

Integrated Civil-Military and Information Operations: Finding Success in Synergy

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In war, the moral is to the physical as three is to one.

Napoleon Bonaparte

INTRODUCTION

The military operation to remove the Ba'athist regime from Iraq in March and April of 2003 was a resounding success, largely due to overwhelming technical and tactical superiority. Many publications appearing over the past year have discussed that phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in great detail.¹ Efforts to stabilize the country and transition from combat operations, however, have been much more nettlesome and complicated, punctuated daily by reports of violence and terrorist activity. The vicious cycle of violence and encumbered reconstruction that peaked in the spring and summer of 2004 not only threatened to derail the process of building a new Iraq and negate the sacrifices of many, but further destabilize the

¹ Books include: *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics and Military Lessons*, Anthony Cordesman, CSIS Press, Washington, 2004; *The Iraq War: A Military History*, Williamson Murray and Robert H. Scales Jr., Belknap Press, Cambridge, 2003; *The Iraq War*, John Keegan, Random House, New York, 2004; and *American Soldier*, Gen. Tommy Franks and Malcolm McConnell, Regan Books, New York, 2004.

Middle East in general, mire the U.S.-led Coalition for years to come, and engender conditions for failure in the Global War on Terror. As Anthony Cordesman noted, “a war can defeat a regime, but it cannot create a new culture or set of values, or suddenly create a modern, stable political system and economy.”²

Since President Bush’s declaration of the end of major combat operations in Iraq in May 2003, perceptions of Coalition success have seriously eroded by an increasingly competent and sophisticated insurgent and terrorist campaign aimed at spreading fear, uncertainty and division among Iraqis, as well as by a number of self-inflicted wounds to Coalition credibility that manifested later in the media. In the afterglow of initial success, U.S. forces suddenly found themselves operating across the full spectrum of conflict in a more complex, dynamic, and uncertain environment of simultaneous combat, stability and reconstruction operations, with the hearts and minds of Iraqi civilians as the battleground. A chicken-and-egg dilemma developed between providing a safe and secure environment for “nation-building” and conducting reconstruction and building Iraqi government institutions in order to promote stability and diminish negative perceptions among Iraqis and resistance to U.S. forces and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) efforts.

Astride friendly centers of gravity at the strategic, operation and tactical levels has been the battle to hold the moral high ground of legitimacy – a central aspect of conflict termination and winning the peace. This requires, above all, adequate unity of effort between and within military and civilian organizations, among them Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) soldiers waging intense but often unsynchronized campaigns for hearts and minds at national, provincial, and community levels in Iraq. Despite some remarkable efforts on the ground in various places, the common, media-driven perception has grown that things have been as bad in Iraq as advertised, or perhaps worse.

Why has this critical aspect to securing victory in Iraq been so challenging? What have been the shortcomings, at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, in building confidence in the peace process in Iraq and what can be learned from these shortcomings? Is it more a matter of resources or their effective application? Policy or emphasis? Doctrine or training? High-tech or low-tech? What can be learned from the American experience in Iraq in order to reverse the vicious cycle, attain stability and defeat terrorism, and structure future operations for success?

THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS: HOW BAD WAS IT AND WHY?

Interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq represent a shift in American politics; the United States now has taken on responsibility for the stability and political development of Muslim-dominated countries in regions considered important to its national security strategy. Success, however, is no longer a matter of only winning wars. Success means winning the peace by helping to create self-sustaining representative political institutions and robust market-oriented economies not only in these countries but throughout the region.³ This is the foremost strategic lesson of these two interventions.

² Cordesman, p. 536.

³ “Nation Building 101”, Francis Fukuyama, *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February 2004, 159.

Winning a war is fairly straightforward. It involves defeating a clearly defined enemy, usually an opposing military force, often in order to depose the political leadership holding the population in its grip. Although the prosecution of war has recently evolved to “network-centric warfare” involving sub-national actors and an emphasis on small-unit actions, it remains, in essence, the application of “hard power” to coerce an adversary to bend to your will, or simply remove him.⁴ Winning the peace, however, involves a much more complex and ill-defined process of convincing the host population, now devoid of leadership and in a state of chaos, to embark on a course of political and economic change it may or may not want to take (at least as you would like it). It is, in essence, the application of what Joseph Nye calls “soft power” – “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies... Winning the peace is harder than winning a war, and soft power is essential to winning the peace... Winning hearts and minds has always been important, but is even more so in a global information age. Information is power, and modern information technology is spreading information more widely than ever before in history.”⁵

Ideally, as the effort shifts from winning the war to winning the peace, as soft power is applied over hard power, and as civilian agencies move in to become the major players in the stabilization and reconstruction process, the military are its initial and key enablers. Thus, military operations as such would (or should) be more concerned with hearts and minds, chief among them civil-military operations (CMO) and information operations (IO), which move from being incidental to core activities. For purposes of this discussion, CMO can be described, as defined in U.S. Army Field Manual FM 41-10, as:

...the activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, government and non-government civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile area of operations in order to facilitate military operations and consolidate and achieve U.S. objectives. Civil-military operations may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of local, regional, or national government. These activities may occur before, during, or after other military actions. They may also occur, if directed, in the absence of other military operations. Civil-military operations may be performed by designated Civil Affairs forces, by other military forces, or by a combination of Civil Affairs and other forces.

IO, on the other hand, involves (as defined in U.S. Army Field Manual FM 100-6):

Continuous military operations within the military information environment that enable, enhance, and protect the friendly force’s ability to collect, process, and act on information to achieve an advantage across the full range of military operations. Information operations include interacting with the global information environment and exploiting or denying an adversary’s information and decision capabilities.”

⁴ See “The American Way of War”, Arthur K. Cebrowski and Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The U.S. Naval Institute*, January 2003, pp. 42-43, found at www.nwc.navy.mil/newrulesets/.

⁵ *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., BBS Public Affairs, New York, 2004, pp. x, xii, and 1.

Again, the process described above is what ideally happens. Such was not the case, however, in *Operation Enduring Freedom* or *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Far from winning hearts and minds, especially in Iraq, the euphoria among the population following military intervention was replaced by more negative perceptions of the U.S. and its instrumentalities and activities there. The most revealing were USA Today/CNN/Gallop polls published in April 2004, revealing dramatic developments in Iraqi perceptions of U.S. policy, presence and operations. Among these was that “53% say they would feel less secure without the Coalition in Iraq, but 57% say the foreign troops should leave anyway”, while 71% of the respondents identified Coalition troops as “occupiers”.⁶

Some of these findings were substantiated by a poll conducted almost a month earlier by BBC, ABC News, the German network ARD and NHK in Japan. Among these: while more than half said that life was better a year ago under Saddam, “only 25 per cent expressed confidence in the US/UK occupation forces and 28 per cent in both Iraq’s political parties and the CPA”.⁷ In addition, the first poll conducted in Iraq in August 2003 by Zogby International, revealed that just over 50% of Iraqis felt that the U.S. will “hurt” Iraq over the next five years and that a slightly higher number thought “democracy is a Western way of doing things and it will not work here”. Further precursors: 31.6% felt that Coalition Forces should leave within six months; 34% said within one year; and 25% within two years. In addition, just under 60% felt that Iraq should determine its political future alone and without the help of the Coalition.⁸

Meanwhile, a NY Times/CBS News poll showed a similar drop in support at the home front in the United States: “Asked whether the United States had done the right thing in taking military action against Iraq, 47 percent of respondents said it had, down from 58 percent a month earlier and 63 percent in December, just after American forces captured Saddam Hussein. Forty-six percent said the United States should have stayed out of Iraq, up from 37 percent last month and 31 percent in December.” By June, polls were consistently showing that well over 50% of Americans felt the war was a mistake.⁹

Although the precision of these polls may be called into question, attitudes had clearly soured while the Coalition largely failed to provide a palpably secure and stable environment and promote political and economic change in a way meaningful to and legitimate for Iraqis. On a number of levels, hearts and minds in Iraq had been lost. The other important point: Regardless of what ground truth may or may not be, perception has been more important than reality. In fact, in especially the predominantly psychological battleground for winning the peace, perception *is* reality.

