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**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY—CAPTURING THE INFORMATION TERRAIN ON
THE WAY TO VICTORY**

by

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Acknowledgments

I have been interested in Information Warfare ever since being on the receiving end of the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff's Exercise Eligible Receiver in 1996. It really opened my eyes to a different type of warfare that the military had not planned for in many of its operational plans. Ever since that sobering experience in the Pacific, I have continued to see the importance of Information Operations grow as the military continues to embrace advancing information technology to concentrate on capabilities as opposed to platforms and internalize the concept of horizontal integration.

One aspect that I consider an important part of Information Operations is public diplomacy. I did not realize how important words and the transmission of information to the public could be until I met Mr. John Rendon in 1999. Mr Rendon, President of Rendon Group, Inc., insists that information is terrain and someone will occupy it, either the adversary, a third party, or US. The more I thought about his reasoning and applied it to my analysis of Iraq during 2000, it became obvious that early engagement of public diplomacy can result in a decided advantage in both the definition of the information battlespace and occupation of the information terrain. In the 21st Century information age it is clear that public diplomacy is becoming as important as land, air, and sea warfare.

Hence, my topic was born, and I owe a debt of gratitude to John for peaking my interest in public diplomacy. I am also indebted to Lieutenant General Charles F. Wald, USAF. General Wald supported my topic from its formulative stages, and his subsequent interview after his return from Operation Enduring Freedom helped to fill holes in my research. Additionally, Brigadier General Hugh Cameron (USAF, Ret.) was invaluable for his firsthand insight on the past and continuing Central Command Air Forces' coalition engagement policies. And I thank

Captain Robert Bement who took the time to rummage through all the old files and come through with just the data I needed to finish the Iraqi analysis.

Colonel David Sims, Director, Public Affairs Center of Excellence and his deputy, Major Andy White also took the time to review and offer comments to help refine the paper. Colonel Sims pointed out an excellent paper written by Major Gary Pounder, which offered recommendations from Operational Allied Force that are still valid today and augment my recommendations. Major White was comprehensive in his comments and gave me insight to a Public Affairs viewpoint from the trenches. At Georgetown University, Mary Gawronski and John Brown, Public Diplomacy practitioners in residence, reminded me that information conveyed to the public must be truthful or Department of Defense runs the risk of another Office of Strategic Influence fiasco on our hands and, thus, another paragraph was quickly added.

From the 9th Information Warfare Flight, Technical Sergeant Rhonda Barnklau and Master Sergeant Charmin Johnson kept me accurate on dates and helped me find a specific “shepherd boy” article. Dee Urrutia, Master Sergeant Greg Palmertree, and Richard Urrutia were also key readers who suggested changes to the paper so a normal person on the street could understand what was written and not be overwhelmed by acronyms. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Dr Greg Varhall, who read the paper at least 100 times and insured all the I’s were dotted and T’s crossed. Without his love and encouragement, I would not be where I am today.

Abstract

The impact that information operations and public diplomacy have on military operations is critical to the success of any campaign. However, the United States Government—and in particular the military—has not been very adept at planning and executing public diplomacy. Along with its not being one of the “sexier” tools to execute, public diplomacy in the United States has traditionally and consistently been reactive instead of proactive in helping to shape the battlespace. Especially in light of the events of 11 September 2001 (“9/11”), it has become obvious that the information terrain was available to whoever was best at capturing and controlling it (“information superiority”). One or the other, the United States or the Taliban, would capture the terrain and the media initiative, dominate the headlines, and, more importantly, the public domain.

The United States Government and the military’s inability to match an adversary on the public diplomacy level has been a continuing problem since the Vietnam era when images of the battles were brought into the public’s living room. It still is amazing in this era of technological advancements an adversary such as Saddam Hussein can shape the battlespace and mount a successful propaganda campaign against such a sophisticated foe as the United States to help pressure the United Nations to review imposed sanctions on Iraq. But to the casual observer, this campaign might not be obvious.

This paper details the campaign that Saddam executed in 2000 and impresses upon the reader that various public diplomacy techniques such as “faces with a name” can sway public opinion. Using this campaign as background, and to illustrate the value of capturing the information terrain, the events of 9/11 presented an opportunity to review the United States

Government and Department of Defense's public diplomacy strategy from its infancy as the military prepared for Operation Enduring Freedom.

In examining the first hundred days of this operation, the initial criticism is harsh as the administration stumbled into a different type of war engaging a non-nation-state and with little or no preparation time. As the campaign continued, handling public diplomacy gradually became a priority. Along with convincing our coalition partners that this was not a war against Islam, staffs throughout the United States Government knew that continued public support for a protracted war against terrorism would be needed, especially as the military began to suffer casualties. Now, months into Operation Enduring Freedom, public support in the United States remains high as a result of a refined effort and better understanding of public diplomacy, and the United States Government can focus on maintaining the information superiority it won back from Usama Bin Laden and the Taliban.

While the Department of Defense has come a long way in the past six months, the recommendations in "Public Diplomacy-Capturing the Information Terrain on the Way to Victory" will help the United States Air Force step out in front and be prepared to capture and maintain the information terrain early in any future conflict. These recommendations will help to enable the Air Force to maintain the support of the American, Allied, Coalition, and international publics by shaping the battlefield at home while simultaneously shaping the battlefield in the area of responsibility by air superiority, with both efforts contributing to victory in the end.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“In this and like communities, public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statues and decisions possible or impossible to be executed.”¹

Abraham Lincoln, 1858

As the world enters a new millennium, the face of the adversary is changing. No longer can an adversary be assumed to be a nation state with values close to our own in the Western world. Along with having to deal with non-nation state adversaries, the way the military approaches warfare has also changed. No longer is the enemy expected to be waiting on the other side of a clearly defined forward line with a gun in hand. Additionally, the Internet, at one fell swoop, has made the Forward Edge of the Battle Area global. Overall, the traditional planning for a force-on-force scenario has been replaced with a more nebulous task to prepare for a low intensity conflict.

Information Warfare, if properly planned and executed early at all levels can change the face of warfare. Initially, the execution of the Informational Flexible Deterrent Options outlined in Joint Publication 2.0 can help shape the battlefield long before any aircraft have launched. For instance, gaining popular support and taking steps to gain/maintain the confidence of the public should be instrumental (and required) before beginning most military campaigns. Information is an instrument of national power, just as military, economic and political. Like any weapon or

tool, the United States Government needs to use it or cede the “battlefield” to someone else. Additionally, media operations or public diplomacy, to include written and spoken forms, have been critical in defining public and coalition support in the past and will be key to building the support of and maintaining coalition members who have to answer to their own public.

With the advance of technology, conflicts are portrayed, often unedited, in living rooms throughout the world in a matter of minutes. In the 1960s, war was first brought into American homes and to the international public in a timely fashion via wire and satellite feeds. Much of America watched Vietnam skirmishes play out in their living rooms on the evening news. Nearly four decades later, on 11 September 2001, the real-time images of the second aircraft plowing into the World Trade Center were forever engraved in minds and hearts throughout the world. Without a lead-in, pictures coming across computers and televisions shocked and served to rally the world in seconds. Even some United States adversaries such as Iran condemned the actions portrayed on their screen and the terrorist actions became headlines of virtually all major newspapers around the world. In Afghanistan today, instantaneous news with the satellite video telephone leads to instant pictures ... and instant public reaction.

In an Air Operations Center (AOC), intelligence analysts are always on the prowl for the imagery shot to prove their case. But what about using “images” to build public support for military operations? What if there were not only military interviews and press conferences arranged by public affairs but also a distinct public diplomacy campaign integrated with operations being executed on the battlefield. This seems especially critical for the United States Air Force (USAF), as most campaigns in the recent past have begun with the deployment and employment of airpower.

