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Win the War of Ideas
A National Information Architecture

By

Major Todd C. Kelly

United States Air Force

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

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

Signature: _____

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ABSTRACT

Although the Information aspect of the “DIME” model is often discussed as the most critical instrument of our country’s power in the War on Terror, no agency or entity has a clear lead role in directing or even formulating a national strategy. As such, each agency/entity of the Federal government is left to define what Information is and to determine its own interpretation of when, where, and how Information power can and should be used. Although some agencies (the Office of Global Communications, Strategic Communications & Global Outreach on the National Security Council, the Department of Defense’s many implementations of information operations, Department of State’s Public Diplomacy efforts, etc.) have made varying attempts to wield Informational power, there is lack of common understanding and authority to devise such a strategy. The result is an uncoordinated endeavor, characterized by unclear structures and authorities, thus making inadequate use of Information to further America’s war aims or advance national objectives. The need exists for a unified strategy guiding the Information instrument of national power; therefore, an entity must be created to determine that strategy, direct its implementation for Public Information, and compel coordination for non-public Information activities of all Executive Branch agencies with respect to the national Information strategy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Terms of Reference	3
Chapter 2: Current State of Affairs	14
Chapter 3: Past Efforts	30
Chapter 4: The Public Information Center	57
Bibliography	73
Vita	78

INTRODUCTION

Of all the instruments of national power - namely Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic - Information is arguably the most critical instrument of our country's power in the War on Terror. Yet there is no obvious lead agency/Department/entity of the Federal government with a clear role in spearheading or directing the national Information efforts in this War. Furthermore, there is no clearly identifiable National Information Strategy akin to the published National Strategies for each of the other instruments of the "DIME."¹ Because there is no "Department of Information," each Federal agency is left to interpret the national Information strategy and goals for themselves; also each decides individually how and even whether that department/agency should implement that perceived strategy. As such, each agency/entity of the Federal government is left to define what Information is and determines its own interpretation of when, where, and how Information power can and should be used. Although some agencies such as the Office of Global Communication, Strategic Communications & Global Outreach on the National Security Council, the Department of Defense's many implementations of information operations, and the Department of State's Public Diplomacy Bureau have all made varying attempts to create such a strategy, there is lack of common understanding and authority to devise a unified Information effort. The result is an uncoordinated endeavor, characterized by unclear structures and authorities, thus making inadequate use of Information to further

¹ See the Defense Department's *National Military Strategy* and *National Defense Strategy*, the State Department's *FY 2004 to 2009 Strategic Plan*, the Treasury Department's *Strategic Plan*, and the Commerce Department's *Strategic Plan for FY 2004-2009*. For a presentation of the DIME concept, see Chapter 1.

America's war aims or advance national objectives.

The need exists for a national mechanism guiding the Information instrument of national power; therefore, an entity must be created to determine the National Information strategy, direct its implementation for Public Information, and compel coordination for non-public Information activities of all Executive Branch agencies with respect to the national Information strategy.

To demonstrate this thesis, past and current national Informational initiatives will be examined, followed by a proposed architecture to harness that instrument of national power: the Public Information Center (PIC). Both the pros and cons of the PIC proposal will be presented and analyzed to evaluate the feasibility of such an organization and its functions. The foundation of this entire study is the concept of national Informational power, Public Information, and non-public Information, the definitions of which will be initially laid out as terms of reference.

CHAPTER 1: Terms of Reference

Not until terms and concepts have been defined can one hope to make any progress in examining the question clearly and simply and expect the reader to share one's views.²

The term “information” conjures up many differing definitions for different people. To some, information is data – a mere collection of facts, although those facts may or may not be true. To others, especially to those in the military, information may be considered a weapon – a form of Fourth-generation warfare³ utilizing the cyber-tools at the 21st Century world’s disposal to strike non-kinetic (but not necessarily non-lethal⁴) blows against a similarly-armed opponent, or asymmetrically against a less modern foe, in the technical battlefields of the Globalized⁵ Age. Still others, in particular those concerned with the ideas of the application of geo-strategic power in the political or diplomatic realms, may see information as a force to be harnessed and/or manipulated in order to advance one’s position relative to another’s.

Of course, one’s perspective on “what information is” is both situationally dependent as well as individually dependent. In an educational setting, information may be considered as knowledge; the elements of a topic to be taught. Within political situations, information may be seen as “spin” – i.e., propaganda, essentially, portrayed or

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Knopf, 1993), 152.

³ The concept of 4th Generation Warfare is from Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone* (St. Paul: Zenith, 2004). See p. 2 for a brief explanation of “4GW” and chapter 14 for a more detailed discussion.

⁴ An interesting question is whether information can be lethal - i.e., can non-kinetics kill? Current U.S. military joint doctrine considers “information operations” (IO) to comprise electronic warfare (EW), computer network operations (CNO), psychological operations (PSYOP), military deception (MILDEC), and operations security (OPSEC). Given that range of components of IO, it is certainly conceivable that information can kill. See Daniel M. Vadnais, “Law of Armed Conflict and Information Warfare – How Does the Rule Regarding Reprisals Apply to an Information Warfare Attack?” (Air Command and Staff College paper, Air University, 1997), p. 22 for a discussion on when IO may legally equate to an armed attack.

delivered in a manner to make a partisan point. For professionals within the Intelligence Community, information is unanalyzed “news” or observations; raw facts to be processed into intelligence through analysis or fusion. In the context of computer functions, information is viewed not *as* data, but as “representing” data (such as binary digits in a computer program). In terms of military Information Operations, it is a category of action comprising computer network operations (i.e., attack and defense of computer systems), electronic warfare, and influence operations.

And in all of the above cases, the individual and situational perspectives on the meaning of “information” are each correct. Indeed, Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines ‘information’ as “knowledge,” “the representation of data,” and “a measurement of content,” among other definitions. Further, Webster identifies the words ‘intelligence,’ ‘facts,’ ‘news,’ and ‘data’ all as synonyms of information.⁶ Similarly, the Department of Defense (DoD), in its comprehensive armed forces dictionary, has promulgated an entry for information that not only identifies it as “facts, data, or instructions in any medium or form,” but also as “the meaning that a human assigns to data by means of the known conventions used in their representation.”⁷

With all this in mind, when presenting an argument for an architecture to focus and employ information as an instrument of national power, which definition should be used?

⁵ For an overview of globalization and globalism, see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*, with the collaboration of Robert O. Keohane (New York: Routledge, 2004), chap. 14.

⁶ *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (2003), s.v. “information.”

⁷ *Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (12 Apr 2001, as amended through 31 Aug 2005), s.v. “information.”

START ON A DIME: DEFINING NATIONAL POWER

For the context of this paper, Information is referenced as an instrument of national power. In doing so, it is useful to present a paradigm in which the concept of “Informational power” - and, therefore, ‘Information’ - is defined.⁸ A commonly used model, unattributed to any one author, is the Diplomatic-Informational-Military-Economic construct: the so-called DIME principle⁹. These four instruments “are the tools the United States uses to apply its sources of power; including its human potential, economy, industry, science and technology, academic institutions, geography, and national will.”¹⁰ Although the U.S. is mentioned specifically in this quote, the DIME concept may be applied to any country or nation, and indeed, to any state or non-state entity possessing such sources of power.

Unfortunately, each of the components of DIME has a similar problem to the Informational instrument. None possess a precise universal definition associated with each instrument. To facilitate an understanding of the DIME construct - as well as to place the Informational instrument in context with respect to its corresponding

⁸ A note on nomenclature: in this paper, when the term “Information” or “Informational” is capitalized, it refers to the instrument of national power as defined in this chapter. If either term is used to mean anything else, it will not be capitalized and the definition for that usage will be noted.

⁹ It can be argued that there is a fifth instrument of power, “Justice” or “Legal,” which is separate and distinct from the other four. See George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (2002), p. 6 and George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Feb 2003), pp. 1, 15, 29 for two prominent references to this 5th instrument.

¹⁰ *Joint Publication 1: Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (14 Nov 2000), p. I-6.

Diplomatic, Military, and Economic instruments – this paper’s proposed explanation of each Instrument of National Power follows.¹¹

Diplomatic: The use of negotiations, dialogue, and other means – often times non-public (i.e., not conducted openly, but rather privately; behind-the-scenes) – to convey a government’s¹² will to another political entity with the intent of coercing¹³ that target to achieve the desired result: compliance with the government’s will.

Military: The application of force which includes violent means, both kinetic and non-kinetic, in order to compel¹⁴ an adversary to do a government’s will.

Economic: The use of monetary, financial, commodity, or other means to coerce a target to comply with a government’s will.

Given the above definitions, the Informational instrument of power can now be defined.

INFORMATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POWER

As mentioned above, commonly accepted meanings of the elements of power (DIME) do not yet exist. However, as one of the principal (if not the primary) utilizers of the DIME model, the DoD only refers to the Informational instrument as “a strategic

¹¹ This discussion of DIME is based on LCDR Don Cunningham, MAJ Gary Graves, and Maj Todd Kelly, “Philosophy of War” (Joint Advanced Warfighting School unpublished paper, 30 Sep 05), 3-4.

¹² The term ‘government’ used in this chapter refers to any authoritative body of an entity. In other words, all countries have governments, as do non-state actors who are the decision-makers of a nation (e.g., the de facto government of Iraqi Kurdistan) or of groups/organizations (e.g., inner circle of terrorist organizations like Jemaah Islamiyah). Further, the term “target” refers to any audience which is the object of the government’s action directed toward it. Thus, a target may be a state’s government (in part or as a whole), an individual (e.g., Slobodan Milosevic during Operation ALLIED FORCE [the 1999 war with Yugoslavia]), a segment of a populace (e.g., the Arab Street), the manifestation of a foreign instrument of power (e.g., the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps), or a number of other systems, groups, and/or institutions.

¹³ Coercion: getting a target to willingly agree to do something they may or may not want to do. In other words, taking overt steps to ensure a target complies with a government’s will. This does not have to be a forced situation: in many cases, the target will comply with a government’s will willingly.

¹⁴ Compel: getting a target to unwillingly do something. In other words, a government does not attempt to get a target to comply with the government’s will; instead, the government forces compliance upon them regardless of willingness.

resource vital to national security” with “a diffuse and complex set of components.”¹⁵ While descriptive, such language is not definitive! As is the case with all instruments of national power, not to mention how those instruments are implemented, the “end users” of that power is left to determine for themselves or for their Department/Agency what actions do and do not constitute a manifestation of that power.

There seems to be an unstated belief that there’s no reason to try to define Information because “it’s obvious what Information is, isn’t it?” A more likely reason for the dearth of a common characterization is precisely because of the difficulties the U.S. government often has in coming to such a conceptual agreement.¹⁶ When one considers the various interpretations of the term Information, the problem of disparate understandings of the utilization of this “strategic resource vital to national security” becomes apparent. Furthermore, this disparate understanding may lead to the conflicting use of the Informational instrument. Thus, in terms of DIME, this paper offers the following definition for **Information**:¹⁷

Facts, data, opinions, policies, and/or the means to ascertain that knowledge by a government to be used to *convince* a target audience to comply with the government’s will. Information can be public (utilizing open sources, allowing the Information to be widely known) or non-public.

Likewise, the proposed definition for **Informational** then becomes:

¹⁵ *JP 1*, 1-7.

¹⁶ There are many instances of such interagency disagreements over term definitions and philosophical concepts: see Margaret Daly Hays and Gary F. Weatley, ed., *Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions of Peace Operations: Haiti - A Case Study* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Concepts and Technology, 1996), 35; Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training (IAWG), *IAWG Country Studies: Poland* (accessed at: <http://www.iawg.gov/info/reports/specialreports/poland.pdf> on 10 Apr 06), 3-4; and Unknown, "Defense is from Mars, State is from Venus" (accessed at: http://www.ndu.edu/ITEA/storage/229/DEFENSE_IS_FROM_MARS_STATE_IS_FROM_VENUS.doc on 11 Apr 06).

¹⁷ Also based on Cunningham et. al., “Philosophy of War” p. 4.

The use – or denial of use – of Information by a government in order to *convince* a target audience to comply with the government’s will.

In both of the above definitions, the term “to convince” refers to directly or indirectly getting a target to know/believe something. In other words, a target will decide on its own to comply with a government’s will, often unaware of the government’s attempts to manipulate that target’s compliance. Thus, Information as an instrument of national power is not “neutral,” as one would infer from the civilian and military descriptions of information (with a lower case ‘i’). Rather, the Information instrument is inherently biased. As a tool to achieve an effect, Information is by its very nature influential – i.e., Information is the means of persuasion.

Again, definitions become imperative! As mentioned, Information may be both public and non-public. We immediately ask the natural follow-on question, “what constitutes public Information versus non-public?” To answer this, a brief examination of each term is in order.