Why and how did this happen? How did the most technologically and media-savvy of all nations, the home of Madison Avenue marketing and advertisement and the Hollywood film industry, fail to gain and maintain the hearts and minds of not only Iraqis, but lose so much of the support of the constituent population at home, in a general election year? It may be useful to analyze this question by assuming three levels of friendly “center of gravity” (i.e., the crux upon which a policy, campaign or battle succeeds or fails) when winning the peace (i.e., in peace operations):

⁶ “Polls: Iraqis Out of Patience”, Cesar G. Soriano and Steven Komarow, *USA Today*, 29 April 2004, p. 1.

⁷ “Most Iraqis Say Life Is Good Now, Poll Finds”, David Charter, *London Times*, 17 March 2004, p.

⁸ Based on a slide show provided by Zogby International in March 2004.

⁹ “Support For War Is Down Sharply, Poll Concludes”, Richard W. Stevenson and Janet Elder, *New York Times*, 29 April 2004, p. 1.

- The strategic center of gravity – the support of the constituent population and public opinion leaders of a contributing nation(s) for the international intervention.
- The operational center gravity – the willingness, ability and unity of effort of change agents such as international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) to enter and operate in the host nation or region and conduct humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and nation-building.
- The tactical center of gravity – the attitude of the host population and opinion leaders towards the international intervention, the presence and operations of both enablers (e.g., military forces) and civilian change agents (IOs, NGOs, PVOs, private investors, etc.), and the general process of political, social and economic change.¹⁰

While these three levels are distinct, they are not separable – one can have substantial impact on the other two, often with dramatic results. The most difficult of these to understand is the operational level, while many are familiar with the strategic and tactical levels and their interaction. The most (in)famous example of this interplay is the Tet Offensive of January 1968, when the strategic center of gravity of the Vietnam War was lost due to the images of disintegrating order shown on television sets in American living rooms. While limited, there are parallels to that situation with Iraq more than 36 years later. Many Coalition military and civilian leaders have complained that the international, U.S., regional and local media have greatly distorted perception of the situation on the ground in Iraq, concentrating primarily on reports of car bombings and other acts of violence which sensationalize the news, sell more newspapers and improve ratings, and support political agendas. To some extent, they have had a point: Although there has been much bad news to report, the more mundane, enormous and complex work on rebuilding the infrastructure, renovating schools, establishing neighborhood, city and governorate public administration, and transforming the economy has received much less press and air time.

Many members of the press have also had a limited understanding of the more complex realities and culture in Iraq. The real success story in Iraq has been the slow and difficult progress made in rebuilding the country by soldiers, civilian aid and reconstruction personnel, and of course thousands of dedicated Iraqis at local, less visible levels. When the security situation started to deteriorate, the tone of reporting began to resemble the story of Chicken Little. As said in one editorial, for example, “over the past few weeks we have seen a number of despondent editorial commentaries by the most fervent supporters of the war. Having cheered this error-ridden occupation for 13 months they have now turned on it.”¹¹ However, a counterargument to the criticism of unbalanced reporting is that the Coalition has also not done a very good job of marketing its achievements among constituent populations both at home and abroad. Why this has been so is much of the rub of this short study.

For example, in another comparison to Vietnam, Robert Kaplan draws a parallel between the heroism of Marines at Hue overshadowed by the My Lai incident and the carefully

¹⁰ See also the author’s “The Operational Art of Civil-Military Operations” in *Lessons from Kosovo: The KFOR Experience*, Larry Wentz (ed.), DoD Command and Control Research Program, Washington, D.C., July 2002, especially p. 270 (www.dodccrp.org).

¹¹ Fareed Zakaria, “Hopeful Omens in Iraq”, *Washington Post*, 2 June 2004, p. A25.

planned and sensitively handled operation in Fallujah lost in the din of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. In connecting the dots between tactical operations and strategic operations, Kaplan explains:

But none of the above matters if it is not competently explained to the American public – for the home front is more critical in a counterinsurgency than in any other kind of war. Yet the meticulous planning process undertaken by the Marines at the tactical level for assaulting Fallujah was not augmented with a similarly meticulous process by the Bush administration at the strategic level for counteracting the easily foreseen media fallout from fighting in civilian areas near Muslim religious sites. The public was never made to feel just how much of a military threat the mosques in Fallujah represented, just how far Marines went to avoid damage to them and to civilians, and just how much those same Marine battalions accomplished after departing Fallujah. We live in a world of burning visual images: As Marines assaulted Fallujah, the administration should have been holding dramatic slide shows for the public, of the kind that battalion and company commanders were giving their troops, explaining how this or that particular mosque was being militarily utilized, and how much was being done to avoid destroying them, at great risk to Marine lives. Complaining about the slanted coverage of Al-Jazeera – as administration officials did – was as pathetic as Jimmy Carter complaining that Soviet Communist Party boss Leonid Brezhnev had lied to him. Given its long-standing track record, how else could Al-Jazeera have been expected to report the story? You had the feeling that the Pentagon was reacting; not anticipating. It could not be helped that the shame of My Lai, as awful as it was, should have been allowed to blot out American heroism at places like Hue: The phenomenon of the media as we know it was new back then. But if the stain of Abu Ghraib, for example, is not placed in its rightful perspective against everything else that soldiers and Marines are doing in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Colombia and many other places in the War on Terrorism, then it won't be the media's fault alone.¹²

STRATEGIC SHORTCOMINGS

Iraq epitomizes the challenges of conducting CMO and IO in a complex crisis environment. Soft-power humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, restoration of essential services, infrastructure reconstruction, rule of law, and governance actions can coexist with hard-power combat, antiterrorist or counterinsurgency operations. In spite of extensive U.S. involvements in Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Haiti again, the U.S. ability to conduct peace operations has not significantly improved. Aside from the manpower shortfall, many of the challenges encountered with each new operation have been experienced in previous operations. The process for collecting and disseminating lessons learned and institutionalizing change has generally not effectively addressed shortfalls in conducting stability and reconstruction operations. Regrettably, many of the lessons emerging from one year of operation in Iraq are lessons revisited. They reflect, in part, the influence of an overall national leadership and foreign and security policy elites that remain

¹² Robert D. Kaplan, "The Real Story of Fallujah", *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 May 2004, p. 20.

ambivalent about U.S. military involvement in humanitarian assistance, winning hearts and minds, and “nation-building”.