However, in the past the United States Government—in particular its military—has not been very adept at playing “the public diplomacy card.” Along with not being one of the “sexier” tools to execute, public diplomacy has been used in a reactive sense rather than proactive to help shape the battlespace. In other words, the Department of Defense (DoD) has not been able to seize the initiative. In today’s world, the information terrain is available to anyone who can capture and control the terrain (information superiority); and either the United States captures it, or the adversary will not only seize it and dominate the headlines but, more importantly, the public domain.

My premise is simple: Public diplomacy is an invaluable tool, and DoD, especially the Air Force, must plan for this and execute it throughout the conflict spectrum. To demonstrate this point, I will examine a public diplomacy campaign that Iraq executed successfully in 2000 and as well as the public diplomacy response—especially related to the air campaign—during the first 100 days of Operation Enduring Freedom. In conclusion, I will offer frank recommendations to enable the Air Force to step out in front and be trained and ready to capture/maintain the information terrain early in any conflict.

Notes

¹ Lincoln, Abraham. Political Debates Between Lincoln and Douglas. Cleveland: Burrows Bros. Co., 1897; Bartleby.com, 2001, available from <http://www.bartleby.com/251/12.html>.

Chapter 2

Public Diplomacy and the Information Terrain

According to Hans N. Tuch, author of *Communicating With the World*, public diplomacy is defined as: “A government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies.”¹ It is obvious that in this definition, public diplomacy deals with an international audience, and public affairs is left to inform the domestic audience ... that is difficult to discern and an artificial distinction. Thus, any reference to public diplomacy in the following pages includes dealings with both international and domestic audiences.

Information now available to the public, both domestic and international, affects the formation of public attitudes, and, more importantly, helps to set public opinion. It is no secret that public opinion—once again foreign and domestic—is an important factor in international affairs, exerting influence on decisions and actions of different governments. In this vein, it can be said that public diplomacy strategies established by different governments encompass both domestic and foreign audiences.

While Webster’s first defines diplomacy as “the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations,” its second definition, “skill in handling affairs without arousing hostility,” is more appropriate to the issue at hand. Hostility in this definition can include “negative” public opinion, which was alive and well in the Vietnam era and subsequently helped drive United States Government (USG) policies concerning the war. To use the second Webster’s definition and relying on the Vietnam War as an historical illustration, public diplomacy can include both audiences and will be examined in that way for this paper.

Public diplomacy in the United States has been executed in some form for over 200 years. In fact, as early as 1790, Benjamin Franklin pamphleteered in Europe in favor of the American revolutionary cause.² However, in today's world, there are no boundaries for information flow. It is now possible to transmit information instantaneously with a touch of a button to the most remote areas of the world. Now the public diplomacy initiative is captured by the first to release information, even though sometimes inaccurate. Thus, it is now imperative that governments establish a public diplomacy strategy proactively. In this strategy, it is imperative that the initiative is captured early.

The operational art of capturing and maintaining the information terrain is key to any government; however, seizing the initiative is crucial to military operations. Public diplomacy is a valuable tool for the military, but for maximum effect the Department of Defense should not be the only agency to execute the USG public diplomacy strategy proactively; it should be a synergy of effort to include at the minimum at least the National Security Council, Department of Defense, and State Department. This fact was evident early in the war against terrorism, and the White House quickly recognized this fact.

After the World Trade Center and Pentagon was attacked, President George W. Bush, in a matter of hours, began to use television to heal the nation. The Department of State, Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigations, and even the Department of Treasury have followed President Bush's lead and continued to keep their actions in the war against terrorism at the forefront of the public's mind. The continued attention to media coverage—both verbal and written—attempts to keep the American public as well as the international audience informed. Additionally, this spread of information keeps the crisis on the front pages of major newspapers and, on many days, the lead story on television and the Internet.

On 11 September 2001 (“9/11”), the world was captured by the “CNN effect.” Unfortunately, the terrorist organizations exploited the effect first, apparently having timed the attack on the second tower knowing that cameras would be focused on the World Trade Center. Within minutes, all regularly scheduled programming was cancelled and replaced with non-stop coverage for the next forty-eight hours. Since 9/11, entire sections of major newspaper (*Washington Post*, *NY Times*, *Denver Post*, etc) were dedicated to America’s new asymmetric response to terrorism. Whether defined as “Attack on America,” Operation Enduring Freedom, or “America fights back” the public diplomacy campaign, although not Government driven or controlled in the beginning, filled the information terrain twenty-four hours a day.

Until the tragedy of 9/11 the United States Government had seemed reluctant to capture the information terrain. Adversaries, such as Saddam Hussein, have been able to put their story lines out with little or no response from anyone on the American side—notably DoD—when forces are engaged. Thus, those reading, watching, and downloading information have no alternative news source to refute Hussein’s sources and plants. In essence, as in the past, the United States (US) allowed adversaries to capture the information terrain without a struggle.

However, since 9/11, things are rapidly changing as the United States’ military leadership faces a non-traditional enemy. No longer can military commanders think of the battlespace as only being one-dimensional. Instead of just defeating the enemy with overpowering force, the military leadership now must advise the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) on how to outwit the enemy. The leadership is being asked: “How can we affect the adversaries’ grey matter, and how can we influence their observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) loop?” Along with this, the military has to advise the SecDef on building support in the American public for its operations and to help the coalition countries keep their population informed.

Past conflicts have proven that public sentiment can sometimes be a key barometer on whether coalitions stay together and military operations continue. With the advancement of technology, military advice on how to keep the public domain informed in a real-time manner is crucial. In addition, the military needs to advise on how to operate and tailor reports in a news cycle that is now 24x7 and 365-days a year.

In the recent past, the United States Air Force has been the military arm that executes the first phase of an operational campaign. The Combined Forces Air Component Commander's (CFACC) preparation of the battlefield must include an analysis of the information terrain to be successful. Based on this analysis, the CFACC staff needs to be proactive in recommending a plan to the Combined Joint Task Forces Commander (CJTF/CC) or the regional Commander in Chief (CINC) that executes a public diplomacy campaign in concert with bombs on targets. The essence of the plan should be to capture and control the information sphere in the first few days of any operation or, if possible, before the balloon goes up (preparing the battlefield with your messages, your images, your leaders, and so on).

However, the USAF and Department of Defense cannot capture the information sphere by themselves. This must be an integrated campaign that incorporates all USG agencies working in concert. A good example of this happened early in the war on terrorism. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Treasury Paul O'Neil were quick to build an interagency and coalition that began to freeze terrorists' financial assets and provided the public with the first victory in the war against terrorism. However, along with working across agency lines, the USG has to work side by side with the media to make the latter an invaluable asset to get the word out in a real-time manner to a public hungering for updates of ongoing military operations.

There are many ways how the military can proactively play their part in capturing and maintaining information dominance. To show that objectives can be achieved using public diplomacy techniques, we will examine an adversary's past successful execution of a dedicated propaganda campaign.

Notes

¹ Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating With the World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 3.

² Hans N Tuch, ed., *Communicating With the World in the 1990s* (Washington DC: U.S. Information Agency, 1994), 35.

Chapter 3

Iraq's 2000 Public Diplomacy Campaign

Although the Gulf War has been over since 1991, the United States military still maintains a presence over Iraq to enforce United States and United Kingdom no-fly *demarches* from 1996. However, the normal man in the street does not even realize that airmen continue to fly in the zones protecting Shiites and Kurds on a daily basis. More importantly, the majority of the public is oblivious to the fact that the Iraqi military continues to refine its techniques to shoot down Western aircraft. In the absence of US reporting of the situation, Saddam Hussein recognized the information terrain was there for the taking. In late 1999, he organized his government to set in motion a perception management campaign. Overall, this campaign would use the alleged plight of the women and children of Iraq at the hands of airpower enforcing gulf-war generated United Nations (UN) sponsored sanctions and sway opinion on the world stage that sanctions against Iraq were outdated, oppressive, inhumane, and should be ended.