PUBLIC AND NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION

The *DoD Dictionary* defines public information as “information of a military nature, the dissemination of which through public news media is not inconsistent with security, and the release of which is considered desirable or nonobjectionable to the responsible releasing agency.”¹⁸ Though not completely consistent with the definition of Information as provided above, some elements of this entry are indeed applicable. Specifically, the dissemination of Information via public means (e.g., news media in the

above definition) and with the intention of having some positive effect - “desirable,” as the *DoD Dictionary* puts it - seem in harmony with the Informational concept of using Information as a means of influence. Furthermore, although not explicitly stated in the DoD’s explanation of public information, the implication shared by other Departments/Agencies of the Federal government¹⁹ is that such information is truth-based. Public information is thus separate and distinct from deception, which are “measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence.”²⁰

Therefore, this paper proposes the following definition of **public Information**:

Informational actions within the public domain. Such actions will employ only truthful elements of Information – the intention is to influence, not mislead (i.e., no false Information, disinformation, or misinformation). Includes such methods as Public Affairs, Truth Projection, and Psychological Operations.

Conversely, **non-public Information** is then defined by this paper as:

Informational actions not intended to occur within the public domain. Such actions are not limited to the use of truth. Includes methods usually associated with aspects of military information operations designed to deny or corrupt adversary systems and processes - such as electronic warfare, counter-intelligence, computer network operations, and deception.

The Defense Department furthermore attributes five “Principals” to public information – one of which includes a restriction from the use of propaganda directed toward members of the U.S. Armed Forces or their dependents.²¹ The popular perception of propaganda is a negative one (i.e., that propaganda implies a dishonest manipulation of

¹⁸ *JPI-02*, s.v. “public information.”

¹⁹ See, for example, State Department’s *FY 2004 to 2009 Strategic Plan*, p. 31.

²⁰ *JPI-02*, s.v. “deception.”

Information; synonymous with misinformation or disinformation). While such a restrictive principal seems reasonable, the *Webster's* dictionary offers a more balanced definition of propaganda: “the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.”²² Further, the DoD identifies propaganda even less ominously: “Any form of communication in support of national objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.”²³

Although not overtly stated in the DoD’s characterization, the implied aspect common to both classifications of propaganda is its use of lies as well as truth to achieve an effect. It is this inclusion of falsities that differentiates public Information from propaganda. Using either definition, propaganda is certainly an Informational method. But by the proposed meanings given above, only truthful propaganda is part of the *public* Information arsenal.



THE TWO-FRONT INFORMATION WAR CONSTRUCT

Just as Information has both public and non-public branches, public Information can be classified into two aspects. Generically, public Information may be grouped into either a domestic or foreign category. Although both classes of public Information will use the same elements (i.e., the same substantive facts, datum, or policies), the use of this instrument of national power may generate different effects on different targets, and actions intended to produce certain results overseas may have unintended consequences

²¹ *Joint Publication 3-13: Information Operations* (13 Feb 06), p. II-9. The other four Principals are Freedom of Information Act, restriction on classifying politically-sensitive documents, appropriate classification, and interagency Public Affairs planning.

²² *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. “propaganda.”

at home. It is precisely due to their persuasive nature that U.S. Informational efforts must be separated into these two groupings.

Foreign Public Information (FPI) is public Information directed toward foreign audiences, such as governments, groups/organizations, and populaces. It conveys the American message while countering any adversarial message. The goal of U.S. FPI is to affect foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to America's objectives. Such activities target both adversary Information actions and perceptions detrimental to American interests. Being pre-emptive as well as reactive, FPI influences foreign emotions, motives, and objective reasoning to achieve national aims.

Domestic Public Information (DPI) is public Information directed towards the domestic (U.S.) audience to convey Information concerning current military operations, international events, and national intent while protecting the security of American citizens. It is a means to counter adversarial disinformation and propaganda. Also pre-emptive as well as reactive to "enemy" Informational activities, DPI's primary vehicle is Public Affairs.

The geographic orientation of FPI and DPI lends itself to a concept more commonly associated with the Military instrument of national power: the two-front war construct. In such a model, the traditional front is the "front lines," the battlefields in those places around the world where the armed forces wage physical war. In the Information battlespace, this front would be the international stage: essentially, everywhere that is not the United States. The second front is the idea of the homefront: not just the territory of the U.S., but also the American citizenry. Informationally, the

²³ *JP 1-02*, s.v. "propaganda."

Homefront is the domestic audience – the object of DPI. FPI, on the other hand, is targeted toward the international front.

Regardless of whether public Information is FPI or DPI, and regardless of whom its intended target is, the reality of what some have dubbed the “Third Wave” world in which we live is that all such Information has the potential of being ubiquitous.²⁴ That is to say, Information intended for foreign audiences will often have an impact on domestic audiences and vice versa. This ease of access to public Information by all reiterates why public Information cannot contain anything but the truth: a lie abroad equates to a lie at home.

That is not to say that all FPI reaches American citizens, nor is much DPI accessible to overseas populaces. Yet the technologically-based Third Wave world is a “free trade zone of knowledge” which facilitates unfettered flow of Information via journalistic outlets, the internet, and other mass media. It is because of this reality that any public Information, wherever and to whomever it is employed, must be considered to some degree both as FPI and DPI. The interrelationship of the geographic and functional aspects of Public Information is depicted in Figure 1.

²⁴ For a description of the Third Wave and some of its Information aspects, see Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War* (New York: Warner, 1995), 198-200.

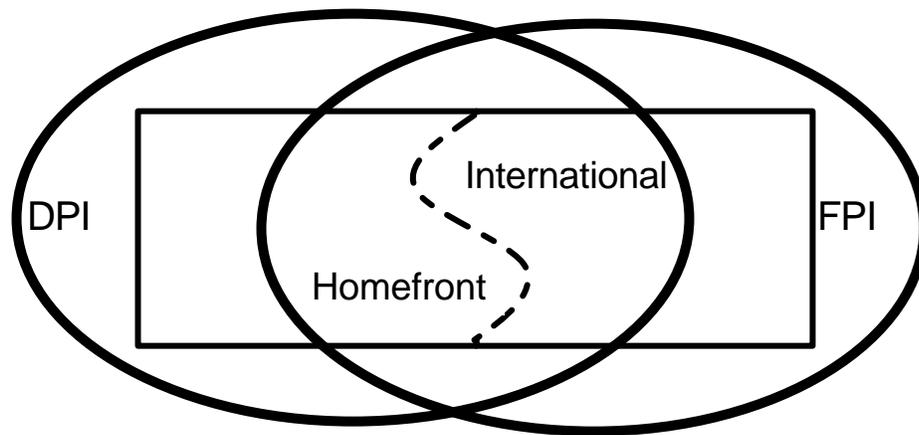


Figure 1.
Two-Front War Construct: Geographic and Functional Relationship

Given this conceptual framework for the Informational instrument of national power, how has the United States used (or how has it failed to use) Information to achieve its national interests – especially during periods of conflict, when one could argue that the effective utilization of all elements of power count the most? An examination of the current Informational efforts, especially with respect to the ongoing War on Terror, offers telling insight.

CHAPTER 2: Current State of Affairs

*We will also wage a war of ideas to win the battle against international terrorism.*²⁵

The “war of ideas” is a hotly debated issue within both the Defense Department and the entire Federal government. At issue is the nature of this struggle,²⁶ the means by which the government is to wage this conflict, and the most critical question of all: which entity of the U.S. government is to lead this effort? Although at first the answers may seem obvious, such as we need to convince the world that we’re the good guys and it’s the entire government’s responsibility to do that convincing, the implementation – like any major national undertaking – is far easier said than done.

When national policies are articulated, whether formally as in the case of published positions (e.g., the National Security Strategy [NSS]), or informally as in public statements/speeches of the President, the means for implementing these policies may often be categorized into one of the commonly-accepted instruments of national power: Diplomatic, Informational, Military, or Economic (the “DIME” model). The Federal Department or agency usually associated with each instrument (D: State Department, M: Defense Department, E: Commerce and/or Treasury Department) will normally devise a strategy or plan to implement the national policies relevant to whatever part of the DIME each particular Federal entity “owns.” The illustrative case most familiar to military personnel is the formulation and publishing of a National Defense and/or Military Strategy, an overarching plan for the use of the “M” instrument in

²⁵ Bush, 2002 NSS, 6.

²⁶ The 2002 NSS uses both the terms “war” and “struggle” of ideas - see *ibid*, p. 6 and p. 31. The 2006 NSS uses the phrase “battle of ideas” – see George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (2006), 9.

accordance with the national guidance as outlined in the official U.S. policy (i.e., the NSS). Similarly, current Departmental guidance for the implementation of the Diplomatic instrument is found in the Department of State's *Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 to 2009 Strategic Plan*.²⁷ The Economic instrument is less clearly identified with a single agency. Elements of this tool are articulated in both the Commerce Department's *Strategic Plan for FY 2004-2009* and in the Treasury Department's *Strategic Plan*.²⁸ This approach is not unique to the United States government, of course; many countries publish similar documents or use White Papers to articulate how they intend to utilize their own instruments of national power, although not always will these strategies be publicly available.

This brings us to the heart of the issue: there is no "Department of Information" or "Public Affairs Agency" of the U.S. government to draft a National Information Strategy. Therefore, national policies regarding the use of the Informational instrument – most importantly, the Presidential direction to "win the war of ideas" – are left orphaned, to be adopted by whichever Department or Agency has the means or desires to implement those Informational policies. The result is a haphazard approach to the use of this critical instrument of national power: an approach that is uncoordinated, allowing for inconsistent efforts in which some actions may not be fully implemented, some may be duplicated needlessly, and some may be implemented at cross-purposes. The conditions are thus created for Information fratricide.

But is this worse-case scenario actually what has come to fruition since the

²⁷ See generally State Department, *FY 2004 to 2009 Strategic Plan*.

²⁸ See generally (and p. 2 in particular) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Strategic Plan: For the Fiscal Years 2003 – 2008* and U.S. Department of Commerce, *Strategic Plan for FY 2004-2009: American Jobs, American Values*, pp. 25, 54.

outbreak of the War on Terror? And what is being done to wage the ideas campaign of the War? To explore these questions, an examination of the major Information entities currently waging the war of ideas provides a useful starting point.

The Players: Major Organizations Engaged in the War of Ideas

WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

Although not usually considered to be a formal entity of the Federal Government, the White House Office of Communications is nonetheless a major purveyor of the Information instrument of national power. As one of the most visible embodiments of U.S. public Information, White House Communications, particularly the spokesman of that office,²⁹ often seems to be waging the war of ideas singlehandedly. Yet this Office's intended purpose is not for "mugwump" Domestic Public Information. Rather, it is basically a political one: to "spin" the President's agenda, actions, and Administration in a positive manner (often partisan) to the American people via the press.³⁰

Information operations targeted toward one's own domestic populace may be considered one definition of politics. The politically-oriented nature of the White House Office of Communications highlights one of the pitfalls in the Information instrument of national power: where is the line between public Information in the national interests and the advancement of a purely political agenda? The same question may be asked of any and all policies of a given administration, i.e., the continual debate between what constitutes a political philosophy vs. impartial "national interests." This issue of

²⁹ Although the official title of this position is Press Secretary, it is often also referred to as White House Spokesman. The incumbent is Tony Snow.

Domestic Public Information politicization will be further explored in Chapter 4.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Most foreign public Information efforts are conducted officially by the Department of State (DoS). Indeed, the DoS has been designated the lead federal agency (LFA) for “public diplomacy” abroad.³¹ Currently conducting this mission is the Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (DoS office symbol: R/PPR). Overseen by Karen Hughes,³² the mission of this office is to “provide long-term strategic planning and performance measurement capability for public diplomacy and public affairs programs.”³³

“Public Diplomacy” is a concept dating back to 1965, when “it was created with the establishment at Fletcher [School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University] of the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy.”³⁴ Often used in government circles interchangeably with Information, the DoS officially defines the term this way: “Refers to government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries. The chief instruments of public diplomacy are publications, motion pictures, cultural exchanges, and radio and television.”³⁵ While this definition closely compares with the one offered in the last chapter for Foreign Public Information, the

³⁰ “White House Offices” accessed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/off-descrp.html> on 11 Apr 06 and interview with Mike McCurry, former Presidential Press Secretary, accessed at http://www.whitehousehistory.org/03/subs_press/b.html on 11 Apr 06.

³¹ United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *2005 Report*, (Washington: 2005), 8

³² Hughes is the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, and as such is the senior official in charge of the Public Diplomacy effort. The Director of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy is Elizabeth A. Whitaker.

³³ U.S. Department of State, “Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs,” accessed at <http://www.state.gov/r/ppr/> on 28 Jan 06.