If Clausewitz’s dictum that war is an extension of policy by other means still holds true, then the process of winning the peace in Iraq was hamstrung first and perhaps foremost by the dubious international legitimacy of the American-led intervention and the limited composition of the coalition. With no UN Security Council Resolution to specifically authorize the invasion, the Bush Administration’s argument for action was largely articulated on the basis of an “imminent threat” to U.S. and international security and interests and Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). When no evidence of the latter was found, the political cachet for *Operation Iraqi Freedom* was seriously tarnished – with profound effects on the operational and tactical centers of gravity.

Beyond politics, these lessons also reflect a strategic and military culture still grounded in the Cold War that tends to choose hard power over soft power and prepare for big wars while fighting small wars. Foreign and security policy approaches have become highly bureaucratic, ideologically-driven and programmatic. Also not to be forgotten is that America is a results-oriented society of predominantly commercial values, constantly demanding instant gratification and enamored with technology, and with a media culture where editorial content is driven by what makes headlines and sound bites and sells advertisement. Specific to the military culture:

Some futurists claim that new information and computing technologies will allow U.S. military forces to “lift the fog of war”. According to this view, a vast array of sensors and computers, tied together, can work symbiotically to see and comprehend the entire battle space and remove ambiguity, uncertainty, contradiction, and error from the military equation. Technology will triumph over the general friction of war, they claim. This view led to the belief that all the American military needs to do to remain preeminent is to focus on acquiring more sophisticated technology. The arguments in support of technological monism echo down the halls of the Pentagon, precisely because they involve the expenditure of huge sums of money... Crucial to success in combat is an understanding of one’s opponent as he is, rather than as Americans would like him to be. This is intelligence in the largest sense. It does not rest on satellites, UAVs, reconnaissance aircraft, and electronic surveillance. Since the Vietnam War, U.S. intelligence agencies have increasingly depended on such technological means, and the information gathered in this way has been of considerable use, particularly to commanders engaged in combat. But it provides little that is of value in understanding the enemy’s intentions, his motivation to fight, and the strength of his will – factors that matter most in war... Flawed political intelligence... had little impact on the conventional phase of the Iraq War. But in Vietnam, political and strategic misjudgments resulted in military disaster. This is a clear warning that applies to the unconventional phase of the war in Iraq. This war is one in which culture and politics matter as much as technology. Political and cultural knowledge require immersion in the languages, history, and contemporary life of a region.¹³

¹³ Murray and Scales Jr., pp. 239-41.

Beyond the strategic culture issue is the issue of bureaucratic politics. Following the major combat phase of the Iraq War, the Department of Defense has almost exclusively led the effort to win hearts and minds and conduct nation-building in Iraq, something for which it is not really ideally suited to do as an institution. The majority of “soft power” expertise and cultural situational awareness for these kinds of endeavors are more readily found in the State Department, which was for various reasons not a major player in the process for at least the first year. Nor was there any overriding influence from the National Security Council (NSC). Although the State Department has paid greater attention to “public diplomacy” efforts in countries like Iraq and the Middle East in general, these efforts, certainly in the period leading up to and in the months following the invasion of Iraq, were seriously under-resourced and received little executive direction and emphasis at the “principals” level involving the NSC and the White House. Moreover, public diplomacy efforts thus far have been to some extent a look to bring back Cold War era instrumentalities like the (now defunct) U.S. Information Agency, Voice of America, etc., whose programs often smack more of propaganda than information.

What these efforts so far do not seem to do is encourage connectivity among important communities in these non-globalized countries and areas, and promote a rising level of expectations and the growth of a middle class through promoting commercial contacts and small and medium enterprise development through, for example, robust and synchronized involvement of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Trade Development Authority, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, or even the Small Business Administration – which implies a coordinated, interagency response (led by the NSC?) rather than simply leaving it up to DoD.

The DoD monopoly, somewhat by default, was not the optimal structure for success in winning the peace in a situation where history and culture were not on the side of foreign-induced nation-building¹⁴. This resulted, to a great extent, in specific policy-level (in)actions that contributed to the denouement in Iraq, or as Cordesman summarized it, the “worst-case scenario” that “illustrated the kind of linkage between military action and nation-building that occurred in Afghanistan”, a scenario of “a steadily escalating guerilla war that would slowly gather popular support”. This scenario would be the result of a number of largely self-induced factors leading to a failure in nation-building, including:

- Progress was too slow and too many promises were not kept. Local security continued to falter, the growth in Iraqi jobs and economic activity was too slow, and many well-intended reforms which did not work or paid off too late to develop any real Iraqi support or gratitude among the populace.
- The problems in nation building increasingly led the U.S. and its allies to act as occupiers rather than liberators. Rather than Iraq for the Iraqis on Iraqi terms – with clear goals in terms of milestones, political and economic action, and a transition to Iraqi rule – the U.S. muddled through in ways that increasingly appeared to involve a presence of five to 10 years, rather than 12 to 24 months. Rather than goals that could attract real Iraqi support, and win

¹⁴ For an excellent summary of the British experience in Iraq in the early 20th century, see Martin Walker’s “The Making of Modern Iraq” in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 2003. Also: *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied*, Toby Dodge, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003.

hearts and minds, the U.S. appeared to be embarked on an effort to rebuild Iraq in its own image.

- The United States and its allies continued to select leaders they wanted, rather than the leaders the Iraqis wanted. Rather than screening the Ba'ath and Iraqi military, large blocs of Iraq's best people were rejected because they went along with Saddam's dictatorship to survive. Not only was there a major power vacuum, but an increasing incentive to oppose the U.S.-led nation-building effort. [This likewise applies to the selection process of the Iraqi National Council, the restructuring of the government ministries, and the framework for discussion of the constitution and elections. In short, the CPA was seen by many Iraqis as projecting an arrogant, colonialist, and pedantic attitude.]
- U.S. and British nation builders and military forces increasingly huddled behind their own security barriers, creating a growing distance from ordinary Iraqis... At the same time, the failure to properly integrate the military and civil sides of the nation-building effort continues to present coordination problems in Iraq.
- The United States sought to ignore the lack of any meaningful secular opposition leaders in the Shi'ite south, and to avoid having religious Shi'ites come to power. This increasingly alienated Iraq's Shi'ites, who earlier tolerated – not supported – the U.S. and British military advance. The end result played into the hands of Iraqi Shi'ite religious hard-liners and Iran. The same pattern of resistance and violence emerged in the south that already exists in central Iraq.
- The United States tried to handle all of these problems as inexpensively as possible in a country that had no meaningful exports other than oil and dates before the war, and earned only \$12.5 billion in oil exports in 2002.
- Rather than conduct an open and transparent effort to rehabilitate Iraq's petroleum industry, with Iraqi technocratic and political advice, the United States acted on its own priorities and perceptions. Oil revenues were not used as the "glue" to unite Iraq's divided factions in some form of federalism.
- Other aspects of nation-building effort lacked transparency, such as nation-building contracts, assistance to Iraqi businesses, and the search for foreign investment. The U.S. and Britain improvised solutions in Western market terms... in a climate of hostile Iraqi conspiracy theories that believe the U.S. and Britain are in Iraq to seize its oil revenues, benefit from contracts, and finance an occupation. [They] did the right thing in economic and technocratic terms, but every such action ended in increasing Iraqi distrust and hostility because it lacked transparency and a quick transition to Iraqi planning and control.