In January 2000, the international public began to get a hint of what was to come. It was clear to Saddam that Iraq needed to pull on international heartstrings to end sanctions and, thus, claim victory over Western powers. Beginning a calculated rhetoric campaign that spoken and written media from other countries could pick up and distribute, Iraq emphasized the theme that sanctions and air strikes intentionally and continually targeted innocent Iraqi civilians and non-military targets. This rhetoric coupled with two of the five UN Security Council members (China and Russia) publicly declaring their non-support of continued Iraqi sanctions and the French government's refusing to join in no-fly operations after Operation Desert Fox in

December 1998 began to turn the tide toward a perception that perhaps the UN sanctions against Iraq had run its course and the resolutions needed to be refined.

Soon to follow were “feeler stories” put out by Iraq. These press releases originated in Iraq with the intent that Saddam’s government were just “feeling out” the terrain. Would other nations distribute the articles and how much play would it get on the wire; was Cable News Network (CNN) including it on Headline News? In the beginning, the articles were aimed toward the Western powers, United States and United Kingdom. This was the case because only those two countries were flying in support of Operations Southern Watch (OSW) and Northern Watch (ONW). After most missions Iraq would claim that non-combatants were the targets and release alleged numbers of innocent personnel “killed and injured” for that day.

It did not take long for wire services to start distributing the stories ... where was any other information? The continuing subject in the articles was mainly suffering women and children along with an accusation that the target was non-military. The point emphasized again and again was the total growing numbers of non-combatants injured or killed by OSW/ONW no-fly zone aircraft. Often the way the articles were slanted, the international public was led to believe that the aircraft on OSW and ONW missions—hence the USAF and the United States Navy--were in some way connected to the enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution sanctions and not exclusively enforcing the no-fly zones to protect the Shiites and Kurds.

The campaign first hit its mark in the US after a few months and was making progress as the focus on anti-sanction stories and increasing coverage of women and children killed prompted responses from the US Congress and American public early in 2000. On Capital Hill, seventy Congressmen seeking an end to Iraq sanctions signed a letter to President Clinton to

express the view that the United Nations Resolutions had done nothing to undermine Saddam but rather had resulted in “the deaths of several thousand children under the age of five every month from malnutrition and disease.”¹ At a New York City rally, staged in front of the US Mission to the United Nations, 86 people were arrested for refusing to move during a demonstration to protest UN sanctions against Iraq.² It is interesting to note that at the same time of the Congressmen’s letter and New York City rally, UN and US officials continued to argue that the Iraqi regime was diverting food and economic aid from ordinary citizens to support the army and pro-regime elite ... a point which drew far less mention in the media because of an ineffective—if existent—public diplomacy campaign.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan also voiced concerns about sanctions being enforced by airpower, bolstering Iraq’s claim that they were devastating civilian life and propelling Saddam’s perception campaign to success. Additionally, at the end of March, Annan warned that the UN was in danger of losing a “propaganda war” with Iraq if the “oil for food” program intended to help innocent civilians suffering under sanctions did not become more effective immediately.³ With the statement by the Secretary General it was clear that Iraq’s propaganda war was in full motion, and now Saddam’s news articles, until this time a snippet buried in the paper on page 8, were published on page 1 or 2 in major newspapers such as the *Times* or *Post*.

Gaining momentum, Iraq moved to the second stage, a “names with faces” campaign. This focused on releasing alleged biographical data on children killed and television’s bringing faces of some of those innocent children into living rooms of the public. Coincident with Saddam’s continued release of stories alleging women and children being targeted by no-fly zone aircraft, a television documentary by award-winning journalist and film-maker John Pilger was released in the US entitled: “Paying the Price—The Killing of the Children of Iraq.” This

90-minute documentary covered the increasing problems faced by the children of Iraq since the end of Operation Desert Storm and the continuing hardships they endured because of the enforcement of gulf-war generated sanctions.⁴ Not covered, of course, was the Iraq government's mishandling of the oil for food program or the building of grand palaces (some even including moats during the worst drought in 100 years) by Saddam Hussein.⁵

The most effective story released—and the one that really began to pull on the public heartstrings—was of a shepherd boy allegedly killed by a no-fly mission in May.⁶ It told the readers, on page one of major newspapers, the story of thirteen-year old, Omran Harbi Jawair.⁷ It graphically related a story of how he laid dead in the dirt with most of his head torn off, the white of his robe stained red when United States/United Kingdom air strikes were conducted at Toq al-Ghazalat, near Najaf. In the article, the carefree teenager appeared no different than most his age; he had enjoyed kicking a soccer ball around his village and had just finished fifth grade.

The international public could relate to this teenager; hence, its impact. No longer was it the Republican Guards who were being killed by air strikes, but an innocent child in the prime of his youth cut down while doing his chores. An innocent child no different than the children of people worldwide. The impact of the article was soon felt, as both the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) formally expressed concern over continued air strikes.

By media reporting, it was evident to Saddam that anti-American sentiments were on the rise and many Arabs had major concerns about US military personnel being stationed on Moslem soil. To capitalize on this weakness, Saddam widened the campaign and began to emphasize—sometime exaggerate—Muslim support for the “evil” Western powers. Continuing to condemn air strikes, Iraq released numbers of aircraft sorties flown from Saudi Arabia in support of OSW and Turkey to support ONW operations. However, not many of these articles made it across the

wire into the international press and this was probably in Iraq's best interest. It could have hurt Saddam's overall campaign had he incited King Fahd and other Arab brothers who potentially could be used down the road to help break through some of the sanctions.

It was imperative to Iraq that countries in the Persian Gulf region choose to re-open their embassies and that humanitarian flights be allowed into Baghdad. Iraq was smart enough to know its continued requests for these two actions would not sway the UN, especially with the US and UK as permanent members of the Security Council. Instead, Iraq "needed a friend in court."

Oman had never severed relations with Iraq, and Qatar was the first country to reopen its embassy in Baghdad early in 2000. United Arab Emirates followed in February 2000, and Bahrain reopened its embassy in the April/May time frame on humanitarian grounds.⁸ By May, four of seven GCC countries had re-established diplomatic relations with Iraq. This gave Iraq more credibility in the diplomatic arena, strengthened Arab ties, and gave Iraq a stronger voice and Arab allies to challenge sanctions at the UN. Amazingly perceptions were changing and the political tide turning in Iraq favor.

In July, Jordan requested that the UN allow flights into Iraq because the embargo damaged them economically, and a Chinese news release related Turkey's huge economic loss due to Iraqi sanctions.⁹ These releases were preludes to Russia's flying a non-UN-approved chartered "humanitarian" flight in August. This flight opened the floodgates. According to Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF), for the rest of 2000, there were over 100 "humanitarian flights" into Iraq, with about 60% UN approved.¹⁰ The approval rate ran high because flights soon became so common that UN approval became automatic. In fact, if the countries submitted a request to the UN, no reply was equivalent to an approval; the only flights that were "not approved" were flights that did not even file with the UN.¹¹

Overall, 16% of the flights were Russian, 16% were Jordanian, 13% Syrian, and 11% Turkish.¹² Russia was no surprise, and neither are the other three due to their ties to sanction violations and illegal oil shipments. There were other countries such as United Arab Emirates and Yemen that sent flights but the really interesting flights were a few high profile trips from France and the United Kingdom. Both countries had state-sponsored trips, but the United Kingdom had flights of “radical” liberal government fringe players.¹³

In September, Russia prepared to resume passenger flights to Iraq, following an August announcement by Baghdad that Saddam Hussein International Airport had been opened after nearly ten years.¹⁴ Syria and Jordan soon asked the United Nations to give a green light to the resumption of direct flights.¹⁵ By September, humanitarian flights were a common occurrence. On the whole, OSW and ONW had no problems with the resumption of true humanitarian flights to get food and medicine to innocent people under the Saddam regime. Their major concern was safety of the aircraft as they were flying through no-fly zones sometimes in the middle of that day’s sorties. As usual, that part of the story was never released, and, the result came across to the public as yet another win for Saddam.