³⁴ Lois Herrmann, Theresa Markiw and Frances Sullinger, eds., *The United States Information Agency: A Commemoration* (1999), 26.

differentiation is in the targeted audience. Public Diplomacy (PD) is geared toward populaces abroad, while FPI includes governments and groups/organizations in addition to overseas publics as its intended targets. Hence, PD is not synonymous with FPI. Rather, Public Diplomacy comprises the key element to, but remains a subset of, Foreign Public Information.

As the State Department's executive agent for Public Diplomacy, the "R/PPR" Office advises Under Secretary Hughes on how best "to focus those [Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs] resources on the most urgent national security objectives, and provide realistic measurement of public diplomacy's and public affairs' effectiveness."³⁶ To accomplish its FPI mission of Public Diplomacy, Hughes' office – via its subordinate Bureau of International Information Programs - produces publications, conducts lectures overseas, provides PD support to Country Team efforts, and administers the "USINFO" web site for audiences abroad.³⁷ In addition, Hughes has established a "Brain Trust": "a high level interagency group to work on key PD issues"³⁸ which meets on an ad hoc basis.

However, DoS only controls and tasks its own Information resources, not the efforts or assets of the entire Federal government. Nor does DoS have the authority to decide what the "most urgent national security objectives" are for interagency Information actions. Rather, the Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for Public

³⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Dictionary of International Relations Terms*, (Washington: Department of State Library, 1987), s.v. "public diplomacy."

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Bureau of International Information Programs," accessed at <http://www.state.gov/r/iip/> on 11 Apr 06 and "About USINFO" accessed at http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/about_usinfo.html on 7 Feb 06. DoS' Embassy Country Teams and their FPI role are discussed in the last section of this Chapter.

Diplomacy and Public Affairs can only “coordinate the [State] Department's public diplomacy presence in the interagency, in close consultation with relevant [DoS] bureaus.”³⁹ Therefore, being LFA for Public Diplomacy allows DoS to have greatest influence over Foreign Public Information efforts, but State still can not control overall Information activities or direct the actions of Information entities within other Federal Departments or agencies.

THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is an exception, of sorts, to the State Department's lack of authority over other entities of the Federal Government. The BBG serves as the Board of Directors for the U.S.-government sponsored non-military Foreign Public Information activities conducted via airwaves, through the media of radio as well as television, with much of the transmitted content also available in streaming and text format over the internet. Although not technically an agency of the Department, State does have limited control over the Broadcasting Board of Governors' efforts by means of the Secretary of State's (SECSTATE's) membership on the Board.⁴⁰ As a permanent (ex officio) member, the SECSTATE has an equal vote on policy and “overall strategic direction”⁴¹ of the Board's subordinate Activities. Although not directive

³⁸ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, “Public Diplomacy Assessment” accessed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/detail.10004600.2005.html> on 12 Apr 06. The Brain Trust includes representatives from the DoD and other Information actors.

³⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs,” accessed at <http://www.state.gov/r/ppr/> on 28 Jan 05.

⁴⁰ In addition to the Secretary of State, the BBG consists of eight bipartisan members, each chosen by the President to serve two-year terms. Usually, Board members are nominated for these positions based on their work and experience in the field of broadcast media (TV and radio). Broadcasting Board of Governors, “BBG Board” accessed at www.bbg.gov/bbg_board.cfm on 3 Feb 06 and Larry Hart, BBG Communications Coordinator, e-mail to author, April 12, 2006.

⁴¹ BBG, *Marrying the Mission to the Market: Strategic Plan 2002-2007 (Text Version)*, 11

authority, the more democratic structure of the BBG organization does increase the likelihood that State's priorities and direction for its Public Diplomacy efforts will be reflected in the organization and execution of the Board's broadcasting programs.

The BBG's mission is "to promote and sustain freedom and democracy by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information about the United States and the world to audiences overseas."⁴² It accomplishes this goal by means of a series of broadcasting activities around the globe, each focused on a particular audience (i.e., the populace of a targeted country or region). Perhaps the most famous of these broadcasting entities is the Voice of America (VOA), which gained widespread notoriety for its work to bring the Free World's perspective to people behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War (a more detailed examination of the VOA's activities during this period is contained in Chapter 3).

Currently, the BBG oversees seven such broadcasting efforts:

VOA

Uses radio and television broadcasting to cover large portions of the world, transmitting in a total of 44 languages

Radio and TV Marti

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting, using radio and TV broadcasting to cover Cuba

Alhurra

Uses television broadcasting to cover the Middle East

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Uses radio to cover Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe; the Caucasus; and Central and Southwestern Asia

Sawa

Uses radio to cover the Middle East

Radio Farda

Uses radio to cover Iran

⁴² BBG, *FY 2005 Performance and Accountability Report*, (15 Nov 05), i.

Radio Free Asia

Uses radio to cover portions of
Northeast and Southeast Asia⁴³

In addition to the actual broadcasters listed above, the BBG also oversees a support and administrative entity, the International Broadcasting Bureau.⁴⁴ At first blush, the preponderance of the BBG's efforts seem to be in an "outdated" form, given the 21st Century's Information Age. While radio transmission may seem rather "Industrial Age" to many Americans, for the majority of the world's population this medium continues to be by far the primary method by which mass amounts of people receive news, entertainment, and information in general. This is particularly true in that key battleground in the War of Ideas: the Developing (or "Underdeveloped") World. By utilizing this ubiquitous method of communicating America's message, the BBG is demonstrating that this element of the nation's Information instrument is "doing the right things" with respect to delivering Public Information abroad.

Each of the seven broadcasting activities of the BBG is guided by common principles: namely, to be an independent medium for the transmission of news, entertainment, and general knowledge about the United States, its government's policies and values, and on the American people and our culture. Independence, in the BBG's terms, means free from government control rather than free from government sponsorship. Although only two of the broadcasters (VOA and Radio/TV Marti) are fully-Federal entities of the U.S. government – the others "are grantee organizations that receive their funding from the government but are organized and managed as private

⁴³ BBG, "About the BBG," accessed at www.bbg.gov/bbg_aboutus.cfm on 3 Feb 06.

⁴⁴ The International Broadcasting Bureau is the "operations arm" of the BBG, charged with providing the means by which the seven broadcasting entities transmit their programming – including managing radio

corporations”⁴⁵ – all acknowledge their government funding and support. However, the Federal government does not control content, mandate format, or exercise any direct or indirect censorship of BBG programming. Therefore, although clearly part of the United States’ Information instrument of power, the impartiality of these broadcasters makes them more akin to a battlefield than a weapon in our Information arsenal.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The Department of Defense (DoD) exercises its use of the Information Instrument of National Power by conducting both public and non-public Information activities across the spectrum of military operations: strategic, operational (theater), and tactical levels. Non-public Information uses the means outside of the public domain commonly referred to as Information Operations – see chapter 1 for a more detailed explanation of “info ops.” Although all such non-public efforts are directed toward foreign targets,⁴⁶ DoD Public Information actions may have both domestic as well as foreign audiences. The most common example of such a dual-natured application of the Information Instrument is Public Affairs (PA). While not unique to the DoD, Public Affairs is used by Defense to disseminate a great deal of information about the War on Terror and other manifestations of the Military Instrument of National Power to the American populace, thus representing one of the largest non-partisan uses of the Information Instrument with Americans as the target audience. As the primary public Information activity of the Defense, PA is conducted by all major entities of the Department such as the Office of

transmitters, leasing satellite time, and facilitating affiliate dissemination of BBG shows worldwide. BBG, *Marrying the Mission to the Market*, 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁶ U. S. Department of Defense, *Information Operations Roadmap* (redacted) (Washington: 2003), 27.

the Secretary of Defense, the Services, principal agencies, and the unified commands. However, no single office or organization directs or even coordinates the messages, methods of delivery, or unifying objectives for these efforts.

Recognizing the importance of coherent action with respect to public Information, the DoD is now embracing the concept of “Strategic Communications.” “STRATCOMM,” to which it is sometimes referred by those in the Defense Department with a penchant for acronyms, is defined as “focused United States Government (USG) efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all elements of national power.”⁴⁷ It is essentially a concept that foreign public Information, as executed through the Information Operations activities of public affairs and some facets of psychological operations, is the influence pillar of Information Warfare (IW). Due mainly to the negative connotations IW carries in some American civilian circles and among foreign publics, the Defense Department is attempting to distinguish and distance Strategic Communications from the more bellicose-sounding “IW.”

One way Strategic Communications is distinguished from Information Warfare is by the introduction of a “new” concept: Military Support to Public Diplomacy (MSPD). MSPD is a Defense initiative recognizing the State Department’s lead in carrying America’s message through public Information programs abroad. While not subordinating itself to the State Department, the Department of Defense is attempting to integrate, or at least deconflict, its Strategic Communications public Information efforts

with those of State through MSPD. In practice, the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Public Affairs Directorate (OSD/PA) interfaces with State's Public Diplomacy Bureau to determine Public Diplomacy themes and messages for regions and countries worldwide. OSD/PA then propagates these themes and messages to Public Affairs organizations in the four Services and the nine Combatant Commands in order to achieve unity of purpose (i.e., consistent messages) between Defense and State Public Diplomacy activities around the world. Again, with no central directive authority, not even for these functions within the Armed Forces and U.S. military structure, implementation of this Military Support to Public Diplomacy is left to individual units and Commands. Determination of when, how, or even if this "strategic communications" should be conducted is thus a disjointed process.

The heart of strategic communications is the need to convey themes and messages to foreign populaces via public Information in order to achieve military and/or national objectives. This perspective is being increasingly accepted by commanders and military personnel at all levels, especially at the strategic- and operational-levels. This heightened awareness of Information's importance is evident in the contingency plans and on-going operations in all Areas of Responsibility (AORs) which now reflect strategic communications as a vital part of military strategy and operations.⁴⁸ Despite the lack of central direction, the military is realizing that its public Information efforts need to become more and more coherent in their purpose and execution.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

⁴⁷ JP 3-13, GL-12.

⁴⁸ Donald Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington: 2006), 92.

The National Security Council (NSC) serves as the most institutionalized Interagency body in the U.S. government. Although each Presidential administration defines how the NSC will be structured and operate, it is common for the NSC staff⁴⁹ to oversee the production of certain national-level strategy documents and to facilitate interagency working groups to coordinate issues among the relevant entities of the Federal Executive Branch. Currently, the NSC is organized under National Security Presidential Directive 1 (NSPD-1) which outlines the procedures for how the NSC will conduct interagency coordination. As has been noted earlier, while the NSC provides the forum for resolving issues and forging agreement across the Federal Executive Departments and agencies, the Council can not direct any governmental entity to take any action or implement any decision. It serves only as a coordinating function; hence, the interagency working groups are dubbed “Policy Coordination Committees (PCCs).”⁵⁰

Within the current structure of the NSC, the Office of Strategic Communications & Global Outreach is the Council’s focal point for Foreign Public Information issues.⁵¹ This office’s Strategic Communications Policy Coordination Committee⁵² spawned the Interagency Strategic Communication Fusion Team at which those federal entities with a vested interest in FPI send designated representatives to meet and discuss Information

⁴⁹ Statutorily, the NSC consists of only the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of State – but may be augmented by other senior officials (such as the National Security Advisor, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of National Intelligence, etc.) at the President’s discretion. While statutorily the NSC is this small group of individuals, the term “NSC” is often used in government agencies to refer to the NSC staff. This staff is currently composed of approximately 50 people, ranging from political appointees to individuals “seconded” from the various Departments and agencies of the Federal government. Unless otherwise specified, the term “NSC” in this paper is intended to mean that full or part-time staff of the National Security Council.

⁵⁰ George W. Bush, Executive Order, “National Security Presidential Directive 1: Organization of the National Security Council System” (February 13, 2001), paragraph 10.

⁵¹ Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *2005 Report*, 8.

⁵² As of 8 April 2006, this PCC has been replaced by the Policy Coordinating Committee on Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications. This “new and enhanced” PCC’s relationship with bodies such as the Interagency Strategic Communication Fusion Team remains to be determined.

issues. In this forum, both the ongoing and future public Information activities of such attending Departments/agencies as Defense, State, and the Central Intelligence Agency are mutually shared in order to achieve synergy of effort and avoid actions that will work at cross-purposes to each other. However, as most U.S. Information activities are not centrally directed by any of the Federal entities, this interagency coordination amounts to an inter-Departmental sharing of ideas, rather than a true coordination of unified effort. Since they only coordinate some foreign public Information, the PCCs and Fusion Team are not the definitive wielders of the Information instrument of national power. Even so, these interagency venues are perhaps the most formal current embodiment of a national Information strategy organ.

OTHER ENTITIES/EFFORTS

While the above Information efforts represent the primary and most organized activities of the U.S. government, there are certainly other Federal entities employing the Information instrument of national power both at home and abroad. All Federal entities have some form of PA office or program to communicate public aspects of their endeavors and to publicize facts about themselves. Since Public Information includes the function of Public Affairs, every Department and Agency is thus using the Information tool. Within their Informational activities, however, several entities are more prominent than others.

