units received IO products from higher headquarters containing messages that were often too broad to resonate with the diverse population in Iraq." Wright (2008) p 281. As the campaign progressed, this failure begins to be rectified. One IO officer recognised that: "Centralized control of IO was impractical, as each Brigade had a different problem environment." CALL Interview with LTC Riggs

[122] Col Stagner points out that the decision to remove the JPOTF from theatre with the majority of USCENTCOM combat forces was a national strategic level decision, complementing the announcement that combat operations in Iraq were complete. COL (Retd) Randall K. Stagner, interview by author, March 07, 2009.

[123] Wright (2008) p 287

[124] Ibid p 280.

of this integration concerns a Tactical PSYOP Team (TPT) supporting Task Force Tarawa of 1 Marine Expeditionary Force (1 MEF) in a combat bridge crossing in OIF. The TPT used a loudspeaker team to persuade the enemy to surrender, resulting in the cessation of enemy fire, subsequent surrender of enemy troops, and facilitating the advance of the Marine unit.[125] Other examples such as Operations AL FAJR and BATON ROUGE in OIF demonstrate that Psyops were well integrated with combat operations at 'the coal-face' – the point of fighting.[126]

Psychological Operations and Stability Operations

If Phase III operations are 'enemy-centric', Phase IV operations must be considered 'population-centric'.[127] This monograph has already demonstrated that Psyops must target the population even during the warfighting phases of a campaign. The importance of the population in the success of Stability operations demands that commanders place greater emphasis on communication during this phase of a campaign. Commanders must win the support of the population for the Coalition mission, and separate the population from the enemy (this can be a cognitive or physical separation or both). In order to achieve this, the commander must succeed in two areas. Firstly, he must provide security - he must protect the population. Secondly, he must provide for the needs of the population. The commander must not only succeed in these two areas, he must accentuate his impact by broadcasting his success. Psyops, with its combined roles of action and message is uniquely equipped to facilitate success in both areas.

Security is important to the overall mission – without it the objective will be hard to achieve: "The people are important – they are vital – but you cannot expect support from people

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[125] Lamb (2005) p 50.

[126] Wright (2008) p 284-6.

[127] Pietrucha, Michael. *Here Be Dragons: Off the Edge of the Chart in Afghanistan.* 24 November 2008.

you cannot protect."[128] However, security is only a pre-requisite to achieving the mission. The mission itself is the preparation of that region or population for a return to normality. The failure to integrate Psyops in Stability Operations again points to the more serious failing to focus on the long term objective – the reasons for military intervention - and will be addressed in the final section.

Stability Operations in OIF and OEF provide the first indication of operations planned for their psychological impact. Civil Military Operations (CMO), such as reconstruction operations, demonstrate the ability of US Forces to address the needs of the population, and as such, in partnership with Psyops, present the ideal vehicle for persuading the population of US intent to develop a region. Psyops is capable of identifying areas in which CMO will have the greatest impact on the local population.[129] Following the CMO operation, Psyops is capable of amplifying the effect of those operations by broadcasting messages that highlight their success in order to win support from the local population. LTC Schmidt, PSYOP Officer for 101st Mountain Division states that Psyops-directed operations are increasing in frequency in Afghanistan. "There was a marked change between OEF IV and OEF VII", states Schmidt, suggesting an increased awareness of the importance of psychological considerations in operations.[130] This change may have been a result of the establishment, between these operational tours, of the G7 Cell at Division level, and the resulting increase in profile of IO and Psyops on the planning staff.[131] At the same time, commanders are demonstrating greater awareness of winning the

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[128] Lt Gen Sir Harold Briggs, Commander in British Counterinsurgency Operation in Malaya, 1950. In recent stability operations in Afghanistan, Brigadier Andrew Mackay, Commander, 52 (UK) Infantry Brigade became well known for his mantra "The people are the prize."

[129] LTC Schmidt describes reconstruction operations, medical patrols and even veterinary patrols that were planned for their psychological impact in OEF VII. Schmidt, interview.

[130] Ibid.