By the time of the first humanitarian flights into Baghdad, even Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen was claiming that Saddam had been successful in waging a propaganda campaign, especially among the Arab populations.¹⁶ Additionally, there was a growing perception among the public that airpower was at fault for UN sanctions’ not working. The political strategy of combining airpower with economic sanctions to shut out trade and investment to Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was not achieving its goals.¹⁷ With the push for resumption of humanitarian flights into Baghdad by various countries, it was obvious, politically, that countries believed Saddam’s claim that sanctions were being aimed at working people more

than the Iraqi leadership and help was needed immediately for the man on the street. It was also interesting to note that complaints on the failure of sanctions were not only directed at the Iraq government and/or the UN but at the airplanes/aircrews carrying out the no-fly mission. This encouraged articles in the news, which did not distinguish between sanctions and no-fly missions and left the reader to think that the two were somehow connected. This left CENTAF and the USAF with the dilemma that airpower could be perceived as the failure point in the overall mission when in reality its responsibility was clearly only enforcing the no-fly *demarches* as written.

Regardless of Iraq's public diplomacy campaign the Air Force remained committed in the area. CENTAF and Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA) had many chances to even out the information battleground but were under strict instructions from Central Command Headquarters to remain passive in any response. Needless to say, it was frustrating to let Iraq win the war of words without a fight, but at that time the military was not prepared to battle on the information terrain. However, this was soon to change with the events of 11 September 2001.

Notes

¹ Otto Kreisher, "GOP Senate Contender Wants Iraq Curbs Lifted," *San Diego Union-Tribune*; 17 February 2000; on-line; Nexis; 28 February 2002.

² "Nation in Brief," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*;" 15 February 2000, on-line; Nexis; 28 February 2002.

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³ New York News Service, "Iraq is Winning Propaganda War, Annan Tells UN," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 March 2000, on-line; Nexis; 27 November 2001.

⁴ "Too High a Price," *Evening Chronicle*, 6 March 2000, on-line, Nexis, 22 January 2002.

⁵ US Department of State, "Palaces and Oil Smuggling," *Saddam Hussein's Iraq*, 24 March 2000, n.p., on-line, Internet, 27 September 2001, available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/iraq/iraq99d.htm#palaces>.

⁶ David Osborne, "More than 21,000 Bombing Raids Flown in the West's Forgotten Conflict," *London Independent*, Friday, 23 June 2000, on-line, Nexis, 26 November 2001.

⁷ Edward.Cody, "Under Iraqi Skies, a Canvas of Death," *Washington Post*, Friday, 16 June 2000, final edition.

⁸ "UAE, Bahrain to Reopen Baghdad Embassies," *IPR Strategic Business Information Database*, 9 April 2000, on-line, Nexis; 27 November 2001.

⁹ "Turkey Suffers Heavy Economic Cost by Sanctions on Iraq," *Xinhua*, 3 August 2000, on-line, Nexis, 27 November 2001.

¹⁰ Captain Robert Bement, Central Command Air Forces, interviewed by author, 8 March 2002.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Anton La Guardia, "French Jet Challenges UN Embargo on Baghdad," *London Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 2000, on-line, Nexis, 12 March 2002, and Kim Sengupta, "Secret

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British Trip to Baghdad Flies in Face of UN Sanctions,” *London Independent*, 11 November 2000, on-line, Nexis, 12 March 2002.

¹⁴ Waiel Faleh, “Russian Humanitarian Delegation Flies to Iraq Without U.N. Permission,” *Associated Press*, 19 August 2000, on-line, Nexis, 27 November 2001.

¹⁵ Jamal Halaby, “Jordan Wants to Resume Civilian Flights to Iraq,” *Associated Press Worldstream*, 17 September 2000, on-line, Nexis, 12 March 2002, and “Syria Considers Direct Flight to Baghdad,” *United Press International*, 26 September 2000, on-line, Nexis, 12 March 2002.

¹⁶ “Cohen Appeals for International Pressure to Force Iraqi Compliance,” *Associated Press*, 2 October 2000, on-line, Nexis, 27 November 2001.

¹⁷ Bruce Finley, “The Legacy of Vietnam: A Generation After Decade-long War, U.S. Still Grapples with Lessons, Scars,” *Denver Post*, Sunday, 30 April 2000, second edition.

Chapter 4

Capturing the Information Terrain Following 9/11

Public diplomacy in the fight against terrorism can be defined as the task of disseminating truths about US motives and intentions. Additionally, it covers current and past US actions in the Middle East, as well as American views of Islam. In the continuing fight against terrorism, public diplomacy is as big a weapon as any other in the Joint Chiefs of Staff arsenal, and this segment of the conflict is no easier to win than other elements of the crisis. It incorporates journalists, wire services, television crews, and the Internet worldwide to play important roles as the conduit to get the word out to the masses.

Success in public diplomacy is crucial preparation for military action as it is a vital element in the preparation of the battlespace. It is invaluable if the coalition of allies is to be maintained during the long action and the inevitable setbacks. Additionally, it will be instrumental if defeat of terrorist cells and those that support them is to be followed up by an expanding effort to make the ensuing peace more secure, within Europe, the Middle East, as well as the United States' homeland.

In reviewing public diplomacy after 9/11, it is important to remember that this paper only focuses on the first 100 days following 11 September 2001. This incorporates events occurring right after 9/11 and the air campaign that kicked off Operation Enduring Freedom on 8 October 2001. The analysis presented here is my own and many of the discrepancies pointed out have already been addressed as the USG continues to modify and solidify its public diplomacy stance.

Early on in the conflict, away from the bombs and battlefields of Afghanistan, a conflict raged on a non-military front, the battle for the Islamic mind. Both the US and Usama Bin

Laden put on an all-out effort to win the support of over one billion Muslims throughout the world. On 7 October 2001, the techniques of modern media manipulation added a crucial new weapon to Bin Laden's arsenal.

Usama Bin Laden understood that Afghanistan was cut off from the world, with a high illiteracy rate; based on third-world technology, he knew that getting his message across would be difficult. However, in a videotape to the masses, his simple words and clever mix of history, psychology, and paranoia pressed all the right buttons.

While Muslim governments rejected his statements, many of their people heard and understood what Bin Laden outlined. He spoke of "80 years" of oppression, while alluding to the presence of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia, and the Israeli occupation of Ramallah and Rafah.¹ Additionally, he referenced to the plight of Iraqi children, which continued to give credibility to the fact that the UN sanctions have continued to cause deep suffering in Iraq.

While his speech did not seem to alter the operations inside Afghanistan, it had a direct impact on Muslims outside the region. Following his speech, newspapers around the world reported increased anti-American Muslim protest in places such as Pakistan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Obviously, this was of major concern to the US and its allies, especially those with Muslim populations. The US knew if Bin Laden could continue to convince other Muslims of his claims by spreading his propaganda and manipulating history and the media, it would make it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for the US to win the "hearts and minds" of the Muslim community to support a prolonged coalition war against terrorism.

In contrast to Operations Desert Storm or Allied Force, DoD is reporting the progress against terrorism primarily from the Pentagon. The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, and SecDef Donald F. Rumsfeld quickly took the initiative and appeared at

daily briefings from the Pentagon. Relying on situation reports from the field, they attempted, along with the President's staff, to inform the public on the progress of the conflict and reassure the public that the military was on course to bring the terrorist cells to justice for the 9/11 tragedy. However, by staging from the Pentagon, they did not allow the public to get acquainted with the military commanders in the field. It also left some with the feeling that the conflict was being run from Washington and not from the field or that there was extensive political oversight in the ongoing operations.

As the briefings continued from the Pentagon, the written press gave commanders in the field—General Tommy R. Franks, Lieutenant General Charles F. Wald, and Vice Admiral Charles W. Moore, Jr.—positive coverage. At times, especially early on when the Taliban were quick to report, it seems that public confidence could have been increased if the story or information came straight from the “front lines.”²

The spokespersons in the field—as opposed to one in Washington—are in the thick of things. They have a completely different vantage point, are the originators of situation reports back to Washington, and would probably have better credibility with the public to counter Taliban claims. With the increased technology and advancements in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, on-scene commanders could also be more proactive in battle damage assessment, admit when things go wrong in real-time and pull the tactical media advantage back from the Taliban.