Foreign Public Information is employed in every country in the world by the member's of each U.S. Embassy's Country Team. Although under the auspices of the State Department by virtue of the Ambassador's power as the principal American

governmental representative to each foreign nation, an Embassy's Country Team is comprised of the senior official from each Federal entity operating in that particular country. While recognizing the primacy of the Ambassador's and, by extension, the Department of State's lead in all in-country activities, the various entities present on a Country Team are not under the direct control of the DoS. Therefore, like their parent Departments/Agencies back in Washington, they are not bound to conduct any Information activities under the direction of State's Public Diplomacy agenda.

As is done on a more strategic level via the National Security Council's PCCs, Country Teams serve as forums to provide visibility into and coordinate in-country activities among the entities present. The main difference is the great deal of de facto control which the Ambassador exercises over his/her Country Team, which ensures no local U.S. effort is at cross-purposes with the country-specific agenda that Ambassador is pursuing. Within the bounds of that informal system, entities such as the Drug Enforcement Agency, United States Agency for International Development, Federal Bureau of Investigations, and other Agencies usually present within an Embassy conduct their own independent public Information activities and other business in their resident countries.

Domestic Public Information is an even more fragmented effort. There is no recognized Federal lead (like State Department is for PD) with respect to government Information directed towards Americans at home. While most Federal Departments would argue that Public Diplomacy and Information Operations can not be legally targeted toward American audiences, all seem to share the same goal of generating positive feelings among the American people about their Departments, policies, and

programs. Rather than being identified as Public Diplomacy, such an Information operation targeting the American domestic populace is called “Public Relations” or Public Affairs.

Beyond the “good PR” undertakings, however, some entities actively execute Public Information programs designed to convince Americans to modify their behavior,⁵³ convey specific themes and messages to them, and/or otherwise influence the U.S. citizenry with respect to a given policy. Some of these endeavors seem commonplace and even expected, as in the case of the Department of Agriculture’s projects to distribute crop-growing techniques to small farmers or the Center for Disease Control’s public health initiatives to promote changes in people’s personal hygiene habits. Others are intended to achieve objectives in the War on Terrorism.

The Department of Homeland Security’s *Ready Program*⁵⁴ is one of the prime examples of such an enterprise. It simultaneously accomplishes the task of educating the U.S. public on the individual actions to be taken in the event of a local terrorist attack while instilling a sense of safety, reinforcing government control of domestic security, and engendering defiant resolve in the face of international terrorism. The program’s television commercials feature a reassuring but serious Secretary Tom Ridge looking directly into the camera while calmly saying the slogan of “you can be afraid, or you can be ready” and epitomize the influence aspects of this endeavor.

⁵³ For examples, see the Center for Disease Control, “Guidelines for Effective School Health Education to Prevent the Spread of AIDS,” accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/guidelines/guidelines.htm> on 13 Apr 06 and U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Consumer Food Safety Behavior,” accessed at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aer804/aer804a.pdf> on 13 Apr 06

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Ready.Gov,” accessed at <http://www.ready.gov/> on 13 Apr 06.

Yet, for the domestic front in the War of Ideas even the informal Information coordination structure of the Embassy Country Team is non-existent. Assuming there should be an equality of Informational level of effort between the two fronts, this situation leaves a full 50% of the war un-fought. At home, more so than abroad, no attempts for unified non-partisan Information action have been made by the Federal government. In addition to the lack of both a National Information Strategy as well as a single directive agency to focus the use of the Information instrument of power, the stigma of the government “targeting” domestic audiences with Information as being an Orwellian perversion of power⁵⁵ is probably the largest inhibitor to the formation of even a rudimentary coordinating body (like the NSC Policy Coordinating Committee or a Country Team) for Domestic Public Information.

⁵⁵ See Chapter 4, for an analysis of the pros and cons of creating “Public Information Center” to solve both the Domestic and Foreign Public Information authority problem.

CHAPTER 3: Past Efforts

*The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth.*⁵⁶

The current Information efforts of the United States government, while sometimes strong individually, are fragmented and thus diffuse the effectiveness of this instrument of national power. Some may say that is the nature of public Information, especially in the free and democratically-principled society that is America. In particular, any government attempts to unify (or possibly even employ) Domestic Public Information (DPI) activities would be an infringement on the liberties of U.S. citizens and will run contrary to not only our laws, but also our values and traditions of a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

The American government has harnessed the Information instrument of power at times in our history and was able to utilize it to great effect. Usually done during periods of crisis and conflict, and especially during wartime, such initiatives spawned organizations and activities (some of which still exist, in various forms, today) that maintained the legal and democratic balance while accomplishing national objectives both at home and abroad. Given the ongoing War on Terror and the Third Wave world of Information access, some of these historical examples provide models for today’s challenges. While a comprehensive study of the use of the Informational instrument is beyond the scope of this examination, an analysis of the use of public Information in America’s rise to and during the Superpower period (World War II through today) offers valuable lessons for the first war of the 21st Century.

INFORMATION IN THE ‘GOOD WAR’

World War II was the first broadcast media war. Although not reported in “real time” as conflicts over the past couple of decades have become, it did represent the first major hostilities since the advent of widespread radio⁵⁷ and film (i.e., newsreel) journalism. As such, mass communications provided more timely and direct knowledge of events and policies to vast amounts of people – as well as being used as an employment mechanism for Information.

The first six months of the War for the United States were characterized by setbacks and meager victories, especially for the Military instrument of national power. The Informational instrument also fared poorly. Concerns about operational security by some Federal agencies, the War and Navy Departments in particular, led to a dearth of public Information on the war effort. Various other Federal entities, each with their own DPI arm, began to clash with one another on what Information should be made public and which was too sensitive or did not advance the domestic or foreign war aims. Some of these same Departments/Agencies duplicated work, wasting time and effort by conducting the same DPI campaign that a peer entity was already undertaking.⁵⁸ This lack of communications and/or cooperation between these governmental entities (including President Franklin Roosevelt’s own Informational actions) further undermined

⁵⁶ First German broadcast of Voice of America, 24 Feb 42.

⁵⁷ Although early broadcast journalism dates back to the advent of radio at the turn of the 20th century, it was not until well after the U.S. government relinquished control of private radio – President Woodrow Wilson having nationalized the airwaves for use by the military and the Creel Committee (see below) during World War I – that a “broadcasting boom” occurred. Shortly after the Commerce Department outlined radio regulations in December 1921, AT&T’s first broadcasting network (later becoming NBC) paved the way for the “wireless” news industry that was firmly established by the start of World War II. Thomas H. White, “United States Early Radio History,” accessed at <http://earlyradiohistory.us> on 29 Mar 06, Sections 6, 13, 18, and 19; George Creel, “The Battle in the Air Lanes,” *Popular Radio* (Sep 1922), 3-10.

domestic Public Information effectiveness. Disagreements about the conduct and scope of Foreign Public Information (FPI), especially as whether such public Information should include propaganda (that is, “a judicious mix of rumor and deception” according to Colonel William “Wild Bill” Donovan, the head of the Office of the Coordinator of Information at the outbreak of World War II⁵⁹), characterized the disunified use of the Informational instrument overseas.⁶⁰

This situation of Information fratricide, duplication, and disunity generated a crisis-like atmosphere with respect to both FPI and DPI. However, the American people, media, and government were leery of a centralized, all-powerful Information organization. This was partly because of their disdain for Nazi propaganda under centralized direction of a government Ministry, but Americans were also apprehensive due to their own experiences with such an entity during World War I.

In that “Great War,” President Woodrow Wilson established a Committee on Public Information (CPI) under the control of its zealous director, George Creel. The CPI, in its passionate efforts to accomplish government war aims, exceeded its goals and created an environment of anti-German and pro-war sentiment in the United States. Not just maintaining domestic support for the war, CPI inadvertently fostered suspicion, generated vitriolic excesses (e.g., it became popular to re-name sauerkraut as “liberty cabbage”), and stifled freedom of speech. The retrospective view of the inter-war years

⁵⁸ For examples of DPI duplication in the early months of World War II, see United States Bureau of the Budget, *The United States at War: Development and Administration of the War Program by the Federal Government* (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1946) 222.

⁵⁹ Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 25, 27, 29. The Office of the Coordinator of Information, although initially controlling an FPI entity (the Foreign Information Service), was charged with functions that make it more akin to one of its post-war successors: the Central Intelligence Agency.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

produced a conventional wisdom that an organization like the CPI was too extreme.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the disjointed Information activities – both foreign and domestically oriented – made it increasingly apparent some sort of centralized control was required.

In the run-up period to America's entry into the war, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) had attempted to focus both public and non-public Informational efforts by creating a series of organizations to harness that instrument of national power. The Office of Government Reports was a DPI organization dealing mainly with non-defense issues of the Federal government; the Office of Emergency Management's Division of Information was the DPI entity for national defense actions; the Office of Civilian Defense was charged not only with Civil Defense, but also with conducting DPI to buoy confidence and support for war preparation activities. The operations of these agencies – not to mention the separate DPI efforts of the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Treasury's programs to "use bonds to sell the war" – were all early attempts by FDR to get a handle on Information. As war loomed in the waning months of 1941, a final peacetime DPI entity, the Office of Facts and Figures, was created. Roosevelt established this last body to provide guidance to all the existing Information Departments/Agencies, choosing not to eliminate or consolidate any of them.⁶²

Similarly, entities proliferated to deal with Informational efforts abroad. Although dealing with foreign countries and their populations was traditionally the purview of the Department of State, the concerted use of Information by the Axis powers (especially Germany's use of propaganda against the United States in Central and South America) overwhelmed both the abilities and the prevailing institutional culture of the

⁶¹ Ibid., 2-3.

⁶² Ibid., 21-22.

Department to counteract this Informational warfare. The Office of the Coordinator of Information, chartered under the flamboyant “Wild Bill” Donovan and with a wide-ranging mandate (including intelligence, covert operations, and counter-propaganda), was the first such organization. Another, the Foreign Information Service (FIS), was initially formed as a subordinate agency of Donovan’s organization. A true FPI functor, FIS was established by FDR in the summer of 1941 to publicize to foreign audiences “the aims and objectives of the American government and the American people.” Primarily via the means of still another FPI entity, the government-sponsored radio news service Voice of America, FIS used truthful public Information to accomplish its mission. Primarily because of his conviction to use only truth in his organization’s FPI operations, FIS head Robert Sherwood conflicted with Donovan - who wanted to use lies and innuendo as well as truth in foreign propaganda - and both men conflicted with the State Department over the direction, content, and methods of Informational efforts abroad.⁶³ To complicate matters more, the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was established separately from, although generally supported by, the State Department. This independent Coordinator was given the task of using FPI to promote American goodwill, as well as Western Hemispheric mutual solidarity (and therefore defense), in order to counter rampant Nazi propaganda in the region.⁶⁴

Despite the specter of Creel’s CPI, private and public - including some in the media - calls for Information unification emerged during the Winter of 1942. The Bureau of the Budget proposed the formation of a body that would consolidate most DPI and FPI functions and provide at least coordination, if not control, of those Federal efforts. FDR

⁶³ Ibid., 25-28.

⁶⁴ Ibid. and Bureau of the Budget, *The United States at War*, 218.

eventually agreed and created the Office of War Information by executive order on 13 June 1942.⁶⁵

THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION

Executive Order 9182 established the Office of War Information (OWI) with a mission to “formulate and carry out, through the use of press, radio, motion picture, and other facilities, information programs designed to facilitate the development of an informed and intelligent understanding, at home and abroad, of the status and progress of the war effort and of the war policies, activities, and aims of the Government.”⁶⁶ To that end, the OWI would:

- Coordinate the war informational activities of all Federal departments and agencies for the purpose of assuring an accurate and consistent flow of war information to the public and the world at large.
- Obtain, study, and analyze information concerning the war effort and advise the agencies concerned with the dissemination of such information as to the most appropriate and effective means of keeping the public adequately and accurately informed.
- Review, clear, and approve all proposed radio and motion picture programs sponsored by Federal departments and agencies; and serve as the central point of clearance and contact for the radio broadcasting and motion-picture industries, respectively, in their relationships with Federal departments and agencies concerning such Government programs.
- Maintain liaison with the information agencies of the United Nations for the purpose of relating the Government's informational programs and facilities to those of such Nations.
- Perform such other functions and duties relating to war information as the President may from time to time determine.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 29-31.

⁶⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order, “Executive Order 9182: Consolidating Certain War Information Functions into an Office of War Information” (16 Jun 42), paragraph 4.a.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, paragraph 4.