[131] "Between my experience in OEF IV and OEF VII.... there was an improvement [in the understanding of PSYOP employment], no question about it, from the commanding general on down." Ibid.

support of the population, through quick response to mistakes, through ground commanders personally leading the reparation process with local leaders immediately after a damaging incident, and in some cases, through restraint in the use of air delivered fires.[132]

However, Stability Operations in OEF also demonstrate failures in integration of Psyops which undermine these advances. These failures occur at both the individual and institutional levels. At the lowest level, the posture of the force is reflected by the individual soldier, to whom the local population has the greatest exposure: "the soldier at the checkpoint is your interface with the local population."[133] LTC Pietrucha, USAF Reserve states in a presentation of his observations from a trip to Afghanistan: "We have got to stop driving like Blackwater[134] guys – we are guests [in Afghanistan] not occupiers."[135] Although standards vary from unit to unit, Pietrucha states that psychological considerations are often overlooked by individuals and small units. The battle to win the support of the population is being undermined by units and individuals who are not considering the psychological impacts of their actions. In stability operations, Psyops must be integrated not just with operational manoeuvre, but with individual actions.

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[132] LTC Pietrucha describes how one US Army commander in Afghanistan restrained the use of air delivered fires in his AO, even in one case of positive identification of an insurgent. This restraint enabled that commander to leverage local Afghans. Lieutenant Colonel Michael Pietrucha, US Air Force Reserve, interview by author, February 13, 2009.

[133] Karabaich, interview.

[134] Blackwater USA was a Private Military Company (PMC) contracted to provide security for L. Paul Bremer, Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq in 2003. Blackwater USA was described by one US Marine Colonel as having "made enemies everywhere" and may even have contributed to the rebellion of 2004/5. For more detail of Blackwater USA actions in Iraq see: http://timshorrock.blogspot.com/2005/01/contractors-arrogance-contributed-to.html. LTC Pietrucha's observation highlights the dangers for US forces of PMCs operating in theatres such as Iraq or Afghanistan. PMCs, such as Blackwater USA, to a local population, may be indistinguishable from US military forces. The actions of those PMCs may undermine the US military in its efforts to win the support of the population.

[135] Pietrucha, Michael (2008).

At the institutional level failure to integrate Psyops is manifested in the US Army's 'enemy-centric' mentality, and the resultant posture of the ground force. While this enemy-centric approach is entirely appropriate for the warfighting phases of a campaign, it is entirely inappropriate for stability operations, which must necessarily be focused on the population: 'population-centric'. The tendency of the US ground forces to treat everything as a threat, and respond with artillery or air-delivered munitions, undermines the wider purpose of the stability operation. The local population do not see the US forces as providing security, but begin to see them as a threat.[136] The US therefore fails in its first requirement in the battle to win the support of the population: demonstration of the ability to protect that population. Until the US Army changes from an enemy-centric to a population-centric approach, it will continue to be considered a threat to the population, not a protector, and advances in stability operations will be limited. Considering all operations from the perspective of their psychological impact will assist in making this transformation.

The requirement to persuade the population to support the US / Coalition cause demands that Psyops be made the primary consideration in Stability Operations, because the posture of the force sends a message to that population of its intentions and motivations. The actions of a single tactical unit or even individual can undermine the wider objective of winning the support of the population. Because all actions have a psychological impact, Psyops must be the directing consideration behind these actions, at individual, unit and even theatre level. Units must react swiftly to the inevitable mistakes that jeopardise the broader psychological message.[137] Experiences in OIF and OEF suggest that while the US Army is slowly increasing its understanding and integration of Psyops, failure to make psychological impact the foremost

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[136] "The solution to everything [in Afghanistan] is to hammer it flat." Pietrucha, interview.

[137] LTC Pietrucha observed in Afghanistan that units appear to be very good at this 'damage limitation'. Ibid.

consideration in the minds of soldiers and planning staff suggests that it continues to ignore the importance and relevance of Psyops. All actions in Stability Operations have a psychological impact. Psyops must therefore be the primary consideration when planning Stability Operations.