Unfortunately the Pentagon press briefings were very reactive instead of proactive. For instance, does it endear the public to your cause when the Pentagon finally briefs on Thursday that a hospital was struck on a bombing run on Tuesday? The public is always subconsciously searching for who will capture the information terrain by being truthful and timely in their

statements. In lieu of any Pentagon reporting, in most situations, the public was willing to take Taliban claims as the truth, and that left the Pentagon trying to convince the public, many times days later, that those claims were false.

Understandably, to counter the Taliban claims the Pentagon did not want to engage in “tit for tat” reporting. However, by staying in their reactive public diplomacy stance, the US allowed the Taliban to quickly seize the information terrain initiative in collateral damage reporting. The Taliban were ready to play on public sentiments, as they proactively briefed post-mission reports to the media and concentrated on US mistakes or the killing of innocent bystanders. Even though reporting was skewed or inaccurate, it was still news from the front for a public hungry for information. As in Iraq, the public had no competing source for information, and it was swayed by the timeliness of the Taliban reports

The Pentagon also needed to be more forthcoming when mistakes are made. No conflict is executed perfectly, and the fog of war is always present. The Pentagon did well in its coverage of the errant bomb that struck a village on 13 October 2001; however, it is inexcusable with all the US technology that UN observers were the first to report that air strikes destroyed a clearly marked Red Cross warehouse.³ The administration needs to keep the public informed of the progress to maintain support, but the military is also human and should be portrayed accordingly. The idea that all operations are successful and every bomb dropped hits its target dead center is phony optimism that encourages public support in the short run. However, in actuality, it undermines support in the longer run, along with the precious trust in government and possible accusations that the Pentagon is guilty of selective editing.⁴ At the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Pentagon was not being forthcoming on operational mistakes. Additionally, the Pentagon’s continued late reporting and SecDef Rumsfeld’s undiplomatic

charge that Taliban were “lying” about collateral damage claims while not producing evidence to change the public’s perceptions did not allow the USG to recapture the collateral damage high ground.

Like Saddam, the Taliban were wise enough to recognize that to win the hearts and souls of the public, you cover in detail killing of innocent women and children. Additionally, you put a face with a name in any Associated Press article, and then Taliban victims become another innocent Afghan child and not a terrorist. This continued collateral damage reporting by the Taliban began to put a slight crack in the coalition in less than ten days after commencement of hostilities. As early as 17 October 2001, Saudi Arabia Interior Minister Prince Naif, told reporters that “the kingdom opposed terrorism but did not approve of the US response ... because this is killing innocent people.”⁵

As stated by President Bush, maintaining coalition support is critical to the success of Operation Enduring Freedom. This support can be built and maintained in a variety of ways but, as in America, public opinion helps mold the political perspective everywhere. Approximately seven weeks after 11 September 2001, public support for a pause in military action in Afghanistan was reflected across many countries in Europe and even in the Far East. At this point in the conflict, Taliban images of impoverished Afghans being bombed out of their homes led to some street protest, and some nations urged caution as the Muslim world prepared to enter into Ramadan.

For instance, in Turkey, the only Muslim member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, public polls showed that between 57-70% of the population opposed the country’s direct involvement in the US-led operation.⁶ In India, Defense Minister George Fernandes, cast doubts on US objectives to eradicate terrorist cells and indicated that the campaign was a “long-term

gamble.”⁷ Even in Kuwait, half of the elected members of Parliament signed a statement calling for an end to the bombing. Six months after the kick-off of Operation Enduring Freedom, Gallup polls taken in the Middle East still showed that 50% of those polled view US military action in Afghanistan is morally unjustifiable.⁸

From this USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll in some Middle East countries, it is apparent that anti-Americanism is still evident in Moslem countries. The United States Government has continued to work this issue as a high priority but must be unhappy with the results. Perhaps the US approached it from the wrong direction ... who would have thought in the war on terrorism Islam would be the center of gravity for the US and the coalition? Additionally, the US needed to plot a public diplomacy strategy that worked through the large differences in perceptions of how the Islam community views Americans rather than differences in values.

In a Georgetown University panel on public diplomacy, Dr Jim Zogby, President of the Arab American Institute, suggested that the Arab mindset would not change until there was a better understanding of cultures on both sides. To illustrate this, he proposed the analogy that it is as difficult for the majority of Americans to “feel” the pain in the continuing Palestinian/Israeli conflict which plays out daily in front of the population in the Middle East as it was for the majority of the Middle East/Islamic population to share the same revulsion Americans felt over 9/11.⁹ When presented in this way, the polling data starts to make sense. While the US continued to build support by keeping the public—both international and domestic—informed of events in Operation Enduring Freedom, the US, especially the military, could have done more to identify with and understand the culture.

In trying to convey the message that the war was not against Islam, it is interesting that the USG and the military did not engage more Arab-Americans or American Muslims to help

send the message. In US opinion polling data, Dr Zogby found that attitudes toward the President and the war against terrorism—among approximately 80% of Arab-Americans born in the US—were no different from those of other Americans.¹⁰ USG public diplomacy strategists should have been keen to this, and in the opening days of Operation Enduring Freedom Arab-Americans/American Muslims spokesmen should have been the ones to reach out to the worldwide Muslim communities. Coming from the same cultural viewpoint, this United States Government’s designated spokesman would have had better odds to reach out and touch the worldwide Muslim audience and help turn the Muslim overseas public’s continued distrust of America in a positive direction.

Along with adding more Arab-American/American Muslim spokesmen to continue to build/maintain coalition support as Operation Enduring Freedom headed into Ramadan, perhaps the US should have redefined objectives and parameters for success. In the beginning, President Bush’s overall stated goals were to defeat “terrorism” and capture Usama Bin Laden. In the first step of the campaign, freezing “terrorist” monetary assets, an announcement eight weeks later by the Treasury Secretary Paul H. O’Neil stated that between 112 countries, approximately \$68M in assets had been frozen.¹¹ This announcement indicated progress for the coalition and satisfied the public hungry for any word of success in the war against terrorism.

However, when the military campaign started, defining parameters of success for that distinct portion were not provided. Since this was a different type of enemy, what would the air campaign contribute to the overall goal of defeating terrorism? The adversary was not a nation state; the normal rules for a successful air campaign were not the same and could not be matched against successes in Operations Allied Force or Desert Storm. Since this was a different type of conflict, setting and announcing parameters for operational successes on the battlefield would

help the public and coalition partners to digest information being provided and put it into context with the overall objective.

Everyone understands the need for operational security; however, generic success parameters could have defined motives for bombing runs, such as preparing the battlefield for ground troops and/or Northern Alliance maneuvering or the need to take out communications and electricity networks directly supporting Usama Bin Laden and the Taliban. With smaller parameters defined, the public can better grasp that the execution of the air campaign is an integral part of the overall strategy and better understand how it fits into the greater scheme.

Overall, while stumbling a bit out of the blocks, the good news is that the United States Government, in concert with Britain, launched a public relations effort intent on being proactive in the public diplomacy realm. Information centers, jointly staffed by United States and British officials, were established in Washington and London, and a third center, staffed by diplomatic, communications and defense officials from both countries opened in Pakistan in early November. Unfortunately, it took the coalition a month of the air campaign to understand that you cannot wait a full news cycle to answer Taliban collateral damage claims. The claim by an administration official that “there’s a recognition that rapid reaction means a lot” may finally be the turning point in moving from a reactive to a proactive stance.¹²

The centers are being used to better coordinate and disseminate positive messages on humanitarian aid, efforts to establish a representative government in Afghanistan and repeated assurances that the anti-terrorism campaign is not targeting Islam or the Afghan population. Additionally, news conferences, speeches, and other remarks by senior coalition officials can be staggered so they can dominate spoken and written press releases around the world and, more importantly, do so around the clock. Slowly, the US moved to win back the information terrain.