- A token 40,000-man Iraqi Army was seen as leaving Iraq defenseless and as dependent on U.S. and British occupiers.¹⁵

On the last point, the summary dismissal, without ceremony or apt acknowledgement, of the entire Iraqi armed forces created a huge and armed group of disenfranchised heads of families, many with serious community influence. This also ignored the reality that “the army is perhaps the single most potent and legitimate symbol of statehood in the country and should not be humiliated.”¹⁶ A classified “think paper” assembled by the Defense Intelligence Agency in April 2003 noted that the Iraqi military was a key symbol of national identity and pride and that the defeat of military would be seriously hurt the national psyche. More than that, they presented a large potential pool of recruits for insurgent, terrorist and organized crime movements as well as militias which would prove difficult to dissolve. Finally, the transfer of sovereignty to the Interim Government was not very effective, due to the hasty handover to (in)competent Iraqis and the paucity of enacted project funding. Only \$660 million of the \$18.4 billion reconstruction money approved in late 2003 had been spent so far by the end of July 2004; less than 30,000 local jobs had been produced as a result; and the training and deployment of professional Iraqi security forces continued to move at a snail’s pace – all adding to the perception of broken promises.¹⁷

Why would the above-mentioned aspects of nation-building be critical to winning hearts and minds and IO? Because, “often in postwar environments it is not what is accomplished in what amount of time that is important but an impression that things are getting better. Nation building is not merely a physical process but also a psychological one.”¹⁸ The same DIA paper also posited that failure to demonstrate progress in returning control to the Iraqis would result in anti-Americanism leading a full-blown insurgency against Coalition occupation. Because the Coalition was not ready to start making visible positive changes in Iraq on a large enough scale to have impact on Iraqi perceptions, the credibility of the liberators dissipated fast.

Iraqi levels of expectations regarding what the Coalition could do for them and how quickly were wildly out of synch with reality, partly because of their own isolation and images of the U.S. as omnipotent and partly because of the great effort to promise the Iraqis good times to come, including PSYOP radio broadcasts and the distribution of over five million leaflets in the months leading up to the war. Add to that inherent Iraqi distrust of American intentions there, and it was no wonder Iraqis were ripe for disappointment, expecting the Coalition to come “with the staff of Moses” (to use an Arabic expression). Their perceptions and expectations had been anything but pre-managed to mitigate such disappointment, cynicism and negative backlash:

They [the Iraqis in the south] watched on Kuwaiti television as President Bush pledged rejuvenation. They read the leaflets that fluttered from U.S. planes, rallying them to a bountiful new era. They saw U.S. military might roaring

¹⁵ Cordesman, pp. 521-4.

¹⁶ Ray S. Jennings, *The Road Ahead: Lesson in Nation Building from Japan, Germany, and Afghanistan for Postwar Iraq*, U.S. Institute of Peace Peaceworks No. 49, Washington, D.C., April 2003, p. 35.

¹⁷ See Cordesman’s CSIS Scholar Statement, “Figures Indicate Challenging Transition Ahead in Iraq”, 25 June 2004, “Cleaning Up the Mess: The Failures of the CPA and the U.S. Effort in Iraq and What Can Be Done to Salvage Them, CSIS, 7 July 2004, and “Inexcusable Failure: Progress in Training the Iraqi Army and Security Forces as of Mid-July 2004”, CSIS, 20 July 2004.

¹⁸ Jennings, p. 26.

through the desert toward Baghdad. Yet looters wreaked havoc under the noses of U.S. and British commanders. Large-scale humanitarian aid did not arrive and the distribution of staples has not yet resumed. For all the joy about the overthrow of Hussein, political change has produced little but uncertainty. Iraqis across the region say they no longer know which end is up – and no one is offering a set of instructions... “The Americans cruised in as the messengers of freedom: ‘We are the messengers of happiness’ for Iraqis. We will deliver you from Saddam Hussein,” said Khalid, the grain trader. “We see nothing. Just destruction and shortages.”¹⁹

In his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on “post-conflict” lessons in May 2004, Cordesman’s earlier observations are reinforced by lessons that reflect “critical failures in American understanding of the world it faces in the 21st Century, and in the nature of asymmetric warfare and defense transformation.”²⁰ Of note:

- Great as U.S. power is, it cannot substitute for coalitions and the effective use of international organizations if at all possible... At the same time, armed nation building is a challenge only the U.S. is currently equipped to meet. While allies, the UN, and NGOs can help in many aspects of security and nation building operations, they often cannot operate on the scale required to deal with nation building in the midst of serious low intensity combat.
- War must be an extension of diplomacy by other means, but diplomacy must be an extension of war by other means as well. Military victory in asymmetric warfare can be virtually meaningless without successful nation building at the political, economic, and security levels.
- Force transformation cannot be dominated by technology; manpower skills, not technology, are the key. Technology-based force transformation and the revolution in military affairs are tools with severe and sometimes crippling limits. Simply adding troops or more weapons will not solve America’s problems any more than trying to use technology to make U.S. forces smaller and more cost-effective will.
- Stabilization, armed nation building, and peacemaking require a new approach to organizing U.S. government efforts.
- The U.S. needs to organize for effective information campaigns while seeking to create regional and allied campaigns that will influence Arab and Islamic worlds.
- The U.S. private sector and foreign direct investment should be integrated into the U.S. security strategy.²¹

And among his major recommendations to U.S. national leadership:

¹⁹ Peter Slevin, “A Sense of Limbo in the South”, *Washington Post*, 6 May 2003, p. 1.

²⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The “Post-Conflict” Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 19 May 2004, p. ii.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 3-10.

Accept the near total failure of U.S. information operations. Stop giving all CPA/CJTF-7 press conferences, and put an Iraqi on the stage with the U.S. spokesmen. Stop all procounsel-like press conferences where the U.S. seems to be dictating. Make an Iraqi spokesman part of all dialogue, and give them the lead as soon as possible. Subordinate U.S. and Coalition spokesmen as soon as possible to Iraqis in press conferences and briefings that are held in Arabic.²²

In addition to these Coalition shortcomings affecting Iraqi perceptions on the ground, Cordesman's recommendation is a good example of how a lack of a coherent and effective strategic game plan to win the peace affects like efforts at the operational level. Nor was it just the U.S. military that had shortcomings in strategic communications. In a redacted memorandum referenced in a website article, a ranking member of the CPA explains:

On a micro-level, avoiding the media is my way of addressing what I see as a failure in our strategic communication, which tends to promote American individuals above Iraqis. Iraqis present at the 4 a.m. conclusion of the Governing Council deliberations on the interim constitution were mocking [CPA senior communications advisor] Dan Senior's request that one say anything to the press until the following afternoon. It was obvious to all that an American wanted to make the announcement and so take the credit. Our lack of honesty in saying as much annoyed the Iraqis. [It also flew in the face of the intense CPA spin that the interim constitution was strictly an Iraqi production.]²³

And in another example by a former CPA Senior Advisor:

The CPA had long been planning a campaign to sell the [Transitional Administration Law] to the Iraqi people once it was adopted. A British advertising agency with offices in the Middle East had been hired to produce a campaign of emotional and highly symbolic television and newspaper ads. Yet, inexplicably, this campaign did not begin until several weeks after the TAL's signing. This allowed it to be preempted by the appearance of leaflets on the streets of Iraq's cities, which denounced the TAL as unfair, unrepresentative, and undemocratic, "a dictatorship of the minorities". These denunciations caught on with the Iraqi public and largely neutralized the CPA's expensive public relations effort before it got off the ground.²⁴

Given the above explanations of American strategic culture and policy-driven developments, it should be no wonder that the effort to secure the military victory, win the peace in Iraq and win hearts and minds was not structured for success from the strategic level. For at least the first critical six months, there was also neither a coordinated, civil-military and joint Coalition-Iraqi strategic communications plan nor any robust, multimedia information apparatus at the national level in Iraq to win hearts and minds. It should thus be no surprise that there was likewise no clearly articulated and synchronized political-military and civil-military plan for winning the peace in Iraq until beyond the first six months of the

²² Ibid, p. 20.