Experience from both OIF and OEF shows that while Psyops are useful in the warfighting phases of a campaign, they become critical in Stability Operations. At the operational and tactical levels of war, both OIF and OEF provide examples of increasing integration of Psyops with other combat operations. However, Psyops remains misunderstood by large sections of the US Army, and operations are rarely planned for the psychological impact, even in Stability Operations where Psyops are "critical to success".[138] Even in stability operations, where the greatest progress is being made towards the integration of Psyops, this progress is undermined by sub-units and individuals who maintain an enemy-centric approach and which fail to consider the psychological impact of their actions. This is symptomatic of the failure to make psychological factors a primary planning consideration of US Army operations.

In order to overcome this institutional problem an institutional solution is necessary. Psyops must be raised in profile through structural and doctrinal changes. Institutionally, mental approaches must be balanced so that enemy-centric and population centric approaches are appropriate to their environments. However, these are not the only issues that must be addressed in order to integrate Psyops completely with other combat operations. In the final section this monograph examines other factors that must be addressed in order to raise the profile of Psyops to be fully integrated with other combat operations.

Other Factors Impeding Psychological Operations

In the preceding sections this monograph has shown that military operations are inherently psychological in nature. It has also revealed that despite significant improvements in

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[138] Lamb (2005) p 139.

the last five years (largely due to the US Army's experience of Stability Operations in OIF and OEF), US Army Psyops are still not employed to their full potential, particularly as a planning function. Organisational, structural and doctrinal failures are identified in the first parts of this monograph as responsible for this failure. In this final section the monograph examines other causes of the failure to integrate Psyops completely into contemporary operations. Three factors contribute to this failure. The first factor is the perception of Psyops as a "black art", brought about by association with their use by "evil" foreign regimes, by problems measuring their effects in a scientific manner and by their long term connection to Special Forces. Secondly, a mental stigma is attached to Psyops: it is considered a 'weapon of the weak', employed by weak foreign powers and in a domestic army, recruiting a lesser (or perhaps more academic) soldier. Closely connected to this bias, the final factor is the US Army's short-term operational focus.

Psychological Operations: The Black Art

Psyops has long been associated with deceit, on account of its unscrupulous use by "evil" regimes in the form of propaganda, both against foreign and internal audiences. Psychological operations practiced by the US Army have always depended upon the credibility that they establish with their target audience. In the information age, this is truer than ever before as technology and information availability provide target audiences with myriad methods of checking the veracity of information. Adherence to the truth is more important than ever.[139] Despite the Psyops' community's insistence on this fact, Psyops are considered inherently deceitful by some members of the US Army, and by other US government agencies and civilians. These individuals fear that the employment of Psyops will undermine core American values of

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[139] PSYOP "messages must be consistently truthful. If you fail to maintain the credibility of a PSYOP campaign, it will cease to be effective." Stagner (2007) p 35. That is not to say that PSYOP is restricted to the absolute, inviolable truth. Stagner goes on to state "the basic information contained in a PSYOP message must be the truth", but "there is nothing in PSYOP doctrine that requires only the truth in its operations." Lamb asserts that PSYOP must use "not only the simple truth....it must use the full range of persuasive communication techniques available." Lamb (2005) p 40.

honesty and openness, and therefore that psychological operations should be avoided at all costs. The debate over changing the name of US Army PSYOP and the suspicion this has prompted has already been discussed in detail.[140] This bias will only be overcome by raising awareness of psychological operations, first and foremost, in the US Army itself. Increasing their integration with other combat operations will achieve this.

Measurement of the effectiveness of psychological operations is a second contributor to Psyops' reputation as a black art. While US Army commanders can observe (and perhaps more importantly) report the effects of their kinetic operations in seconds, the effect of psychological operations must be measured in days, and in some cases even years. Kinetic operations are measured by observation. Psychological operations are measured by judgment and reasoning against knowledge of the target audience. The former lie in the simple, even mechanical (kinetic damage can now be measured remotely with airborne cameras) realm of science. The latter lie in the less clear realm of art. While it is clear whether or not a particular munition has caused certain damage on the battlefield, many elements contribute to changes in a target audience's behaviour. Proving that a psychological operation *definitively* resulted in a behavioural change is rarely possible.[141] Art or science, the effect of psychological operations can and must be measured in order to ensure that they support wider operational and campaign objectives. Military minds must adapt accordingly.[142]

Since their earliest inception, Psyops have been associated with Special Forces. Together with their place as an addition (not a permanent position) to a planning staff, this has contributed

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[140] See Background, particularly footnote 14.