The good news on the side of the military is that engagement with Middle East nations made it easier to build and maintain the coalition. From the military perspective, especially from an air chief perspective, coalition building must be an established principle, built and maintained even before a crisis has begun. The Air Force, engaged in Operations Southern and Northern Watch since the middle 1990s, has been working with Middle East coalition allies on training and interoperability solutions ever since the end of the Persian Gulf War. This engagement policy, however, rose to new heights during General Wald's tenure as Commander, United States Central Command Air Forces, which began in January 2000. Little did he know that his engagement policy would serve him well as the military began to ponder an October 2001 response in Afghanistan.

General Wald's initiatives such as the First Annual Middle East Air Chief Seminar and the Air Chief Information Net, underscored the need and answered the call for air chiefs to organize, train and fight as one entity. To do this, General Wald approached tough subjects with his coalition counterparts, such as interoperability and computer network defense with not only Gulf Cooperation Council nations (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) but also other countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Great Britain, and France. In retrospect, the air chiefs began to feel part of a team, based on trust for each other, much like their European allies involved in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

When the call came in late September for General Wald and his staff to deploy forward, CENTAF was prepared, but, more importantly; the other Coalition air chiefs were ready to help. Since not all Ambassadors had been confirmed and moved into position, General Wald, a known entity and someone Middle East air chiefs and political leaders trusted, set out to acquire basing and overflight rights in the area.¹³ With the division of military and political roles not as defined

in the Middle East as they are in the US, General Wald was able to act as a military/statesman representative for the United States Government. He was able to do this with ease because of the engagement policy that he had been working on with the air chiefs in the area for the previous two years.

Additionally, with General Franks' deciding to remain in Tampa, General Wald was tasked to pull together support for military operations against Usama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda terrorist cells in less than a month¹⁴. Working out of the Prince Sultan Air Base Combined Air Operations Center, the Air Force and its coalition partners enjoyed the latest in technological advancements and put the saying of "train like you fight" to the test.

Air power in the final analysis did the job it was asked to do. Senior leadership rallied the coalition partners, and the operation began in less than a month. The leadership knew that the military coalition had to stay behind the scenes as the Arab political arena sorted itself out on the United States response. While some may have worried about air power's reputation because of the continuing saga in Iraq, the momentum of Operation Enduring Freedom has allowed the United States Air Force to continue to fly high, at least among the air chiefs.

Notes

¹ Mark Matthews, "Bin Laden Video Taps Deeply into Arab Emotions," *Baltimore Sun*, 9 October 2001.

²Michael Isikoff and Adam Rogers, "Who's in Charge? Among Others, a General, a Soldier and a Shadow Warrior," *Newsweek*, 29 October 2001, 30, and Pauline Jelinek, "Commanders in Charge of Leading U.S. Forces in Terrorism Fight Drawn From all Services," *Associated Press*, 21 September 2001, on-line, Nexis, 26 October 2001.

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³ Jonathan Weisman, "Raids Intensify; Red Cross Hit in Error," *USA Today*, Wednesday, 17 October 2001, final edition. It is interesting to note that the International Red Cross claimed that the buildings were clearly marked with a red cross on the roof while the Pentagon reports that US Forces had no idea that the Red Cross was using the warehouse to store wheat and humanitarian supplies.

⁴ Peterson, Roger, "Where's the Rest of This War's Story?" *USA Today*, Monday, 7 January 2002, final edition.

⁵ "Minister Not Happy About the Bombing," *The Daily Telegraph (London)*, 16 October 2001, on-line, Nexis, 11 January 2002.

⁶ "Attack on Afghanistan: Global Mood: Bombing Casualties Cause Concern Around the World: Some Nations Shift Stance After Air Campaign," *Guardian*, 31 October 2001.

⁷ Edward Luce, "Doubt is Cast on America's Afghanistan Gamble," *Financial Times (London)*, 31 October 2001, on-line, Nexis, 31 October 2001.

⁸ Andrea Stone, "Kuwaitis Share Distrust Toward USA, Poll Indicates," *USA Today*; Wednesday; 27 February 2002, final edition.

⁹ Dr James Zogby, "Talking with the Islamic World: Is the Message Getting Through?" panel, Georgetown University, Washington DC, 19 February 2002.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Jerry Seper, "Agents Raid U.S. Firms Linked to Bin Laden," *Washington Times*, 8 November 2001, and Kevin McCoy; "U.S. Freezes Assets of 2 More Groups Allegedly Tied to Bin Laden," *USA Today*, Thursday, 10 January, 2002, final edition.

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¹² Karen DeYoung, “U.S., Britain Step Up War for Public Opinion, *Washington Post*, 1 November 2001, final edition.

¹³ Lieutenant General Charles F. Wald, United States Air Force Director of Operations and Space, interviewed by author, 29 January 2002.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Chapter 5

Recommendations

The events of 11 September 2001 have forever changed the face of warfare. Americans, whether or not they knew anyone killed or injured in the tragedy on that morning, take the war against terrorism personally. An element of fear has been brought to the US homeland, and the adversary is now knocking, coming in the front door, and capable of attacking without warning. In this regard, the war against terrorism involves more than the military. Today, the public expects and demands information on military efforts to defeat terrorist cells and ensure the safety of the American homeland.

On the military side, commanders have begun to embrace the information revolution. Along with planning operations to engage a new type of adversary, Air Force leadership has leveraged information technology to take airmen from a war game to the field. Between Joint Expeditionary Forces Experiment and Combined Aerospace Operations Center Experimental, in the last five years the Air Force has striven to incorporate technology to bring information directly into the hands of the warfighter. Fighting the air campaign for Operation Enduring Freedom from the new Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Prince Sultan Air Force Base (PSAB), Saudi Arabia, it was a technological victory that airmen were enabled to take advantage of new digital technology, unmanned aerial vehicles, and emphasized sensor-to-shooter information to further prove the concept of “CAOC as a weapons system.” Now CAOCs such as the one at PSAB should be the norm and Combined Forces Air Component Commanders should expect nothing less.

But how does the military leverage this breakthrough in information technology to quickly and proactively release information to the public? How does the military ensure and

maintain public support for operations while maintaining operational security on the battlefield? No doubt, public diplomacy is here to stay. To complement its successes on the battlefield, the military needs to embrace the art of public diplomacy and be more forthcoming in executing this valuable tool. Only as air force operators understand by continued education and training what they can do and bring to the Information Operations fight will any progress be noted. Department of Defense, and the Air Force in particular, must maintain a protracted focus on acquiring, learning how to operate, and wielding different aspects of this particular weapon.

A number of other writers¹ have offered recommendations in this area, and these should be taken in both concert and contrast to those offered below in the continuing effort to claim the initiative in the information battlefield. Taken in total and integrated with an operational plan, the Air Force can bring the true value of public diplomacy to fruition.

Tapping Reserve/Guard expertise. The first thing that needs to be done is to build a solid cadre from the bottom up. Expertise lies in the private sector, and reaching out to the Guard and Reserve should be the first effort. To copy the scenario following Moonlight Maze,² when computer network defense was needed and fast, the vast computer knowledge base from the private sector was tapped through Guard and Reserve duty. The same ideas should be used in building the initial public diplomacy cadre.

In the business sector, public relations specialists, sometimes called “strategic communicators,” are hired to help mold the image of any corporation. Enticing some of these personnel to join the reserves can help to set up a “train the trainer” scenario, where active duty personnel can learn the secrets of the trade and train others in this aspect of public diplomacy. Being able to have them as part of the team, many for weekend duty, will help to incorporate civilian public diplomacy techniques and evolve them to apply to military crisis settings.

Additionally, when called to action when a crisis begins, the Air Force will have trained and qualified cadre ready to respond.