²³ Jason Vest, "Fables of the Reconstruction", Association of Alternative Newsweeklies, 20 April 2004 www.aan.org

²⁴ Larry Diamond, "What Went Wrong in Iraq", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2004, p. 53.

operation, when much of the goodwill created by the overthrow of Saddam and his regime had dissipated and the hard realities of nearly three decades of neglect and trauma set in. This dearth of strategic guidance and resources in that gap of time had profound downstream effects on building Iraqi confidence in the process of political and economic change.

OPERATIONAL LAPSES

The failure to win hearts and minds in Iraq also had many fathers at the operational level. Other than the Iraqi Media Network (IMN), friendly IO in Iraq was largely relegated to the Coalition Forces, especially for the first 10-12 months. (The Ministry of Information was, of course, abolished immediately.) The IMN, supervised by the CPA with the assistance of some Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers until its turnover to an Iraqi board of governors, got off to a slow and feeble start, largely due to a dearth in funding and organizational support. By spring 2004, it grew to encompass a \$96 million operating budget for its satellite television, FM radio and newspaper operations, and was gaining credibility with Iraqis as an alternative to Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya. “The mix of C-SPAN-style public affairs and cable TV news appears to be catching on. The State Department did a survey [in March 2004], asking Iraqis which source they go to first for news. Al Iraqiya beat its two chief competitors. It garnered 40 percent of respondents, compared with 29 percent for Al Arabiya TV in the United Arab Emirates and 11 percent for Al Jazeera.”²⁵ Another example of indigenous capability to promote civil dialogue in Iraq was Radio Dijla, the Arab world’s first independent all-talk radio station, launched in May 2004. The small staff there receives up to 18,000 calls daily: “Everybody from laborers to ministry officials tunes in, and callers are free to speak about anything at all (only incitement to violence is taboo).”²⁶

Still, considerable time and goodwill was already lost by the time these initiatives gained momentum. As mentioned earlier, in addition to a power vacuum, there was also an information vacuum, which nature likewise has a tendency to abhor. This had considerable impact on perceptions on the Iraqi street, at the tactical center of gravity.

While Americans have obviously drawn their understanding of the situation in Iraq through the prism of their own national media culture, Iraqi perceptions were arrived at rather differently. What the USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll also revealed is that “only 7% in the poll say they based their opinions on personal experience... More news is spread through that oldest delivery system: marketplace chatter. In the rumor mill, interviews indicate, every confrontation between Americans and Iraqis is portrayed as an assault on the Iraqi people, not on just a few lawless insurgents.” Further, the Los Angeles Times, which maintained a constant presence the first year in Iraq, explained this in more revealing detail; namely, that “the gossip on the street and the grisly images flickering across Arab television are doing as much to undermine American authority as well-armed insurgents staging ambushes on desert highways. Reality is pliable and truth is altered to serve agendas in a society where stories, myths and superstitions have shaped public discourse for centuries...”

“The rumors are really the problem of the Americans,” said Hashim Ihsan, editor of *Kawkab*, a Baghdad newspaper. “The U.S. gave us freedom of

²⁵ “Al Iraqiya Offers Alternative View”, Rowan Scarborough, *The Washington Times*, 28 April 2004, p. 3.

²⁶ “The News in Iraq Isn’t All Bad”, Jeff Jacoby, *Boston Globe*, 1 August 2004, p. 4.

speech but nothing else, so all many Iraqis can do is invent rumors to cope with the anxieties and fears in these dark times.” “The Iraqis are living in an information vacuum,” said Lt. Col. Gregg Olson, Commander of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, which has encircled the city of Fallouja. “They’re existing on rumors.”

For decades under Hussein, Iraqis lived in a country perverted by propaganda. Little was known about the outside world or the dealings of the government. The people’s mood was controlled by innuendo planted by Iraqi intelligence operatives and by shreds of vague information that spread through alleys and boulevards. This created a parallel reality, which at its most outlandish featured last year’s televised proclamation by Mohammed Said Sahaf, then Iraq’s information minister, that U.S. forces were not in Baghdad, even as gunfire from advancing troops rang out behind him.

Street gossip is merging with a new phenomenon: satellite TV. Satellite dishes symbolized the end of Hussein’s regime and brought the unfolding of events into living rooms. Live broadcasts by Al Jazeera and other Arabic-language channels show what is happening in Iraq, from kidnappings to suicide bombings to gun battles between American troops and insurgents. U.S. forces claim that these outlets have stepped beyond the boundaries of news gathering and are inciting uprisings and sabotaging efforts to build a democratic Iraq.

Al Jazeera is often first on the scene of a story. Its breathless commentary and images of dead Iraqi civilians undercut the U.S. message that the occupation is improving the country. The bloodshed the channel shows sometimes offers an eerie counterbalance to assessments by Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, the top U.S. military spokesman in Iraq, who has described battles between insurgents and U.S. forces as “upticks” in violence.

Hamida Smaysam, dean of media studies at Baghdad University, said: “Everyone is watching Al Jazeera and other Arab TV stations. There’s a war of information going on, and the Americans have not been able to fill the gap. Al Jazeera is not intentionally distorting the facts — it’s just rushing into exciting news and making quick conclusions,” she said. “But at the same time, the Americans want to hide things.”²⁷

By the summer of 2004, a modest effort had been made to build one of the most essential institutions to a democratic society – a free and independent media which can do a far more credible job of telling the story of the effort to build the peace in Iraq than any outside sources. Beyond little investment in Iraqi media enterprises, there was a paltry effort to train local journalists by opening up journalism studies departments at Iraqi post-secondary schools, in partnership for example with Western universities and colleges, creating internships with established world media, and hosting seminars to facilitate discussion of the role of the media in leading civil dialogue in Iraq. Many see this as a longer-range task of nation-building, but it needs to be front-loaded in order to reap the benefits of the investment soon enough, for example, for the elections process. Although PSYOP forces had excellent information dissemination capabilities of their own, printing and distributing leaflets,

²⁷ Rumors Thrive In A Nation Shaped By Myth, Jeffrey Fleishman, *The Los Angeles Times*, 27 April 2004

deploying loudspeaker teams in local villages, and beaming messages on radio and Coalition-controlled TV, it had limited ability to build the capacity of local independent media to tell the story more credibly than PSYOP, even though most radio and TV facilities outside Baghdad were undamaged and operational.

If the operational level center of gravity of winning the peace is the willingness, ability and unity of effort of civilian change agents like the CPA and other government agencies, NGOs or the UN and its agencies to conduct relief and reconstruction, then perhaps the greatest operational level shortfall was the dearth of such organizations visible to the Iraqi people, lending international credibility to the effort. Beyond the well-known resource failures of the CPA, the overall planning and preparation shortfalls naturally did not include solicitation and facilitation of large number of NGOs and other outside help for the immediate post-conflict period. There were simply too few international NGOs to have large enough of an impact on perceptions on the Iraqi street of the international presence during the first few critical months.