[141] According to LTC Henderson, PSYOP-ers may exaggerate their ability to measure the effectiveness of their operations. Lieutenant Colonel Eric D. Henderson, US Army, interview by author, Fort Leavenworth, KS. February 18, 2008. This tarnishes the professional reputation of PSYOP and contributes to the image of Psyops as a 'black art'.

[142] "Military personnel automatically assume that non-kinetic effects cannot be measured – it is not impossible, they just have to think about it." LTG David P. Fridovich, Director, Center for Special Operations, USSOCOM, presentation to School of Advanced Military Studies, 14 Jan 2009

to Psyops' reputation as a specialist skill, inaccessible to most. Psyops' association with Special Forces has created an institutional mindset that Psyops cannot be employed except by Psyops soldiers. Psyops soldiers themselves may contribute to this image, by giving the impression that only they truly understand the subtleties, methods and employment of Psyops.[143] However, this monograph has demonstrated that all operations are inherently psychological. Nowhere is this more true than in stability operations, where "the soldier at the checkpoint" communicates a message to the target audience. In the information age, psychological operations are not discrete operations - they are the entire operation. They are not only conducted by Psyops-trained troops, but by the entire force.

The US Army must recognise that operations are inherently psychological and must plan and execute them in a way that reflects this fact. The need to gain language training, and cultural awareness, core disciplines supporting the practice of Psyops, and the time that this takes a Psyops practitioner, points to Psyops as a specialised skill. As such, it is likely to remain in the Special Forces field. In order to overcome perceptions that Psyops is an unattainable skill (a stigma associated with many special skills), Psyops must simply be more closely integrated with other combat operations. Increasing Psyops' profile in the field staff structure will increase exposure to and comfort with their operational employment, and the skill and practice in their use will no longer appear attainable.

Psychological Operations: "The un-American Weapon"[144]

Psychological operations are seen by some as a 'weapon of the weak' – a method employed by a small, weak force, unable to tackle a larger and more powerful enemy any other

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[143] LTC Schmidt remarks that "Personalities can sometimes get rubbed the wrong way particularly.... if [the PSYOP officer claims to] know everything there is to know about PSYOP." Schmidt, interview.

[144] Harris, Eliot. *The un-American weapon: Psychological Warfare*. New York: M.W. Lads Publishing Co, 1967.

way.[145] This undermines the US Army identity, and even that of the American nation, based on its perception of itself as the most powerful Army in the world. If, as many erroneously think, Psyops threaten the core American values of honesty and openness, and if use of Psyops is a sign of national or military weakness, Psyops must therefore be an "un-American weapon."[146] Against this cognitive background the US Army's post-World War II operational experience also contributes to create a bias against Psyops. During the Cold War, the US Army was poised to fight another preeminent land power, the Soviet Union, in a predominantly kinetic, conventional fight. Emphasis lay on the ability to react to enemy attacks and the subsequent destruction of his combat power. The immediacy and severity of potential combat operations in this context discouraged the employment of a capability with little or no reactive ability, the measurement of which took place over days and months - Psyops. Thus, the US identity colludes with the US Army's recent operational history to create a "firepower-centric" approach to operations.[147] At best, this approach relegates psychological operations to an afterthought behind planning other combat operations, indicating that the concerns of Gen Wedemeyer in 1948 have still not been adequately addressed.[148] At worst this approach takes the form of bias against anything that does not destroy the enemy.[149] Such deeply ingrained mindsets as these can only be changed with concerted effort.

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[145] "Psychological strategies have often proved attractive to weak states forced to rely for their survival on diplomatic manoeuvre and deception." Barnett (1989) p xii.

[146] Harris (1967).

[147] Pietrucha, Michael, LTC USAF Reserve, *Here be Dragons: All over the chart in Afghanistan.*" November 2008.

[148] In pre-deployment planning for OIF, one lead planner for V Corps only considered IO after establishing the V Corps manoeuvre plan, looking for ways in which IO supported his scheme of manoeuvre, not as part of a condition-setting process to the entire operation. Eassa, interview. See footnote 10 for details of Wedemeyer's letter.