Use of civilian strategic communications firms. Keeping qualified individuals in the Air Force is difficult in any career field, and, much like our computer field, public diplomacy experts could be outsourced. Early on during Operation Enduring Freedom, DoD contracted the Rendon Group, a well-known strategic communications firm in Washington, DC. This firm was hired to help explain the military strikes and train DoD on how to approach the global Muslim audience and spread a positive image of the US military around the world to combat anti-Americanism. With the rising tide of opposition to the military strikes in the Islamic World, the Pentagon needed someone that could “come in quickly and help them orient to the challenge” of communicating to a “wide range of groups around the world in real time” and using all media techniques.³

With the help of the Rendon Group, DoD has managed to keep public support, both in American and Coalition countries, for the on-going operation against terrorism. However, the secret to that success is that the strategic communication firm was brought in before the public diplomacy initiative was lost. With the Rendon Group working behind the scenes with the Pentagon and the United Kingdom and Pakistan information centers opening in early November, the United States Government and its allies finally began to work on a 24-hour news cycle and be out front with the latest news.

Some examples where strategic communicators can help are to “media map” (identify and describe all media outlets) for the region of interest. This will give commanders an idea of how many and of what caliber media outlets operate in the region and how to incorporate them into the ongoing public diplomacy strategy. Additionally, firms can advise Air Force leaders on

up and coming technology that will allow commanders to report proactively recent activity, even when the host nation may not let Western media into their country. Internalizing the lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom and “thinking outside the box” about the use of contractors, the Air Force should continue to develop relationships with strategic communications firms, incorporate them as part of the team, and rely on their expertise from the initial planning stage.

Proactive reporting instead of reactive. As mentioned earlier, with the birth of the “CNN effect,” the world is mesmerized by the ability to get blow-by-blow accounts of ongoing operations. In light of this, the Air Force, which for the past two decades has led DoD in military operations, should take the lead in pushing for proactive reporting from the battlefield. Keeping in mind security precautions, real-time reporting can help capture the information terrain. With the technology available to battlefield commanders, there should be no reason why anyone should be able to take the public diplomacy initiative away from the US.

However, along with reporting proactively, there is an absolute necessity for honesty. As stated before, with the fog of war, no operation goes perfectly smoothly. If there is a mistake during an airdrop, step up to the podium, admit it and state what the Air Force is doing to ensure it does not happen again. Truth must be a hallmark of information operations. With this approach to the public, there will be no doubt that the Air Force reports the good with the bad, and the trust between the two entities will continue to grow.

Along with proactive reporting, the Air Force needs to steer clear from a “war of words” with the enemy. Commanders have enough to worry about and should not play a “tit for tat” with the enemy in the public eye. If the Air Force becomes proactive and builds trust through its

reporting, then commanders can choose when and where to capture and maintain the information sphere and do not have to base their reporting on that of the adversaries.

Full time commitment. Just like gaining and maintaining air superiority, capturing the information sphere takes commitment from the commander. This includes not only the CFACC but also the CJTF/CC or regional CINC. Since the air campaign most often is at the beginning of any operation, it is imperative that the Air Force leads the way in capturing the information terrain.

To lead the way effectively, the Air Force must first commit to educating operators on the importance of using the information battlespace. During Professional Military Education (PME), future strategic leaders are taught a great deal about traditional military tools. However, this would be an ideal time to examine what Reuters, CNN, London *Times*, etc., can do to an air campaign if an aircraft mistakenly takes out an ammunition depot, nuclear storage facility, or a Red Cross Warehouse. In an academic setting, leaders of tomorrow can execute different scenarios and examine alternative outcomes and their effect on the media before real-world operations are hampered.

The Air Force trains like it fights and it must integrate staff public diplomacy discussions of the information battlespace at the beginning of the planning and not as an afterthought. Additionally, operators, logisticians, intelligence, information warfare, supply experts can now join smartly into the discussion of public diplomacy strategy and help craft a plan which supports air operations throughout the entire spectrum.

During operations, public diplomacy should be part of the discussion in the CFACC strategy cell meeting along with the plan for the next Air Tasking Order. More importantly, public diplomacy planning has to be included in deliberate and crisis action plans. While the Air

Force components may take the lead, the CJTF Commanders must commit to ensuring that the campaign is cohesive and integrated with all other tools. With any military involvement, public diplomacy has to be executed from the start to gain the upper hand, and this takes experts—much like the fighter liaison in the CAOC—on staffs to make it happen.

Coalition engagement. It is not a stretch that the United States Air Force will ever engage in battle unilaterally without its being part of some sort of coalition. With United States' military forces often as the lead, the Air Force for its part has to consider and incorporate avenues to reach the public of coalition partners. Each respective country must be considered early in the planning process and should be addressed in the overall public diplomacy strategy.

However, besides addressing the needs of respective countries in the public diplomacy strategy, the USAF can also help change or reduce anti-American mindsets. This can be achieved by continuing cooperative military engagement, especially in the Middle East region. By strengthening engagement and with a commitment from the highest echelons of the Department of Defense, coalition countries will have a better understanding of United States' motives and intentions.

It is well known that there is a certain trust built between military leaders as they work on a continuing basis with one another. As these leaders, such as each country's air chief, work side-by-side with each other in exercises and attempt to solve seemingly impossible problems such as interoperability so forces can execute as one entity, they better understand why a particular country takes actions. In times of crisis and conflict, the trust and respect between air chiefs already would have been established and strengthened, thus enabling most air chiefs to properly translate actions or reactions by a particular country. While the air chief may not

necessarily agree with the action taken, he at least can articulate or often times properly interpret the country's intentions to help satisfy their own country's public diplomacy needs.

To continue to build on the foundation CENTAF has erected in the Middle East, the US needs to broaden its perspective on engagement to ensure success. First, while maintaining operational security and the element of surprise, the USG should reexamine its practice of informing as opposed to consulting coalition countries of the United States' intended military actions. Additionally, some political and legal constraints of engagement have not been updated since the days of the Cold War.⁴ Often times, this handcuffs engagement initiatives such as a program for some Middle East coalition countries, which would have emulated Allied Air Forces Central Europe's successful Tactical Leadership Programme, designed to improve the way some NATO country's air forces would conduct combined operations.

The Air Force needs to consider grooming individuals for the CENTAF Commander position. In the Middle East, air force leadership does not change every two or three years, and the air chiefs become comfortable and accustomed to each other after working with the same individuals for five or ten years.⁵ The United States Air Force, although diligent in selecting just the right commander to seamlessly follow the one before, in the long run may be doing itself a disservice in not joining in this close knit group of airmen. If an individual was stationed at CENTAF or somewhere in the region when he was a field grade officer, he could become familiar and interact with air chiefs. In that time a relationship could be established, and coming back to the region as the three-star commander would make the transition into the "trusted agent" category a smooth one with little or no learning curve.

With the increased purchase of US aircraft, the tactics, techniques, and procedures are very similar among different country's airmen. Capitalizing on this, the USAF, through

engagement, is in a great position to push for solving interoperability problems and scheduling and executing exercises that present a “train like we fight” scenario with coalition counterparts. In regard to public diplomacy, this continued engagement will increase the public domain’s knowledge of what the United States Air Force “is all about” and how it relates to their respective country or military operations. More importantly, in the midst of any crisis or conflict, it will decrease the time to incorporate coalition aircraft into air operations and coalition staffs into any CAOC... then forces will be on their way to victory as a cohesive and integrated air force team.

Information Centers. The establishment of Information Centers during Operation Enduring Freedom in early November was key to capturing the information terrain back from the Taliban. This effort had full time commitment from the White House, and all department staffs were represented. For the first time in recent history, the United States Government was releasing information on the 24-hour news cycle, and, more importantly, there was thought on “who, what, why, where, and when” announcements pertaining to the operation would be released. This kept public support high and reinforced the message of fighting terrorists and their cells and not against the Islamic population.