In a foreshadowing of the Interagency authority issues evident in the War on Terrorism 60 years hence, the OWI did have the power to direct other entities of the Federal Executive Branch to comply with the strategic Informational direction it laid out. Yet the establishing executive order also provided a loophole to maintain the Departments' and Agencies' independence. As most Federal entities retained their inherent Information arms, any "programs relating exclusively to the authorized activities of the several departments and agencies of the Government"⁶⁸ would remain under the purview of each of them. In practice, the OWI only had the clout to compel DPI & FPI coordination, not dictate all Informational employment. Furthermore, the State Department exerted pressure on FDR so that the Western Hemisphere - with the exception of Canada and, of course, the United States - was exempted from the Office of War Information's area of responsibility.⁶⁹

Yet the OWI's prerogative to lead public Information activities for the U.S. war effort was universally recognized. A contributing factor to this deference was that several of its predecessor entities were combined into the new organization. Personnel and functions of the Office of Facts and Figures moved to the OWI, as did the Foreign Information Service in its entirety. This consolidation left the remaining portions of Donovan's Office of the Coordinator of Information to be re-organized into the famous Office of Strategic Services (OSS),⁷⁰ the forerunner of today's Central Intelligence Agency and military Special Forces. Likewise, the Office of Government Reports and

⁶⁸ Ibid. paragraph 5, 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid., paragraph 6 and Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 30, 34-35.

⁷⁰ Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 30-31, 63.

the DPI functions of the Division of Information of the Office for Emergency Management were subsumed into the new wartime Office.⁷¹

To implement this colossal task of wielding America's Information instrument of national power, FDR handpicked a popular radio personality "with the funny voice. Elmer – Elmer something." That Midwestern-twangd broadcaster was Elmer Davis, a well-respected journalist with a widely listened-to nightly commentary program on CBS radio. Davis was certainly no Washington insider (he never held a Government job before the OWI), but as a talk radio commentator, he was one of the media voices calling for Information unification: lamenting the plethora of Information entities often working at cross-purposes, he editorialized that "under one head, with real power, they might get somewhere."⁷² Not nearly as idealistic as many of those who were to work under him in the endeavor, Davis nevertheless shared many of their core views – especially concerning Public Information vs. propaganda. In public speeches on the subject of war Information, Davis summarized the OWI's philosophy on the matter this way: "Let me say that at home and abroad we are telling the same story, telling the truth."⁷³

Despite FDR's Executive Order giving him authority to issue directives "binding upon the several Federal departments and agencies,"⁷⁴ the new Director saw the OWI's interagency strategy as being "to persuade different agencies concerned with the same problem to get together and agree on what is to be done about it so that they can tell the same story – when one agency is exclusively or primarily concerned, to persuade other

⁷¹ Roosevelt, "Executive Order 9182," paragraph 1.

⁷² Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 32-34.

⁷³ Elmer Davis and Byron Price, *War Information and Censorship* (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943), 13.

⁷⁴ Roosevelt, "Executive Order 9182," paragraph 5.

people not to sound off about something that is none of their business.”⁷⁵ Initially disinclined to lead such a massive undertaking (he actually suggested famed reporter Edward R. Murrow for the assignment), Davis’ pragmatism and background helped him mitigate his bureaucratic handicap and lead the OWI to a generally successful accomplishment of its mission during the course of the war.⁷⁶

Organizationally, the Office of War Information had two geographic branches: the Domestic Branch for DPI and the Overseas Branch for FPI. In addition, a functional division called the Policy Development Branch was created to carry out public opinion research and to, as its name implies, develop Informational policies for the geographic branches.⁷⁷ However, responsibility for national policy formulation was not solely self-contained within the OWI. Its founding executive order also specified that a consultative Committee on War Information Policy would be established in addition to the OWI itself. Membership of the Committee included the OWI Director (serving as the Committee’s Chairman) and representatives from the Departments of State, War, Navy, the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, as well as the Joint Psychological Warfare Committee.⁷⁸ The Committee on War Information Policy’s role was to “formulate basic policies and plans on war information, and shall advise with respect to the development of coordinated war information programs.”⁷⁹ Although OWI was the recognized “lead

⁷⁵ Davis and Price, *War Information*, 16.

⁷⁶ Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, pp 32, 35-37.

⁷⁷ Bureau of the Budget, *The United States at War*, 228. The Office of War Information reorganized in September 1942 with the public opinion functions being absorbed into the Domestic Branch and the policy development role being assumed by the OWI Director.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 230; Roosevelt, “Executive Order 9182,” paragraph 3; and Arthur B. Darling, “Origins of Central Intelligence,” *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 8, Issue 3, p. 61. The Joint Psychological Warfare Committee was disbanded the following Winter and replaced with the OSS’ Board of Strategy on Military Psychological Warfare.

⁷⁹ Roosevelt, “Executive Order 9182,” paragraph 3.

federal agency,” this Committee process facilitated Interagency input on the strategic and operational direction national Informational activities were to take in the War.

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE: DPI IN WORLD WAR II

The Domestic Branch, according to its mandate, developed “war information policies, [coordinated] the war information programs of Government agencies, and through the use of established communications facilities [sought] to assure an accurate flow of war information to the public” within the continental United States. To conduct these DPI functions, the Branch had Bureaus of: Book and Magazine, which liaised with and tacitly suggested to editors, writers, and literary agents topics about which to print; Foreign and domestic News, which provided digests of foreign news reports (difficult to obtain at this pre-Third Wave time period) and official US Government press releases; Graphics, which not only facilitated artists’ support to all other Federal entities but also produced and disseminated artwork, including some of the now-famous posters (e.g., “Remember Dec. 7th!,” “Buy Bonds,” and “Plant a victory garden”);⁸⁰ Radio, which obtained airtime for Government broadcasts and interfaced with radio broadcasters and advertisers; and Special Services, which answered public inquiries (akin to providing a “Freedom of Information Act” response service today), conducted public opinion research, and compiled newspaper article summaries for the Federal government - the forerunner of the current Early Bird news digest of the Armed Forces Information

⁸⁰ United States Office of the Federal Register, *United States Government Manual 1945: First Edition* (Washington: USGPO, 1945), 90 -92 and New Hampshire State Library, “Unifying a Nation: World War II Posters from the New Hampshire State Library” accessed at <http://www.state.nh.us/ww2/index.html> on 6 Mar 06.

Service. Additionally, the Office of the Director of War Programs provided direction to all the subordinate Bureaus of the Department.⁸¹

One of the more controversial divisions within the Domestic Branch was the Motion Picture Bureau, which “oversaw” Government relations with Hollywood. Although OWI itself was to make no films, this public-private sector relationship produced all the famous (and some infamous) wartime motion pictures and newsreels that contributed to fostering morale among the American populace during the World War II years. Officially, however, the Bureau merely “suggested topics dealing with war information programs to theatrical short subject producers and nontheatrical producers.”⁸² The motion picture industry thus voluntarily became a de facto DPI tool of the Federal government, albeit one with large degree of autonomy: Hollywood did not take orders from the OWI, and the Bureau of Motion Pictures ended up exerting little actual control over the industry.⁸³

More control was invoked over another voluntary government-industry DPI venture: the War Advertising Council. Formed simply as the “Advertising Council” by the leading commercial advertising agencies as part of the groundswell of popular desire to get involved after Pearl Harbor, the entity partnered with the Federal Government to help rally national support for the war effort. After the OWI was created in 1942, the newly-renamed “War Advertising Council” essentially became a subordinate agency, receiving funding and direction from the Domestic Branch.⁸⁴ Through the War Advertising Council, the OWI did more than just ensure “an accurate and consistent flow of war

⁸¹ Federal Register, *Government Manual*, 91-92.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 59.

information to the public and the world at large.”⁸⁵ The Council became the primary vehicle by which ads like “Rosie the Riveter,” “Loose Lips Sink Ships,” and “Buy Bonds!” not only conveyed DPI but also served to build civilian morale and support for American participation in World War II.⁸⁶

OVER THERE: FPI IN WORLD WAR II

American Informational activities abroad were a more convoluted matter. Although the OWI’s Overseas Branch “thought that they had a clear mandate to control all information activities aimed at the enemy,”⁸⁷ other Federal agencies (namely the Departments of War, Navy, and State) each had their own ideas about the execution of Foreign Public Information operations outside the United States. Additionally, the military took the position that OWI’s purview did not extend to non-Public Informational functions, such as secret or “black” propaganda actions targeting the Axis militaries and governments, not necessarily enemy general populations. This disagreement stemmed from the fundamental difference between Donovan’s OSS and the FIS, which had become the core of OWI’s Overseas Branch, in the use of the Informational instrument as truthful Public Information or deceiving propaganda. By the end of 1942, the OWI and the Joint Chiefs of Staff had reached an impasse on this issue.

FDR, intervening to clarify these xeno-Informational responsibilities, issued a second executive order on wartime Information. In it, OWI was given the authority to “plan, develop, and execute all phases of the Federal program of radio, press, publication, and

⁸⁴ Federal Register, *Government Manual*, 91 and Ad Council, *Matters of Choice: Advertising in the Public Interest* accessed at <http://www.adcouncil.org/timeline.html> on 6 Mar 06, pp. 2, 4-5, 40.

⁸⁵ Roosevelt, “Executive Order 9182,” paragraph 4b.

⁸⁶ Ad Council, *Matters of Choice*, pp. 4, 40.

related foreign propaganda activities involving the dissemination of information.”⁸⁸

However, the OWI was required to coordinate with the War and Navy Departments for any Information actions targeting locations where military operations were ongoing or planned. Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff won approval authority for such programs, and execution of the activities would come under theater commanders’ control.

A combined joint interagency coordination group (JIACG) structure thus evolved, with OWI “Informationists” working alongside U.S. military Psychological Warfare planners and British Political Warfare specialists, including both civilian and soldiers from His Majesty’s government, to integrate Allied Public and Non-Public Information operations in combat theaters. Although philosophical differences in the prosecution and execution of Information strategy occurred throughout the war (e.g., military commander’s deviated from FPI into propaganda on occasion by broadcasting lies and/or misleading Information in order to generate an effect on Axis troops as well as civilians), this early interagency process worked. Eventually, recognizing the military as better-suited to conduct non-Public Information activities, the OWI formally deferred to the OSS for “jurisdiction over secret propaganda” in 1944.⁸⁹

Another continuing source of contention was with the State Department. While Executive Order 9312 maintained OWI’s exclusion from the Western Hemisphere (excepting the United States and Canada) in favor of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs’ mandate for Latin America, it did not give the Department of State the same

⁸⁷ Bureau of the Budget, *The United States at War*, 230.

⁸⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order, “Executive Order 9312: Defining the Foreign Information Activities of the Office of War Information,” (9 Mar 43), paragraph 1 and Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 122-124.

⁸⁹ Bureau of the Budget, *The United States at War*, 230-231; Roosevelt, “Executive Order 9312,” paragraph 1; and Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 128.

specified authority that the military secured to coordinate on or approve FPI.⁹⁰ In another premonition of today's interagency friction, the OWI often made their own discernment of U.S. foreign policy directly from the President's speeches; the Office did not feel compelled to look to other cognizant authorities (like DoS) for additional guidance or clarification.

Needless to say, strife erupted between these executive agencies for the Diplomatic and Informational instruments of national power. This dysfunctional relationship resulted in part due to the cobbling together of the different, pre-existing, agencies into the OWI – some of which, like the FIS, arrived with a pronounced independent bent. This “shotgun wedding” was reminiscent, to some extent, of the manner in which the Department of Homeland Security would be created sixty years later. After the OWI-DoS rift began to cause public problems, especially over Information fratricide incidents in the European Theater of Operations, an internal reorganization strengthened the OWI Director's control of the Overseas Branch. The result was an improved coordination process between the agencies and a more concerted effort by the OWI to recognize State's role as the lead federal agency for foreign policy.⁹¹

With this 1944 reorganization and the JIACG-like operations with the military, the final form of the OWI took shape. Co-located with the main offices of OWI at the Social Security Building in Washington were: the Office of the Overseas Director, conducting the national-level interagency coordination and providing strategic FPI planning and policy direction; the Communications Facilities Bureau, the forerunner for today's International Broadcasting Bureau of the BBG, responsible for operating “a world-wide

⁹⁰ Roosevelt, “Executive Order 9312,” paragraph 1.

⁹¹ Bureau of the Budget, *The United States at War*, 231-233.

network of communications to carry the ‘Voice of America’ by radio and the written word by cable and wireless to every important propaganda target throughout the world;” and the Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, the OWI’s own intelligence analysis arm, also conducting operational assessment through its subordinate Foreign Morale Analysis Division.