[149] On the 3rd Army planning staff for OIF 1 the commander of the targeting board (An O7 grade officer) refused to consider anything that did not kill or destroy things. In so doing he ruled out Information Operations (including Psyops) targets from the targeting board. Benson, K. COL (Retd), interview with the author. Maj L. Frias believes that bias against Psyop occurs because "we do not kill

Psychological Operations: Providing focus on the ultimate objective

This monograph has identified the US Army tendency to focus on the enemy (the "enemy-centric" approach) in its campaign planning. As a result of this, the US Army focuses on the warfighting phases of a campaign at the expense of the subsequent stability operations. In doing so the US Army is in danger of losing focus on the ultimate objective of military operations: to restore a country to normality. A military operation is not an endstate in itself. By focusing on (destruction of) the enemy and not on the subsequent stability operations, the US Army is drawn to the immediate problem and fails to focus on the ultimate objective of military intervention. The enemy must be dealt with, but the enemy is a short term objective. The Stability Operations which follow are the means to achieve the ultimate objective, and psychological operations are critical to their success.[150] The US Army must engage in population-centric operations *from the start of a campaign* in order to achieve this objective. Planning operations for their psychological effect helps maintain focus on the ultimate objective – setting the conditions for a return to normality.

Psychological operations are hindered from complete integration with other combat operations on account of an inherent suspicion of their intentions, effectiveness and worth. Not only are Psyops seen as a black art, available only through specialists, they are also associated with practices incompatible with American and US Army values. Psyops are perceived as having uncertain or even un-measurable effects. Even the uncertain effects are measured in a time seemingly incompatible with the pace of modern operations span (days, weeks or even years). Recent US Army history conspires with the US Army's firepower-centric and enemy-focused approach to render Psyops a second-tier capability employed as an afterthought to combat

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stuff." Frias, interview. During pre-deployment planning for OIF, one V Corps planner referred to Information Operations as "a bunch of misfit toys". Eassa, interview.

[150] Lamb (2005) p 139.

operations. This approach, while appropriate to the US Army of the Cold War, is incompatible with modern operations.

Modern operations require a population-centric approach. Operational theatres must be understood in terms of target audiences, and these must be engaged from the earliest moment of a campaign. By considering and engaging target audiences early the US Army establishes an approach to operations that will facilitate the transition from warfighting to Stability Operations – the population-centric approach. By utilising psychological operations to their full potential, and integrating them into operations from the earliest phases the US Army will counter its enemy-centric approach, and create the conditions for a successful transition into Stability Operations, thereby providing focus on the ultimate objective: creating the conditions for a return to normality. The factors preventing operational integration of Psyops are serious, and in some cases deeply engrained into the US Army mentality, but they are not insurmountable. By changing the staff structure *now* to reflect the value of Psyops in military campaigns, the US Army will take advantage of its current depth of operational experience, and the of the early signs of increased understanding and integration of Psyops.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Information Age has transformed modern life, and with it, the environment in which modern operations are conducted. The prevalence of Information Technology throughout the globe reduces actions, facts and messages to information. Information prevalence enfranchises populations in their environment. Operations in this environment respond to that enfranchisement by including greater levels of stability and reconstruction than ever before, further enfranchising the population in changes that directly impact their lives. In the case of the most recent US operations, populations are being persuaded to accept fundamental changes to their society and way of life in order to effect long-lasting transformation. Operations conducted within the modern environment must therefore address the local population as a key audience.

Psychological Operations are the tool for the US Army to persuade audiences to accept change. Accepting the increasing importance of persuading audiences in modern operations, the position of the Psyops planner in the US Army field staff must be raised in profile to reflect this importance.

While the Information Age has transformed modern life, and demands a transformation in the US Army, the research for this monograph has demonstrated that the Information Age is not the only factor that demands change of the US Army. Also demanding change is the understanding that military operations are inherently psychological, and must be executed in a manner that reflects this fact. This fact is not new – operations have always been inherently psychological. However, in the context of the contemporary environment, the requirement to influence and persuade is more relevant than ever, and it is therefore this acknowledgement that is the greater force for structural change in the US Army. A critical difference between the Information Age and the Pre-Wireless Age (the context in which the staff structure was created) lies in the enfranchisement of modern populations in the actions of their governments, including their military operations. While the target for psychological impact in the Pre-Wireless Age was limited to the opposing army and public officials, in the Information Age that audience is dramatically expanded to include civilian populations. Influencing this larger audience is critical to achieving military success in the contemporary operating environment. As a result, psychological considerations must guide US Army planning, creating actions with combat troops and amplifying the effects of those actions throughout a target audience.