While security was the main issue identified by many NGOs reticent to operate in Iraq, the lack of specific international authorization legitimizing the international presence in the form of a UN Security Council resolution was another. Things went from bad to worse, of course, following the 23 August 2003 bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, after which a number of NGOs left along with UN agencies. Some eventually returned, but the deterioration of the security situation in early 2004 forced more to leave, reinforcing the notion that the international presence in Iraq was an occupation. Unity of effort among those working in Iraq was relatively good, thanks largely to coordinating mechanisms such as the humanitarian operations and humanitarian assistance coordination centers (HOCs and HACCs) at the operational level, as well as the civil-military operations centers (CMOCs) established and run initially by Civil Affairs personnel at the tactical level.

As 2004 wore on, dozens of home-grown NGOs appeared, obtaining financial assistance from Coalition government agencies, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Britain's Department for International Development (DFID), which were disbursing the lion's share of aid, reconstruction and institution-building project monies, often through international and local NGOs on a subcontractual basis. As this relationship matured, the effectiveness of such aid distribution improved. At the same time, State Department conducted a major review of the \$18.4 billion U.S.-funded reconstruction program, shifting from the Pentagon's focus on big-ticket infrastructure projects to smaller, job-generating projects. "The projects have been way too large", noted Rick Barton of CSIS in *The New York Times*. "If you try to build pyramids in the beginning, it will suck up all the money [as well as provide easy targets for sabotage]". The model, ironically, for more palpably improving local living conditions, putting people to work, and increasing Iraqi participation in reconstruction management (and thus the legitimacy of local public administration) is the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP), a comparatively quick, flexible and positive small aid program. As Barton posits, "we need to make the Iraqis have ownership", so when something goes wrong they'll fix it themselves instead of blaming outsiders."²⁸

²⁸ "U.S Seeks to Provide More Jobs and Speed Rebuilding in Iraq", Erik Eckholm, *The New York Times*, 27 July 2004, p. A7.

To keep things in perspective, “the rebuilding of Iraq has proved to be the most far-reaching international—and particularly American—nation-building enterprise since the reconstruction efforts in Europe and Japan at the conclusion of World War II. In fact, in financial terms, the first two years of civilian reconstruction in Iraq are proving more ambitious than the first two years of civilian reconstruction of post-war Germany, Japan, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan combined...”²⁹ Still, the failure to initiate a virtuous cycle of progress and rising employment helping security early in the process resulted in a vicious cycle of security concerns hindering assistance and nation-building.

CHALLENGES AT THE GROUND LEVEL

While the shortcomings of nation-building in the first year in Iraq allude to an overall lack of cultural sensitivity and situational understanding on the part of policy makers at the strategic level and the CPA at the operational level, the bureaucrats were by no means alone. At all levels of war, the military had its problems, too. The strategic culture of the Pentagon and the institutional legacies of the Cold War, discussed earlier, reflected the preference of the military, all the way down to the tactical level, to fight the war instead of win the peace. As former CENTCOM commander, Gen. (ret.) Anthony Zinni has repeatedly suggested in public appearances, “we are involved in wars of cultural proportions, but we don’t understand the culture.” Or, as Rep. Ike Skelton of the House Armed Services Committee noted: “In simple terms, if we had better understood the Iraqi culture and mindset, our war plans would have been even better than they were, the plan for the post-war period and all of its challenges would have been far better, and we might have been better prepared for the ‘long slog’”.³⁰ One of the other reasons, however that the U.S. military has had trouble understanding foreign cultures is that neither intelligence nor information operations give much importance to an understanding of the local culture as integral to the operational environment, let alone operations in general.

One of the more interesting discussions emerging in the summer of 2004 was whether the presence of U.S troops in Iraqi neighborhoods was actually fueling rather than quelling the insurgency. For most of the operation, the military assumed, based in part on lessons drawn from Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as from the British, that maintaining "presence" through extensive patrols, large-scale raids and other highly visible operations would increase stability. Some officers were challenging that, however, saying that such operations have done more to inflame anti-American feelings among Iraqis than to secure the streets. One pointed out that “the presence of foreign security forces is provoking the very instability that must diminish in order for the process to work. Coalition Forces are not only not stopping most of the violence, they are the active force which is provoking it.” Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, supported this view in a July 2004 hearing of the House Armed Services Committee: “Sometimes the best way is to be less present, and to be focused in your presence and successful in what you do.”³¹

²⁹ “Donor Activities and Civil Society Potential in Iraq”, U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report 124, July 2004, p. 2.

³⁰ “U.S. Military Training Fails to Grasp Foreign Cultures, Says Rep. Skelton”, Sandra I. Erwin, *National Defense*, June 2004, p. 16.

³¹ “Officers Question Visibility of Army in Iraq”, Thomas E. Ricks, *Washington Post*, 26 July 2004, p. 1.

The issue became politically charged, not only because it called into question the issue of force structure levels in Iraq, but whether it vindicated the Secretary of Defense's emphasis on using fewer forces over big troop numbers to win wars (and perhaps to win the peace). The issue, unfortunately, risked missing two important points: first, that once hearts and minds are lost, then the presence of troops perceived as occupiers indeed becomes counterproductive (so the argument to draw down troops and operations makes sense, but mainly because the point of diminishing returns has come and gone); and second, the MO of the military is more important than operational or tactical presence: "The predominant pattern of human behavior in the information age is network behavior. Network-centric warfare is about human behavior in a networked environment – and in warfare, human behavior ultimately determines outcome."³²

In other words, it's the quality of the presence. While the Chief of Staff and many other leaders have advocated conducting "focused operations", it is extremely difficult, in an insurgency environment using troops untrained in counterinsurgency warfare, to avoid even unintended consequences such as "collateral damage".³³ Moreover, the conduct of operations needs to occur, as Zinni would say, in a way that accounts for the cultural aspects of the operational environment. Recalling the 29 April 2004 *USA Today* poll cited earlier, many Iraqis considered American troops to be arrogant and insensitive:

- 58% said [Coalition Forces] soldiers conduct themselves badly or very badly;
- 60% said the troops show disrespect for Iraqi people in searches of their homes, and 42% said U.S. forces have shown disrespect toward mosques;
- 46% said the soldiers show a lack of respect for Iraqi women; and
- 11% of Iraqis say Coalition Forces are trying hard to restore basic services such as electricity and clean drinking water.

And in the referenced *New York Times* report on the same day, regarding the foreign military presence, 48% had a negative impression of how the U.S. military has dealt with Iraqi civilians (22% were neutral and 17% were positive).

While the invasion itself damaged Iraqi national pride (because the Iraqis themselves were unable to overthrow Saddam) and although a great majority hated Saddam, the conduct of the military didn't help matters. In places like Fallujah and Baqubah, tactical commanders began to learn when conducting raids and sweeps that, in the process of kicking down doors in the middle of the night to find "bad guys" (and often kicking down the wrong doors), entering the private space of the house where the women and children were, then tying up and interrogating (i.e., humiliating) the man of the house in front of his family, the premier cultural value of family honor was violated. Reports of soldiers pilfering stores of cash and other family valuables during these raids and sweeps also increased.³⁴ Families had no

³² "Transformation and the Changing Character of War", Arthur K. Cebrowski, *The Officer* (Reserve Officers Association of the United States magazine), July/August 2004, p. 53.