The final Overseas Branch Bureau in the District of Columbia was the Outpost Service Bureau, providing administrative support to the Branch’s more than 20 Outposts in Allied countries (including Australia, China, England, et. al.), neutral nations (e.g., Ireland, Spain, Sweden, et. al.), and even in “battleground” & liberated territories (such as Egypt, France, Iraq, and Italy). The majority of the remainder of the Overseas Branch was situated in New York and comprised: the Radio Program Bureau, staffed by former FIS men and operating Voice of America; the Overseas Publications Bureau, producing printed material including leaflets; the Overseas Motion Picture Bureau who, in collaboration with Hollywood, provided “films for distribution in allied, neutral, liberated, and conquered countries;” and finally the News and Features Bureau, which supplied news stories to Overseas Branch entities. For radio FPI broadcasts to the Pacific Theater of Operations, the Branch maintained an additional office in San Francisco.⁹²

THE SECOND “INTERWAR” PERIOD

On 31 August, 1945, President Harry Truman praised the Office of War Information’s “outstanding contribution to victory” in World War II – and then abolished

⁹² Ibid., 232 and Federal Register, *Government Manual*, pp. 88, 93-95.

the Office and all its Informational activities.⁹³ However, as some of the Information entities that formed the OWI had viable missions that pre-dated the war, a few of those agencies also found new life in the post-war period. A testament to their staying power, several such legacy bodies still exist today.

Perhaps the most recognizable of these successors to contemporary Americans is the Ad Council. Dropping “War” from their name and government funding from their coffers, the Ad Council heeded both FDR’s and Truman’s wishes for the Council’s public service work to continue after World War II. Well-known for its public service announcements in broadcast and print media, the Ad Council is a non-profit organization which teams up frequently with the Federal government to advance “a select number of significant public issues and stimulate action on those issues through communications programs that make a measurable difference in [American] society.”⁹⁴ In practice, the Council acts as a voluntary instrument of DPI.

Lesser known to the public are internal government entities and functions. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), although not a direct continuation of the Domestic Branch’s Foreign News Bureau, essentially serves the same function today for the government, as opposed to OWI’s focus on providing foreign news to the domestic press. Operating as a subordinate entity of the Central Intelligence Agency, FBIS provides translations of news broadcasts and articles from media abroad for use as open source intelligence. The “Early Bird,” popular with members of the Defense Department, is a continuation of the traditions of another Domestic Branch arm: the Special Services

⁹³ Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 149 and Harry S. Truman, Executive Order, “Executive Order 9608: Providing for the Termination of the Office of War Information, and for the Disposition of Its Functions and of Certain Functions of the Office of Inter-American Affairs” (31 Aug 45).

⁹⁴ Ad Council, *Matters of Choice*, pp. 10, 34, 40.

Bureau. As that organization did for the government in the 1940s, the Armed Forces Information Service culls this collection of articles from domestic news sources daily.

In the area of FPI, the International Broadcasting Bureau has inherited the foreign broadcasting support mission originally performed by the Overseas Branch's Communications Facilities Bureau. Both Bureaus' most famous communications agency was, and is, the Voice of America (VOA).⁹⁵ Although all such manifestations of the OWI were to be dissolved under Executive Order 9608, an independent commission successfully persuaded the Truman administration that the U.S. government should not be "indifferent to the ways in which our society is portrayed to other countries."⁹⁶ The Department of State was "unquestionably...the place for [foreign information] in time of peace" according to Elmer Davis. As such, it assumed responsibility for this FPI function and established the Office of International Cultural Affairs and the International Press and Publication Division⁹⁷ to administer these Informational instruments. Such entities would form the nucleus for the United States' reconstitution of Information capabilities as the world squared off in the defining struggle of the latter half of the 20th Century: the Cold War.

VOX AMERICANA

"The war never stopped. Only the enemy has changed."⁹⁸ That admonition by the first president of the post-World War II Ad Council was indicative of the predominant feelings of the democracy-communism conflict which ensued shortly after the defeat of

⁹⁵ Federal Register, *Government Manual*, 94 and BBG, *Marrying the Mission to the Market*, 12.

⁹⁶ Truman, "Executive Order 9608," paragraph 3a and Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, 9.

the Axis powers in 1945. As America belatedly realized after the onset of World War II, its Information instrument of national power had once again been “demobilized” into a peacetime status. However, in this new kind of ideological war, the sense of urgency which facilitated the formation of the Office of War Information was absent. Yet, as the divide between East and West became increasingly pronounced and hostile, the impetus to strengthen our Information arsenal was revived.

By 1948, many in the government saw the battle for the hearts and minds of peoples around the world as a critical front of the Cold War. The VOA, perhaps the main tool in this FPI fight, continued the work it began in 1942, but now its target was primarily audiences behind the Iron Curtain. To augment its activities to influence these populations, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty were later added to fulfill “a ‘surrogate’ role, providing a free press” to the Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe.⁹⁹

Yet the need for something more was apparent. Sponsored by two Senators concerned over the post-World War II state of American Information, the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act - also known as the Smith-Mundt Act, after the legislation’s authors - was signed into law by President Truman. This watershed bill formed the basis for much of the FPI activity of the Cold War and remains in effect today. Under it, the State Department maintained its status as lead federal agency for

⁹⁷ Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, 9 and Elmer Davis, *Public Information in a War Economy* (Washington: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1948), 17.

⁹⁸ Ad Council, *Matters of Choice*, 10.

⁹⁹ BBG, *Marrying the Mission to the Market*, 13 and The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, *Changing Minds Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World* (Washington: The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, 2003), 28.

activities abroad through the Office of International Information, which took control of VOA.¹⁰⁰

DPI, however, was another matter. As the Act stated, any foreign public “information about the United States, its people, and its policies...shall not be disseminated within the United States, its territories, or possessions.”¹⁰¹ Reflective of the mindset that no authoritative or coordinating DPI body was required – or, for that matter, desired – in “peacetime,” responsibility for such activities returned to the purview of each of the various Federal Departments and Agencies. With the exception of the Ad Council, which was called upon from time to time during the Cold War to generate support for an issue (e.g., President Lyndon Johnson’s appeal for the Council to initiate a rallying campaign for the Vietnam War)¹⁰² rather than be the vehicle for any concerted DPI endeavor, little attempt was made by the Federal government to utilize the power of a unified DPI effort.

By 1950, the Cold War had turned hot with the outbreak of the Korean War. FPI continued to be employed, with the VOA increasing its Asian operations and target audiences, Problems of Communism journal beginning publication, and planning for expansion into the new medium of television being initiated. Yet, the course of the conflict with communism called for more radical measures. With multiple independent and Congressional commissions recommending changes to the FPI structure and approach,¹⁰³ the fresh administration of Dwight Eisenhower decided to create a new overseas Information agency.

¹⁰⁰ Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, 11

¹⁰¹ 29 USC Sec. 1461(a).

¹⁰² Ad Council, *Matters of Choice*, 13.

¹⁰³ Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, 15.

THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

In keeping with the Smith-Mundt Act, President Eisenhower authorized the consolidation of all State Department Information functions into the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1953. Chartered “to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics in promotion of the U.S. national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions, and their counterparts abroad,” the new entity absorbed VOA and all the DoS’ Country Teams’ Information activities. Internationally, these USIA successors to the OWI’s Overseas Branch Outposts were known collectively as the United States Information Service (USIS). Although it would have a close working relationship with its parent State Department over the course of its 46-year lifespan, USIA was “an independent foreign affairs agency within the executive branch of the U.S. government.”¹⁰⁴

This separate stature and accompanying clout were evident in operational structure Eisenhower established for the Agency. Although the USIA Director (a position eventually held by famed communicator Edward R. Murrow [1961-1964]) reported to the President through the National Security Council (NSC), direct access to the Commander-in-Chief was granted for regular updates and special FPI issues. Furthermore, an early form of a NSC Principals/Deputies Information Policy

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 15, 20 and USIA Office of Public Liaison, *USIA: United States Information Agency* (Manila: USIA Regional Service Center, 1998), 5. USIA’s name was briefly changed to the United States International Communication Agency under the Carter Administration, but President Ronald Reagan restored the Agency’s time-honored name in 1982.

Coordinating Committee was set up to facilitate USIA's input on national policy formulation. Called the Operations Coordinating Board and chaired by the Deputy Secretary of State, this interagency forum included the Deputy Defense Secretary, the Director of Central Intelligence, the head of the Foreign Aid Agency (predecessor to the United States Agency for International Development), as well as the USIA Director. In addition, the Director was an attendee at all meetings of the NSC.¹⁰⁵

Despite its status as a member of the policy-making team, USIA only had authority over its own personnel and means. The Information Agency's designation as the lead federal agency for FPI was acknowledged by the other governmental entities, but the mandatory compliance with directives - as had been the case under the OWI system - was not part of USIA's charter. Each Federal Department and Agency had reverted to their "peacetime" Information autonomies, and this arrangement has not changed since. Despite compliance with FPI policy being essentially voluntary, this collaborative arrangement seemed to generally work well during the Cold War.

A similarly cooperative approach was also taken by the main USIA organization and its executing subordinates "in the field." Rather than exercising a centrally-controlled strategy from Washington, the first USIA Director created a process by which general guidance, dubbed as "world themes," would be conveyed to USIS entities, often resident within U.S. Embassies in each foreign country. This direction, possibly the genesis for the "theme" concept commonly accepted in contemporary influence operations and strategic communications, was reciprocally communicated: in consultation with the Chiefs of Mission in their countries, the USIS personnel that received the world theme guidance would also submit back to the USIA headquarters

¹⁰⁵ Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, pp. 15, 20, 30.

their plans and ideas for what FPI undertakings should happen at their own particular posts.¹⁰⁶

With the advent of USIA came the introduction of a new characterization of FPI: public diplomacy. Although not officially coined until 1965,¹⁰⁷ “PD” became synonymous with what USIA did. Indeed, the Agency’s mission statement was derived from its definition of the concept: “promoting the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.”¹⁰⁸ Though slightly broader than the description of Foreign Public Information outlined in the first chapter of this work, the institution of the USIA was certainly the primary vehicle by which the Informational instrument of national power was employed abroad during the Cold War – and employed to great effect. David Gergen, a former member of USIA’s Speaker and Specialist Program, in 1994 characterized the Agency’s role in the victory over communism this way: “...our triumph during the Cold War period came on the battlefield of ideas. And that is where USIA was at the forefront.”¹⁰⁹

ANOTHER INFORMATION DEMOBILIZATION

As was the case with the Creel Commission after World War I and the OWI after victory in the Second World War, the end of the Cold War seemed to close another chapter on Informational activities. With the “cessation of hostilities” not as clear cut as

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰⁸ Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy, *Changing Minds Winning Peace*, 20-21.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 52 and Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, 71.

was the case with traditional wars, the need to adjust Information operations was also not immediately evident. Combined with the murky evolution of the post-Cold War's New World Order was the technology explosion throughout the 1990s. The introduction and worldwide proliferation of mass media sources, especially the internet and satellite/cable news channels, made Information a more widely accessible instrument.

The events of that decade – including the series of American military operations, many of which involved non-traditional roles for the armed forces – and the accompanying public opinion “mood swings” seemed to convince President Bill Clinton and others in the government that a FPI restructuring was the only way to regain the Information initiative. Lamenting “the unfortunate power of inaccurate and malicious information in conflict-prone situations” like Bosnia and Rwanda,¹¹⁰ Clinton signed the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 and issued Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 68. Between these two documents, USIA was abolished and a new interagency process was to take over the strategic direction of the latest term for FPI: “International Public Information (IPI).”¹¹¹

The Department of State once again held the dominant role in FPI, as it absorbed most of the functions and personnel of USIA upon its disestablishment in 1999. Although broadcasting entities (such as the International Broadcasting Bureau organizations of VOA, Radio and TV Marti, and others) were aligned under the “independent Federal entity” of the Broadcasting Board of Governors according to the 1998 Act, the Secretary of State was given a permanent supervisory role in that separate

¹¹⁰ Bill Clinton, Executive Order, “Presidential Decision Directive 68: The Administration’s Policy on International Public Information,” (30 April 1999), section I.

¹¹¹ Ibid, sections IV, VI and Herrmann et. al., *The United States Information Agency*, 69.

agency.¹¹² Further weight was given to State's dominant position in FPI by the creation of an interagency group to enact the provisions of PDD 68, with the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs chairing the body. A significant point in the PDD was the interagency group's task to develop a first-ever national FPI strategy

...consisting of public information plans for potential major regional or transnational challenges. The strategy will outline opportunities for using IPI to promote our national interests and to prevent and mitigate international crises. IPI plans for specific contingencies will include discussion of the potential for information-based U.S. responses, the threshold for U.S. IPI involvement, resources required for meeting our public information goals, the most effective information tools, the scope and duration of proposed U.S. IPI efforts, and the desired result. IPI plans will also be integrated into interagency planning...¹¹³

The proposed national FPI strategy never materialized, as the new millennium brought a new administration and a consolidation of interagency working groups.¹¹⁴ As a result, the outbreak of the War on Terror in 2001 found the nation again with a diffuse assortment of Information entities and functions scattered throughout the Federal government.