While the Information Center was established at the national level, the idea has additional applicability at lower levels. The CFACC has Information Warfare Flights (IWF) at his disposal, and they are trained to be “information warriors.” With the core makeup of an IWF (intelligence, space, and psychological operations) and the inclusion of public affairs expertise, the IWF cadre should be the backbone of the CFACC Information Center.⁶ This flight should be responsible for organizing, presenting, and executing the public diplomacy aspect for the air campaign, in concert with the CJTF staff. If an Information Center at JTF-SWA or CENTAF

had been established and able to employ different responses during Saddam Hussein's public diplomacy campaign starting in 2000, this writer doubts that Iraq would have been able to capture and maintain the information terrain.

For instance, when the humanitarian air flights began in August, what if JTF-SWA, through United States Central Command, declared the resumption of humanitarian flights into Iraq was a positive step. Imagine the response from the coalition, if a US spokesman declared the United States Government was committed to getting food and medicine into the Iraqi population and deployed forces would help in whatever way possible to ensure the safety of the humanitarian flights and cargo through the no-fly zones. Overall, these statements would emphasize the US was still engaged in the area to protect only against Iraq aggression, had no ill will toward the Iraqi population, and that humanitarian efforts should be encouraged but the safety of passengers and cargo was of paramount importance to the United States.

This response would have not required deployments of aircraft or personnel but, instead, a simple coordinated news release. Words are powerful tools and the military should not be afraid to join this battle. With trained personnel, commitment of Air Force senior officers, and the integration of the CFACC public diplomacy plan with the CJTF public diplomacy strategy, another arrow will be added to the Combined Forces Air Component Commander's quiver to acquire, maintain, and effectively utilize the information battlespace to ensure information superiority.

Notes

¹ See, for example, Major Gary Pounder, “Opportunity Lost: Public Affairs, Information Operations, and the Air War Against Serbia,” *Aerospace Power Journal* XIV, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 73-75. I would especially like to note the recommendations offered by Major Pounder; they are noteworthy not only because of their incisiveness, but because they are based on a different example, Operation Allied Force, yet remain valid today. They include: (1) Recognizing the importance of public information as an IO tool; (2) Strengthening doctrine; (3) Understanding the evolving media environment; (4) Building a Public Affairs Corps for the 21st Century; and (5) Planning and executing public-information efforts more effectively.

² Vernon Loeb, “NSA Adviser Says Cyber-Assaults On Pentagon Persist With Few Clues,” *Washington Post*, 7 May 2001, on-line, Nexis, 8 February 2002.

³ Warren P. Strobel and Jonathan S. Landay, “Pentagon Hires PR Firm to Persuade Muslims That War Isn’t Against Islam,” *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 19 October 2001, on-line, Nexis, 8 February 2002.

⁴ Brigadier General Hugh Cameron, United States Air Force (Retired), Special Assistant to Commander United States Central Command Air Forces, interviewed by author, 25 February 2002.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ As Commander of the USAF Information Warfare Flight at United States Central Command Air Forces, the inclusion of the CENTAF Public Affairs Officer in all our Information Warfare planning efforts was standard operating procedure. Although PA expertise is not

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internal to the flight makeup, I learned early that the expertise they provide is critical to the overall success of the Information Operations plan.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Twenty years ago, an average sound bite in the media was approximately 24 seconds, and today on most networks they average just eight seconds.¹ In just eight seconds, the world can be mesmerized by the CNN effect and public opinion swayed by visions coming across their television or computer screens. Inside and outside the military, there is discussion of a revolution in military affairs centering on the exploitation of information technologies to achieve information superiority on and off the battlefield. Public diplomacy is that conduit between the military's search for information superiority and the public's continuing thirst for real-time, accurate information from the battlefield.

Before the events of 9/11, it was frustrating to watch Saddam Hussein and other adversaries capture the information terrain from the US. With the US as the only remaining superpower, it was incredible that someone, without using the latest and greatest in technology, could sway the international public to believe that military power was responsible for innocent women and children dying in Iraq. Even though UN sanctions are discussed and dealt with on the political side, OSW and ONW operations remind us that Prussian military writer Carl von Clausewitz's dictum that war is an extension of politics is still valid in today's world.²

It was refreshing to see the United States Government, to include the military, becoming more sensitive to the information terrain and willing to fight for the initiative following 9/11. While there was some stumbling in the beginning, the military has managed to retain support, both on the domestic and international fronts, for its continuing operations in Afghanistan. This support has withstood damaging *USA Today*/Gallup polls and casualties returning home from the crisis. In a long protracted war such as that against terrorism and its supporters, it is key that the public diplomacy initiative not be surrendered.

In-depth analysis of the battlespace and prior planning by military commanders are key to success on the battlefield. Analysis of the adversary, his technology, and the type of weapons he possesses fill planning documents. Additionally, time-phased force and deployment data is developed, CFACC objectives defined, and air strategy for different situations outlined. This prior planning allows commanders to survey all tools available in their quiver and select the right tool to execute at the right time.

However, public diplomacy appendices are not a staple in military planning. If information superiority is going to be captured early in any battle, it must be approached with as much vigor as gaining and maintaining air superiority. The air campaign needs to incorporate information warfare techniques, to include public diplomacy, early on to help prepare the battlefield. This not only prepares the battlefield in the area of responsibility but also in the eyes of the domestic and international publics. Recalling Vietnam and Somalia action displayed on televisions in living rooms throughout the world, it was very obvious that the United States Government, and subsequently the military, quickly lost those information terrains. This militates more strongly for prior planning of a public diplomacy strategy. If this plan is not in place to execute the public diplomacy card, the result is that often times this critical piece is forgotten or executed in pieces with no thought of the consequences but with the intent of just stopping the bleeding.

With the information technology explosion today's armed forces are expected to be a "jack of all trades" and able to engage the enemy in all dimensions. Military forces need to disrupt the adversary's OODA loop and ensure that commanders are able to move information at will. The Air Force core competency of Information Superiority brings to mind the heavy emphasis placed on information. In the field, airmen need to take this core competency at face value and prepare to fight for and maintain the information terrain and plan for the early execution of public diplomacy in all crisis and conflicts.

Coupling Air Force Chief of Staff's General John P. Jumper's recent horizontal integration initiative and the focus on "sensor-to-shooter" capability to bring information to the warfighters on the battlefield in a real-time manner with the ability to have a proactive public diplomacy strategy to help shape the battlefield is key to overall victory in the future. In striving

for information superiority, airmen must never allow any adversary to take the initiative and control the information terrain, and, more importantly, they must never underestimate the power of information. They must understand that the value of the information terrain increases as technological advancement reduces the size of the world. Ultimately, airmen need to internalize that by gathering data to distribute accurate and timely information from the battlefield, they can affect the outcome of conflicts around the globe. The United States Air Force is committed to the battle for information superiority and can lead Department of Defense through the information technology revolution of military affairs to win future battles.

However there will be no successful future battles unless we prepare for them now. No future battle can be won before it is engaged. Thus, the “future battles” are here now ... and we had better engage!

Notes

¹ Barry Lowenkron, lecture to International Affairs Class 377, Georgetown University, Washington DC, 20 March 2002.

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. And trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87. And it is interesting to note that V.I. Lenin turned this on its head—but not unreasonably—by suggesting, “war is the continuation of politics by other means.” In *Socialism and War*, 1915.

Glossary

AOC	Air Operations Center
CAOC	Combined Air Operations Center
CENTAF	Central Command Air Forces
CFACC	Combined Forces Air Component Commander
CINC	Commander in Chief
CJTF/CC	Combined Joint Task Force Commander
CNN	Cable News Network
DoD	Department of Defense
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
JTF/SWA	Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia
ONW	Operation Northern Watch
OODA	Observe, Orient, Decide, Act
OSW	Operation Southern Watch
SecDef	Secretary Of Defense
UN	United Nations
USAF	United States Air Force
USG	United States Government
9/11	11 September 2001

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