³³ Two good articles illustrating the dilemma of counterinsurgency and "collateral damage" are "The Military: Losing Hearts and Minds?", Oscar R. Estrada, *Washington Post*, 6 June 2004, p. B01, and "Inside One Day's Fierce Battle in Iraq", Ann Scott Tyson, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 July 2004, p. 1.

³⁴ "Iraqis Say Soldiers Rob Them", Ray Sanchez, *Long Island Newsday*, 15 August 2004, p. 1.

choice, in accordance with time-honored mores, but to seek retribution, for example, by planting a roadside bomb, often for a payment. From the local perspective, it was less personal than business. Such troop tactics and behavior, void of cultural sensitivity, were generating “POIs” – “pissed off Iraqis”. By early 2004, more commanders were concluding that POIs accounted for many if not most of their casualties, not the “bad guys”. Add to this that, while scores of Iraqis were killed, for example, during protests in Fallujah in August 2003 or during the raid in Samarra three months later, hardly any troops were publicly disciplined. This not only made the U.S. look hypocritical on human rights and the rule of law. It implied that Iraqi lives were neither respected nor valued. Then came Abu Ghraib.

In response to these developments, many commanders began to adjust tactics, particularly the 1st Marine Division after taking over Fallujah from the 82nd Airborne Division in the spring of 2004. During many raids and sweeps, for example, CA and other teams were sent in to offer apologies for the inconvenience in looking for the enemies of the Iraqi people, as well as a payment for the damage and trouble. While this did not necessarily win hearts and minds, it often mitigated the creation of an unfriendly element because it largely settled the moral score. PSYOP teams were also employed to respond:

U.S. forces battling insurgents in northern Iraq have a new weapon in their arsenal — illustrated Arabic-language booklets explaining politely to residents why American troops want to come into their homes to search for weapons. “Iraqis did not like having their houses searched when we did not hand out the books,” said Capt. Jeff Peterman, an expert on psychological or information operations with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the Army’s 1st Infantry Division. Now soldiers routinely distribute the books — which emphasize that the troops do not want to harm Iraqi families — before carrying out searches, eliminating much of the previous friction. The booklets are part of a broad public relations effort by the brigade’s psychological operations unit, which includes “story books and coloring books for the kids, including a full range of subjects about things like unexploded ordnance and teaching kids about the police department,” Capt. Peterman said. Also, he said, “We’ll pass out simple informational fliers or handbills telling people not to park their car along the side of the road because it could be mistaken for someone placing an explosive device.”³⁵

Some commanders, of course, understood the integral role of CMO and IO better than others, especially those who had peace operations experience in places like Bosnia or Kosovo. Among them was Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, who commanded the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq. Petraeus holds an advanced degree in international relations from Princeton and served as the assistant chief of staff for operations for SFOR. His division was also well suited for its mission. The 101st’s nearly 7,000 infantry soldiers, without armored vehicles, conducted dismounted patrols to stay in touch with the locals. “We walk, and walking has a quality of its own,” Petraeus said. “We’re like cops on the beat.” As part of his command information program, Petraeus would post flyers saying “We are in a race to win over the people.” Paying compensation was part of the division’s strategy to discourage revenge killings. In addition to paying for accidental wounds or killings, money was also paid for damage to Iraqi homes. Although it took more than eight months before the Army instituted a coordinated claims process in Iraq, the 101st had already paid more than \$200,000 in

³⁵ Kris Osborn, “New Iraq Weapon is the Printed Word”, *Washington Times*, 8 June 2004, p. 12.

repairs out of CERP funds.³⁶ Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, who commanded the 1st Cavalry Division, likewise emphasized CERP-funded public works projects and political engagement after taking over contentious Shi'a communities south of Baghdad from departing Spanish forces.³⁷

The Marines, who in many ways have a more integral understanding than the Army of CMO and IO, also used targeted public works projects as part of their carrot-and-stick approach: “no greater friend, no worse enemy” being the watchword. Even a fair number of junior Army tactical commanders down to company level, perhaps representing a generational shift, understood what many of their senior leaders had more difficulty understanding – the integral role of CMO and IO at even the most basic level of military operations:

Routine dismounted patrols must be conducted in sector, despite the risks. A mounted patrol through a sector fails to provide adequate presence and does not lend itself to winning the hearts and minds of the local population... Company civil-military and information operations deserve serious attention from senior leaders. We lack the experience, training, and resources in these areas at the brigade level and down... CMO and IO are not mutually exclusive. Commanders must take personal responsibility for these efforts. CMO and IO reinforce the success of each undertaking. The more successful CMO is in your sector, the more positive your IO will be for you.³⁸

In addition to adjustments on the ground, some corrective actions began to be taken in early 2004 to improve training soldiers in cultural situational understanding and effectiveness in dealing with civilians from other cultures, especially in the Middle East. In a dramatic reversal, the Secretary of Defense intervened at the 11th hour to stop the planned FY2004 closure of the Army's Peacekeeping Institute at Carlisle Barracks, PA (home of the Army War College). The Army's combat training centers, including the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, CA, the Joint Readiness Training Center at Ft. Polk, LA, as well as the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, have injected much more play on scenarios involving “civilians on the battlefield,” modeled specifically on Afghanistan and Iraq, for units preparing to rotate to those locations. Marine units are doing likewise. The Center for Army Lessons Learned at Ft. Leavenworth, KS, in cooperation with RAND, is likewise looking at ways to improve cultural sensitivity as a component of information operations, which is translating into adjustments of the Battle Command Training Program and the Command and General Staff College. The Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, has been providing cultural and political orientation training to brigade-level commanders and staff as part of its Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace courses since early 2004. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point is providing scholarships to Duke University's Fuqua School of Business for select new graduates to obtain an MBA in order to “be sophisticated enough to deal with people and to negotiate and operate in multidimensional cultures...”³⁹ The Army Special Operations Command is

³⁶ Michael R. Gordon, “101st Airborne Scores Success in Reconstruction of Northern Iraq”, *New York Times*, 4 September 2003, p. 4.

³⁷ “A Different Street Fight in Iraq, Scott Wilson, *Washington Post*, 27 May 2004, p. 1.

³⁸ CPT Daniel Morgan, “Going to Fight in Iraq? Lessons from an Infantry Company Commander”, *Army*, April 2004, pp. 16-25.

³⁹ “Training for Unpredictable Realities”, Sarah Murray, *Financial Times*, 3 March 2004, p. 3.

considering a \$74 million Tactical Language Training System to teach Arabic language and culture through interactive scenarios involving voice-recognition and artificial intelligence technologies developed by the University of Southern California.⁴⁰ The Joint Special Operations University at Hurlburt AFB, FL has seriously upgraded its training on joint CMO. In addition, CA forces deploying to Iraq in September 2004 were better trained than their predecessors, thanks to a pre-deployment exercise at Ft. McCoy, WI involving the largest training assembly of CA soldiers since World War II. Unlike the forces working in Iraq until the end of the summer of 2004, the forces following them were more prepared to address the informational and cultural lapses described by Zinni and Skelton.

WHICH “IO” IS IT?

As mentioned before, the U.S. military, for reasons of political and strategic culture, has had trouble understanding the cultural dimension of combat and stability operations, which is the major reason why it has trouble with counterinsurgency and peace operations. A reflection of that can be seen in how the military looks at IO.