WAR ON TERRORISM: EARLY EFFORTS

As the impact of the terrorists' attacks sunk in, so too did the realization among many that this first war of the 21st Century would be unlike many previous conflicts. Winning it will require "coordinated, integrated, and sustained engagement of the enemy across the full spectrum of U.S. instruments of power."¹¹⁵ To that end, numerous initiatives arose to again harness the Informational instrument. Though each in turn had

¹¹² BBG, *Marrying the Mission to the Market*, pp. 2, 12, 14.

¹¹³ Clinton, "PDD 68," sections III-IV, VI.

¹¹⁴ Bush, "NSPD 1"

¹¹⁵ Bush, *NSS-CT*, 25.

merit, the uncoordinated nature of these efforts was reminiscent of the pre-OWI days of World War II. Those Informational efforts that are still ongoing in this “war of ideas” have been discussed in the previous chapter; below are those organizations that have ceased operations or were terminated as the Federal Executive Branch gropes for an effective Information architecture.

The DoD, still maturing its concept and implementation of influence operations, embarked in late 2001 on two endeavors within the Pentagon to focus what the Defense Department sees as its part of the Information instrument: FPI and non-public Information. The Office Strategic Influence was established to shape Foreign Public Information. Ironically, it was DPI – or, more to the point, the lack thereof - that proved to be this organization’s bane. Stories began to circulate in the U.S. press that this Office was engaging in, or at least proposing to engage in, unethical activities (poisoning of civilian food and blaming it on al Qaeda, for instance) and planning to use propaganda (i.e., lies, innuendo, and deceit) in the public realm to achieve success against the terrorists. The negative publicity quickly spiraled out of control and the Secretary of Defense was forced to disband the Office. While these claims of ill intent were unfounded and may have simply been the result of political infighting, the episode further contributed to the growing popular opinion that “we’re losing the information war.”

A second more successful, yet less public, DoD effort was the Information Operations Task Force (IOTF). This endeavor by elements of the Joint Staff was able to provide analysis, guidance, and begin operational assessment for the Unified Combatant Commands. While not conducting operations itself, the IOTF was useful in furnishing Informational assistance for the Regional Commands as they formulated their own public

and non-public Information activities in support of the war effort. As Theater Commands matured their individual military Information programs, the need for such support from the Pentagon declined and the Task Force's traditional IO staff functions were incorporated into the Joint Staff's Deputy Directorate for Information Operations by 2004.

Outside of the Department of Defense, the White House realized an additional capability for Public Information would score gains in the critical opening months of the war. The idea for Coalition Information Centers (CICs), essentially a focal point for media interface, manifested in the establishment of CICs in the capitals of both the United States and the United Kingdom. The first wartime DPI/FPI entity since World War II, the CICs facilitated interviews by administration officials with both domestic and foreign media, monitored the tone and content of news and commentary programs to determine public opinion themes and trends, and distributed press releases both at home and abroad. An interagency structure consisting of representatives from various entities manning desks at the Coalition Information Center in the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House provided limited coordination, but the CICs had no authority to task any Department or Agency with conducting Informational activities on their behalf. Nor was there any comprehensive Information strategy: the two CICs (a modest third was later established in Afghanistan) were consumed with the immediate situation, and not able to devise plans for more than a few days in advance. With President Bush desiring a less "crisis action" apparatus for Public Information, the CIC concept transitioned to a new entity in 2003.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ George W. Bush, Executive Order, "Executive Order: Establishing the Office of Global Communications," (January 21, 2003).

The successor organization to the White House Coalition Information Center was the Office of Global Communications (OGC). As Afghanistan was liberated and planning began for the invasion of Iraq, the OGC tried to get beyond the immediate reaction nature of CIC operations and provide a more direct DPI function. Through mass e-mails of its Global Messenger, the OGC attempts to communicate talking points sometimes seemed to blur the line between White House Communications (“spinning” the administration’s situation) and providing non-partisan DPI. By 2005, the OGC ceased operating with its limited FPI functions migrating to the State Department and to the National Security Council’s Office for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach.¹¹⁷ Domestic Public Information again has apparently reverted back to the decentralized control and execution of each Department and Agency, leaving the various Federal entities to determine their own DPI and FPI activities.

BACK TO THE FUTURE?

As has been demonstrated, the United States Federal Executive Branch has harnessed the Information instrument of national power at different times, through various means, and often to great effect throughout the recent history of the past 100 years. The catalyst of war was the common impetus to motivate those Informational actions. Faced with a new global war, in which Information may be a supported as well as a supporting means by which to wage the conflict, these historical examples from

¹¹⁷ Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *2005 Report*, 8 and Matthew T. McDonald, White House staff, e-mail to author, October 28, 2005.

entities such as the Office of War Information may serve as the blueprint for a 21st Century national Information architecture.

Chapter 4: The Public Information Center

*This is a people's war and to win it the people should know as much about it as they can.*¹¹⁸

“We’re losing the Information war!” This lament has become conventional wisdom for many Americans, its origins dating back in all likelihood to 12 September 2001. With every “negative” news story, public statements from government officials that seem to be in conflict or contradictory, and each internet blog that portrays opinion as indisputable fact, U.S. policy-makers, military personnel, diplomats, and average citizens increasingly echo this mantra. The American leadership is also keenly aware of the Public Information struggle, leading officials like Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to openly sound the alarm: “Let there be no doubt that the longer it takes to put a strategic communications framework into place, the more we can be certain that the vacuum will be filled by the enemy and by hostile news sources who most assuredly will not paint an accurate picture of what is actually taking place.”¹¹⁹

As has been outlined in previous chapters, multiple initiatives and existing agencies have made valiant attempts to turn the Information tide. However, as was the case in the first six months of World War II, the need for bolder steps is increasingly evident. A few public interest groups, most notably the Congressionally-directed Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World in 2003, have made open calls for an Information architecture. Such a system would include “the establishment of a Cabinet-level Special Counselor to the President for Public Diplomacy,” as well as other structural and procedural changes to U.S. Foreign Public

¹¹⁸ Elmer Davis, Regulation No. 1, Editor and Publisher 75, July 18, 1942, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Donald H. Rumsfeld, “War in the Information Age,” *Los Angeles Times*, 23 February 2006.

Information.¹²⁰ Yet such proposals are almost exclusively geared toward fighting the war of ideas abroad, through FPI, leaving largely unaddressed the equally important use of DPI on the homefront in the Information War.

A solution for this Information problem is to take a cue from the last World War our nation successfully fought and create a new Office of War Information (OWI). In World War II, the OWI served as the single entity which formulated and executed public Information programs at home and abroad. This entity coordinated the Information activities of all Federal departments and agencies and assured an accurate and consistent Information flow to help achieve Allied war aims. The United States needs a new OWI to achieve our current national and war aims – not just to win the War on Terrorism, but to enable our country to win the larger war of ideas.

To accomplish this end, a Public Information Center (PIC) should be created. Such an entity would consolidate the current public Information (both foreign- and domestically-focused) functions of all the Executive Branch's Departments and Agencies. Although each Federal entity (Department and/or Agency) would maintain their existing public Information capabilities (personnel, resources, and – in most cases – their missions), the PIC would have “operational authority” over all the Foreign and Domestic Public Information functions, operations, and efforts of those entities.

Specifically, the PIC would have a primary responsibility of drafting the National Public Information strategy. Such a strategy would be developed from the guidance provided in the National Security Strategy (NSS), as well as from supplemental security policies directed by the President. Further, the President would approve and direct

¹²⁰ See generally Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy, *Changing Minds Winning Peace*, and p. 59 specifically.

implementation of this Strategy in the same way other National Security “amplification” strategies are promulgated (e.g., the NSS-Combating Terrorism, the National Strategy for Homeland Security, the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, etc.).

Beyond the establishment of the National Information Strategy, the PIC would issue guidelines and directives to all other Executive entities on the execution of that strategy. To that end, the PIC would be responsible for directing all national Foreign Public Information (FPI) and Domestic Public Information (DPI) efforts for the Federal Government. This responsibility constitutes the definition of operational authority: the power to direct an entity to conduct prescribed missions.

In order to ensure true unity of effort, the key PIC leadership should also have visibility into the non-public Information activities of the various Federal Departments/Agencies. While the Center’s operational authority should only extend to Public Information, the clout to compel government entities to coordinate (“coordination authority”) their non-Public actions would create a dynamic and integrated approach to the employment of the entire Information instrument of national power within the context of the National Information Strategy. Beyond providing the strategic venue to coordinate these classified and sensitive non-Public Information activities, and by virtue of the PIC’s focus on public Information, the Center should not be empowered to direct, interfere, or otherwise exercise any *control* over any Federal Departments’/Entities’ non-Public Information efforts.

Obviously, unless legislated, such power must be invested in the PIC from the President and would require interagency support and buy-in to succeed. To facilitate

such buy-in, the PIC would have only a relatively small cadre of organic personnel with at least half the PIC staff being attached and/or liaisons from other entities (Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, et. al.). In addition, execution of the strategy would, in most cases, be decentralized to those entities. However, some “production,” such as the Public Information Tasking Order (PITO) discussed below, would be internal to the PIC.

Support from the other Branches of the Federal government would also be required. Specifically, Congress would have to repeal or modify the Smith-Mundt Act. The 1948 law, as discussed in the previous chapter, restricts DPI by forbidding domestic dissemination of public Information intended for overseas audiences. Such a limitation does not reflect the realities of today’s interconnected world and would hinder the PIC’s purpose of unity of the Information effort. This legislative change would also clear any legal objections from the Judicial Branch.

The PIC itself would not be a very large organization. Ideally, this new Office should have less than 100 personnel – perhaps approximately 75. This complement would include all assigned, “matrixed” (i.e., seconded from the other Federal entities), interagency liaisons, and any administrative support personnel required. Minimizing the organization’s staff in this way should help to reinforce the concept that the PIC would be the national Public Information *focus* entity, rather than an office manned to actually create and disseminate all the Informational products or conduct the Informational operations that would still be the purview of the individual Federal entities. The attached personnel from the Executive Departments/Agencies should work at the PIC on rotational basis, perhaps for one-year tours. This rotation system for a portion of the PIC staff

would facilitate fresh ideas and practices both at the PIC and at the Departments to which these matrixed personnel return.

To accomplish its mission of leading the National Information effort, the PIC should be composed of the following teams: intelligence, strategy (to conduct long- and mid-term planning), plans (to develop the near-term plans from the strategy), operations, and assessment. As mentioned, each of these teams would have both permanent PIC staff and personnel attached as augmentation staff/interagency liaisons to conduct the functions of the PIC.

Intelligence: The Intelligence Team would be responsible for providing relevant intelligence on targets (i.e., target audiences for FPI), as well as analyzing enemy and foreign propaganda/public information. This Team would also conduct “red teaming” (wargaming against U.S. Information strategy/activities from an enemy perspective) of PIC plans and initiatives.

Strategy: The Strategy Team would be responsible for all long-term (i.e., 6 months and beyond) and mid-term (1-6 months) strategy development. This team would also draft the National Information Strategy for the President’s approval. The long- and mid-term planning efforts are the translation of that national strategy into more concrete guidance (specific objectives, dissemination and tasking recommendations, and measures of effectiveness).

Plans: Plans would be responsible for turning the concrete guidance from the Strategy Team into an executable plan. This near-term plan would “operationalize” the strategy by creating an Information Tasking Order,

which would outline the integrated FPI and DPI implementation scheme for the upcoming one month period. The Information Tasking Order would detail the target (i.e., intended audience), timing of delivery, delivery method (medium), any special instructions for the message/theme (e.g., message length, other agencies/entities involved, required elements of message/theme), and tasked agency (i.e., the Department primarily responsible for accomplishing each assigned FPI and/or DPI mission in the Tasking Order).

Operations: Operations would supervise the execution of the Information Tasking Order, ensuring the integration of main and supporting efforts from the various agencies/entities tasked with missions on the order. Operations would also have responsibility for responding to any immediate (i.e., day-of and within three days of execution) deviations/situations requiring changes to the Information Tasking Order. This Time Critical Information Tasking function would utilize the guidance from the Information Tasking Order and would exploit opportunities, mitigate adversities, and counter enemy public Information actions (as required).

Assessment: The Assessment Team would work closely with each of the other teams in order to perform their primary role: measuring how well the strategy is accomplishing its desired effects and recommending any modifications to that strategy. To best determine whether our nation - through the efforts of the PIC - is winning the war of ideas, the

Assessment Team would partner with the Strategy Team to write clearly defined, measurable, and attainable Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs).