The author of this monograph has identified inhibitors to the correct employment of Psychological Operations with other combat operations. Some of these inhibitors cannot be countered in the short term. The mistrust of Psyops in the American mind has been brought about by its association with 'evil' regimes and will only be overcome through greater understanding of its honest and regular employment in military operations. Similarly, the apparent difficulty in measuring the results of Psyops will be easier with increased integration of Psyops and combat

operations, and the accompanying exposure of planning staffs to Psyops. However, other inhibitors can be overcome quickly. US Joint and Army doctrine does not encourage the use of Psyops as a guide to planning other combat operations, despite evidence of its increasing use in that role in contemporary operations. Doctrine must be re-written to reflect the fact that all operations are inherently psychological and should consequently be planned for their psychological impact. Vignettes in doctrine must dissociate Psyops from the "product" and associate it with cognitive planning of action and communication of messages about that action.

Two-thirds of Psyops units are part of the US Army Reserve Component. In spite of this component's significant contribution to operations, Psyops operators are not receiving the same level of training and support throughout the Psyops Groups. All Psyops units suffer from under manning. The US Army must make an uplift in investment in Psyops to reflect Psyops' importance in modern operations. This uplift would ideally redress the imbalance of Active Duty / Reserve Component in the Psyops community, to create two Active Duty POGs and one Reserve Component POG.

Psyops require deep cultural understanding of their target audiences. Cultural understanding is a weakness in the US Army which must be acknowledged and countered. Increasing cultural understanding in the branch responsible for engaging and persuading target audiences will counter that Army-wide weakness and serve to improve the capability of Psyops in each theatre of operations. The US Army must build an institutional depth of cultural awareness in the Psyops branch by creating regional experts in culture, including language training and experience in that region. In addition to greater cultural understanding, the US Army must make greater use of emerging Information Age technology in persuading target audiences. Further research must be conducted into the efficacy of these technologies at different operational levels in the US Army. For example – to what extent can the internet be employed at Brigade level to influence target audiences within the Brigade AO?

In their structure, Information Age organisations must reflect both their environment and their function. The current staff structure originated in the Pre-Wireless Age, when armies were entirely enemy-centric and populations were separated physically and cognitively from the battle. Information Age operations cannot focus on the enemy to the exclusion of the population. Information Age operations must be population-centric – an approach which maintains sight of the overall goal of a campaign (but does not exclude the enemy as a consideration, so closely is it linked with the population and stability). In spite of the dramatic environmental changes that have enfranchised the population in modern conflict and increased the importance of information, the US Army has not dramatically transformed its staff structure. The author of this monograph proposes creating a new position in the staff structure, independent of IO and in direct coordination with the G3 (Operations and Plans) officer. This change must be effected down to Brigade level at a minimum. In doing so, the author of this monograph expects to separate Psyops from the technical aspects of IO, and raise the profile of Psyops in the US Army. The change will build on the current depth of US Army operational experience to institutionalise psychological considerations as the foremost consideration in planning operations.

Recent changes have increased the profile of Psychological Operations in the field staff structure but have not gone far enough, limiting the change to Division Headquarters and retaining the Psyops planning function under IO, where it is confused with technical capabilities. This change has effected great improvement in the Divisional operations, but is not replicated at lower levels, despite the diversity of Brigade AORs and the need to approach each audience with separate psychological operations.

This research shows that a powerful combination of information prevalence and enfranchisement of the population demands increased emphasis on psychological operation in the US Army. Together with the understanding that military operations are inherently psychological, this environment demands transformation of the US Army. The US Army must place greater emphasis on psychological impact at its operational and tactical levels, altering its planning

structure, operational stance and its institutional mindset. Failure to effect this transformation now may result in the US Army's loss of hard-won lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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