Although this organizational structure allows for a self-contained public Information planning and operations center, the task of effectively focusing the Information instrument of national power is too large and needs to involve too many other organizations for the PIC to perform its mission separately from the rest of the US government. Manning the Center with only a small number of “permanent party” personnel and limiting the number of those attached from the Federal Departments/Agencies would help “federate” the national Information effort among the entire Executive Branch. The modest staffing would, by design, delegate certain functions to existing Information entities that are already conducting those efforts. For example, the Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the Department of State (DoS) may have the responsibility of generating the MOEs for the PIC’s Assessment Team. Furthermore, all execution of the taskings levied through the PITO would be implemented by the apparatuses of those tasked agencies. In other words, the PIC would provide that centralized control of national public Information currently missing from our government.

The decentralized execution of the Information effort would achieve unity of purpose through the Public Information Tasking Order, as alluded to above. The PITO would provide a single-source directive integrating the Information activities of the U.S. Government. This document would be produced on a regular schedule: monthly is optimal, but daily or weekly frequency may be appropriate dependent on the world or war situation. The Tasking Order would provide national guidance and direction in the

forms of objectives, desired effects, message, “targets” (i.e., intended audience[s]), timing, recommended delivery mechanism, responsible entity (tasked department), enabling efforts (supporting agencies and required actions), and MOEs. Additionally, any required Special Information Instructions would be included in the PITO to ensure deconfliction of activities and address coordination issues between tasked entities. By providing such direction and visibility into the mutually-supporting Information efforts underway, the PITO would be the mechanism by which the currently disparate Departmental actions are ordered, focused, and synergized to accomplish war aims and other National objectives.

Several models rise to the fore as to the best placement for this Center. Direct subordination to the President, similar to the Office of National Drug Control Policy construct, has the obvious advantage of proximity to the Commander-in-Chief; such close association with the Chief Executive facilitates both guidance and empowerment of mission. Another potential model is to have the PIC directly subordinated to the Office of the Vice President. Such a placement gives the Center independent clout and adds the authority of the Vice President to the implementation of the PIC’s job, although this situation would also expand the role of the Vice President substantially.

Perhaps the best positioning of the PIC would be within an inherently Interagency entity: i.e., the National Security Council (NSC). Directly subordinating the PIC to the NSC (specifically, the PIC reporting to the President through the National Security Advisor) would allow the Center to utilize some of the existing credibility and access such an Interagency forum provides in order to leverage both Departmental/Agency participation as well as the consensus-building authority the NSC already enjoys. Such a

model, making use of an institution and mechanism with which the Interagency Information entities are already familiar and comfortable, would help facilitate the Interagency participation and “buy-in” that is required for the success of this Public Information effort. In this set-up, the NSC’s Office of Strategic Communications and Global Outreach would form the cadre of the PIC’s permanent-party staff. Furthermore, since one of the tasks levied on the PIC would be to author and maintain the National Information Strategy, associating the Center with the same body usually responsible for drafting other National Strategies (i.e., the NSC) makes logical sense for this organizational model.

Regardless of where the PIC ultimately resides, it will only succeed in unifying the national Public Information effort if it has the Interagency cooperation, operational authority, and support – at least, perceived support – of the Governmental leadership. In particular, active and wholehearted participation by all Federal Departments and Agencies is a “must.” Otherwise, the PIC will fail or – worse – become an ineffectual bureaucratic staff manned by second-rate personnel from Interagency overages. Key to Interagency buy-in would be active support from the President and Cabinet Secretaries/Agency Directors, from which the PIC would derive the clout needed to break down inter-Departmental barriers and build an American Information Team. Dominance of the Center by any one entity (e.g., a preponderance of staff from the Department of Defense or too much delegation of authority/responsibilities to DoS) would undermine that teamwork and may foster cases of the very thing the PIC is designed to avoid: Information fratricide.

PIC: PROS

The pros of the PIC/PITO construct stem from the organization this architecture would provide for unifying the U.S. Information efforts, as well as from its inherent authoritative power. Specifically, the centralized control, manifested through the PITO and other directives, and the decentralized execution of PIC taskings is a proven tenet of the exercise of instruments of national power. This decentralized execution, along with the federation of PIC functions among the Federal Agencies, would help overcome some of the Interagency resistance that inevitably comes with the perceived loss or transfer of authority and power to a different entity.

Organizationally, the proposed structure (Strategy, Plans, Operations, and Assessment Teams) would allow for near- and long-term thinking as well as the flexibility of immediate reaction and dynamic exploitation of Information opportunities. Another strength of the PIC concept would be the dedicated Assessment Team, filling the critical function of success measurement and evaluation, which is essential to any effects-based operation. Targeting, particularly ensuring target audience coverage via the PIC's centralized target assignment in the Plans Team, would be another benefit of this national Information entity. Likewise, the PITO not only would ensure integration of effort through visibility and tasking, but guarantee activities are linked to common objectives and the War Aims through explicit national-level guidance.

PIC: CONS

The cons of the PIC/PITO must also be honestly recognized and addressed. An obvious reality is that while the PIC would restrict itself to using only the truth to achieve

the U.S.'s ends, our enemies will not symmetrically reciprocate. This battle of truth vs. lies may result in the PIC becoming myopically focused on a constant reaction to enemy propaganda, thus inadvertently ceding the Information initiative to our adversaries. Similarly, the danger exists that the Center could become politicized, blurring the lines between the function of White House Communications and the intended apolitical pro-US goals of the PIC. Creation of a new entity itself may hinder the rapid flow of Information and therefore work counter to our interests. Another major pitfall of the establishment of a body with such operational authority is the deference required from the Interagency to make the PIC an effective office; such parochialism among the various Departments and Agencies of the Federal government is the main impediment to true national unity of effort. Finally, the PIC will have to counter the very inevitable misperception as an Orwellian "Ministry of Information" – a propaganda arm of the state that some will always see as "Bush's Big Brother."¹²¹

Location of the PIC within the Executive Branch may also serve as either a pro, as has already been discussed, or a con. Subordination of the PIC directly under the Vice President would create an unprecedented expansion of that Office's authority and may cause an unintentional diffusion of the inherent power of the Presidency by delegating responsibility for one of the four instruments of national power to the Executive's Number 2 man. Placing the PIC under the auspices of the NSC puts this Information entity at a level below Cabinet rank and may hinder interagency cooperation with what the Departments could see as a body not on par with the appointed Secretaries. Following the "Drug Czar" model would essentially give the PIC Director Cabinet status,

¹²¹ See *1984* by George Orwell for a more complete understanding of the analogies.

but such a powerful placement may generate the very image the Public Information Center will need to counter: a Joseph Goebbels-style “Department of Propaganda.”¹²²

ANALYSIS

As can be seen from the above sections, arguments can be made both for and against the establishment of a Public Information Center. Although the concept may seem appealing on the surface, the counterarguments and efforts likely required to create such an entity are sure to give one pause. An analysis of the pros and cons will yield a greater understanding in order to better form an opinion on this proposal.

As discussed, the PIC’s main focus would be the direction of the American Public Information effort both at home and abroad. As this paper has defined it, Public Information is restricted to only the truth. Enemies of the U.S. may see such a restriction as America fighting with “one hand tied behind her back” as the adversaries’ use of propaganda (truth *and* lies) could give an advantage to them in the war of ideas. However, today’s technological and communication environment – the battlefield in this Information conflict – provides a de facto check and balance system for the veracity of public Information. With the ubiquitous “real-time” independent journalism and individuals’ means of ascertaining truth through access to a multitude of media, especially via the uncontrollable internet, the shelf-life of propaganda has dramatically decreased since previous conflicts. Use of public Information (i.e., the truth) by the PIC has the potential of compounding success as its directed themes, messages, and various efforts withstand the scrutiny of evaluation by its domestic and foreign targets.

¹²² Goebbels was the German Minister of Propaganda in World War II.

While counter-propaganda would be a function of the PIC, the real danger of the Center becoming a reactionary body to the Information activities of enemies exists. To mitigate this risk, the four-Divisional organization would ensure the Public Information Center would not lose its focus by being drawn into the “news media cycle.” While adversary Information actions will impact all Divisions, only the Operations Division will have responsibility for waging “today’s war” via its PITO execution monitoring processes and its Time Critical Information Tasking function. Such distribution of tasks within the PIC would help the entity to keep sight on the larger war of ideas while simultaneously fighting the daily battles.

Politicization of the PIC is a concern, as it was for its model organization, the Office of War Information, in World War II. Placing the PIC outside of the Executive Office of the President (i.e., not a White House component office) is one step to allay the fear that the Center will become an extension of White House Communications. Another important factor would be the PIC composition: staffing this entity with “attached” or rotational civil servants and military personnel from the various Federal agencies/Departments would help assure its non-partisanship. Although some of the permanent staff, including the Center Director, will likely be appointed by the sitting President, this situation would be no different than is the case for every Federal entity with a politically-appointed Secretarial head and Departmental leadership. To further establish PIC impartiality and credibility, the implementing President could appoint a respected citizen with a reputation for unbiased work as the PIC Director, much as FDR did when he selected the journalist Elmer Davis to serve as Director of the OWI.

Any new bureaucratic organization runs the risk of increasing governmental red tape and becoming more of a hindrance than a help to the country. Such could be the case with the PIC, as this additional layer of control may stifle the current Information efforts of the Departments/Agencies. It is precisely for that reason that the recommended size of the Center be relatively small. This modest staffing would prevent the PIC from intentionally or unintentionally attempting to become an executing body for public Information. With clearly defined authorities and responsibilities, likely spelled out in an Executive Order or National Presidential Security Directive establishing the entity, the PIC would be designed to provide the guidance, strategy, and unity of effort for the rest of the Federal government to execute.

Likewise, this interagency staffing and explicit authority granted from the President would ensure the required cooperation from all the other Federal Executive Branch Departments and Agencies. If empowered to perform its mission as the lead Information authority through Presidential direction in an Executive Order, compliance with PIC functions by the interagency would be mandatory. If the Department of Homeland Security model were adopted (i.e, initial establishment by Executive Order followed by formal institutionalization through legislation), a habitual relationship of cooperation would be formed that would transcend Administrations. However, the key to success would not be a compelling function like a law, but rather through buy-in from the Interagency to the PIC's Information mission. This "enfranchisement" of the Departments and Agencies would stem from the interagency staffing of the Center, as well as from the Federal entities retaining their own Information assets and execution authorities.

Finally is the con that harkens back to the American fears of another Creel Commission: the actual or perceived danger that the PIC would be or would become a propaganda arm of the government, manipulating facts and brainwashing U.S. citizens. This concern is well-founded, for even well-intentioned endeavors can work too well and inadvertently become the very thing which they are designed to oppose, as evidenced by the DPI excesses of World War I. This challenge is countered by the same means that the first potential pitfall in this analysis would be dealt with: the truth. By effective use of Public Information – open presentation of the U.S. message, rapid and honest acknowledgment of mistakes, mitigation of Information fratricide, seizure of the Information initiative, efficient outreach to all target audiences, and exposure of adversary propaganda – the Public Information Center could establish its reputation for credibility and authoritative information (little “i”) to both foreign and domestic audiences. It is precisely through the execution of both its DPI and FPI missions that the PIC would not only dispel any myth of it becoming an Orwellian Propaganda Ministry, but would also be the primary mechanism to win the war of ideas. As Elmer Davis astutely pointed out, “we believe the truth is on our side, not only as to the nature and issues of this war, but as to who is going to win it.”¹²³

CONCLUSION

All things being equal, Information (arguably) represents one-fourth of a nation’s power. While readily acknowledging the criticality of employing this instrument,¹²⁴ our nation has yet to make a concerted effort at harnessing this tool and applying it

¹²³ Davis and Price, *War Information*, 13.

¹²⁴ For example, see Bush, *2002 NSS*, 31.

effectively to win the War on Terror. The above proposed architecture provides a methodology for the United States to seize the Information initiative by developing a National Information Strategy and an apparatus to ensure the unified implementation of that strategy. The Public Information Center, a modern-day Office of War Information, can be that mechanism to accomplish the national goal of winning the war of ideas.

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VITA

Major Todd Christopher Kelly is an intermediate developmental education student at the Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS) of the Joint Forces Staff College. JAWS produces operational/strategic planners who are expert in the joint planning processes and capable of critical analysis in the application of all aspects of national power across the full range of military operations. Prior to this assignment, Major Kelly was Chief of the Pacific Air Operations Center Strategy Plans Team, responsible for developing air, space, and information strategy and plans for Pacific Air Forces and Pacific Command coalition/joint military operations, contingencies, and exercises.

Major Kelly graduated from The Ohio State University on 12 June 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics. He was commissioned in the United States Air Force through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program the same day. He has served in strategy development, operational planning, and intelligence positions from unit level to the Air Staff as well as in several contingency operations.

Major Kelly was selected by the Air Force Institute of Technology to earn a Master of Arts degree in Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu, graduating in May 1999. He is a fully-qualified Southeast Asia Foreign Area Officer and speaks Indonesian.