IO has many different meanings in the U.S. military. As Larry Wentz from the National Defense University and George Mason University has pointed out: “IO has as many definitions and perceptions as organizations trying to employ it; implementation is inconsistent; and warfighting is still its main focus.”⁴¹ Although there is a doctrine at the joint level, the services tend to have parochial interpretations. The Air Force, in a characteristically technological way, sees IO largely as cyberwarfare, electronic countermeasures and “Command Solo” television and radio broadcasts from modified C-130 aircraft.

The Army’s agents for IO are found in the 1st IO Command, which exists under Army G3 Operations at the Pentagon than as a functioning operational command. It is a force provider of IO specialists, piecemealed out to operational commanders. At the tactical level, IO officers are usually found at the G3, because Army doctrine considers IO a “non-lethal fire”. Thus, the IO officer is often the Fire Support Officer, who has been given IO as an additional duty. In many cases, they are not trained in IO, since they are given the duty more as an afterthought. As one PSYOP officer in Iraq observed about the IO officer he worked with: “He was well intentioned and learned quickly, but he was not what was needed at the time since we didn’t have time to train people”.

Then there are the PSYOP teams attached to and in direct support of unit tactical (i.e., “kinetic”) operations. Remarkably, although CA and PSYOP belong to the same force command – the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), they seldom have had much to do with each other at either the operational or tactical levels. CA and PSYOP rarely train or deploy together, and the operating guidelines (techniques, tactics and procedures – or TTPs) for integration and coordination between CA and PSYOP are underdeveloped. Even USACAPOC recognizes the potential gains of greater CA-PSYOP mission integration:

⁴⁰ “Arabic High-Tech tutor”, *Newsweek*, 14 June 2004, p. 10.

⁴¹ From “Information Operations”, a briefing by Larry Wentz of the National Defense University and George Mason University to U.S. Army Civil Affairs personnel at Ft. McCoy, WI, 9 August 2004.

[CA and PSYOP] are distinct missions. When appropriate, however, great synergy can be derived from leveraging the mass media capabilities of our PSYOP units to influence the attitudes and behavior of key elements of the indigenous population by publicizing humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, rehabilitation and ministerial assistance activities of the civil affairs units working in the area⁴²

It was only at local command initiative, for example, through the creation of IO working groups and the use of tools such as synchronization matrixes, that the disparate elements that had impact on hearts and minds, including as well public affairs, chaplains, legal staff, etc., were coordinated. Otherwise, CMO and IO were often disjointed. In Bosnia and Kosovo, there was margin for such error; this was not true in Afghanistan or Iraq. While IO was used to great effect to spoof, debilitate, and destroy enemy command and control systems and demoralize troops (for which U.S. IO systems are essentially designed), when the battlespace shifted to being less physical and more “non-dimensional”, the flaws in the U.S. approach to IO became transparent. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, at least in the early stages, there was no integrated and coordinated joint IO part of the overall campaign plan to lay out goals and objectives, determine the lines of coordination among various elements contributing to IO (PSYOP, CA, etc.), define overall messages and media, and establish the effects to be reached and the procedures through which to assess them. When one was finally established, it took months before it trickled down to many of the operators on the ground. IO campaign and message development were often reactive and in response to what the military staff thought were appropriate messages, sometimes based on polling data derived in a difficult polling environment but less so as a product of a deliberate and coordinated focus group study. For example, in the 20-30 IO messages the author saw from the 4th Infantry Division headquarters each week in late 2003, well over half of them were usually in response to something that had occurred or to the remarkably consistent and simple themes employed by the resistance – primarily that the Americans were occupiers and not liberators and that Iraqis were no better now than under Saddam. As one officer put it, “the enemy was more in our decision cycle than we were in his.” Additionally, as a U.S. Army Peace and Stability Operations Institute study on CMO in Afghanistan observed:

Information Operations were focused on supporting the combat operation and gaining legitimacy and force protection for OEF. Although ISAF used IO to effect, OEF had a difficult time exploiting the opportunities presented by CMO. Intelligence Operations were focused on supporting combat operations. Again it was difficult obtaining products that supported CMO. HUMINT was inadequate and opportunities were missed.⁴³

This gets at the fundamental question for every military commander (and their civilian partners) in stability and reconstruction operations: “What *is* the battlespace?” In wartime, the battlespace is largely physical – i.e., key terrain and political and economic infrastructure, enemy combat formations, opposing leadership, etc. When the effort shifts to winning the peace, however, the battlespace becomes predominantly psychological – i.e., hearts and minds and legitimacy at strategic, operational and tactical levels. This likewise decisively shifts the focus of the effort such that, as one British staff officer put it, “the combat operation

⁴² Maj. Gen. Herbert L. Altshuler, Commander, USACAPOC, interviewed by Jeffrey McKaughan, *Special Operations Technology*, Vol. 2, Issue 4, April 2004, p. 22.

⁴³ William Flavin, *Civil-Military Operations: Afghanistan*, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle, PA, Draft 3.2, 8 June 2004, pp. 9 and 107.

should become a supporting operation to the CMO and IO campaign”. This understanding suggests a significant departure in the way the military has conducted not only CMO and IO but operations in general:

We live in a physical world... we traditionally conceptualize the battlespace in physical terms, and develop, acquire and employ capabilities that have value in the physical world. In short, it is what we know and do best. Increasingly, however, the most complex elements of the battlespace are non-dimensional. The liability of that term is that it suggests a battlespace that doesn't exist in fact or form, and is thus unconsciously diminished in importance. The emerging reality is that non-dimensional battlespace now defines a new strategic commons, and comprises the most complex battlespace in the conflicts of the 21st century.⁴⁴

The failure of military commanders to visualize the battlespace and understand the centrality of the information and cultural environment in particularly the post-invasion phase is by far the biggest reason why the military has had difficulty winning the peace. Hence the generally low priority for CMO and IO (often an afterthought to operations), the near-obsession with finding and eliminating “bad guys”, and the less than consistently strong record of personal involvement or leadership by example in winning hearts and minds.

Information management, as an engine of IO, was also poor. CMO reporting in particular was a cottage industry – formats constantly changed and were often narrative, collection was through maneuver reporting channels that watered down or “sanitized” reports to bullets, and the reports, of varying quality of information and detail, were always classified – which means they could not be shared with civilian interagency partners to promote civil-military unity of effort. At the operational level, fact sheets on what was being done to improve people's lives – i.e., “success indicators” or “measures of effectiveness” – were generated slowly and haphazardly, starving the effort to counter car bombings and rumor with factual good news. Local staff inputs to “effects-based” requests for information from higher were more a “check the block” response to frequent or overwhelming task orders rather than the result of serious ground assessments, contributing to the distorted understanding of reality. These problems are being addressed, albeit slowly and without great emphasis. One example is improved “effects-based operations” and the development and employment of the Civil Affairs Knowledge Management System (CAKMS), based in part on the successes of the UN-developed Afghanistan-Information Management System (AIMS). The most promising initiatives, however, can be found at the State Department's new Humanitarian Information Unit, which is employing cutting-edge methods to synchronize civil-military, interagency and multinational information management and transparency, all in an effort to improve unity of effort and facilitate real-time “information dominance” to those concerned with IO.

In order to understand the information operations culture in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is worth looking at some of the doctrinal precepts for IO, as shown in Figure 1⁴⁵. What is interesting is that they seem to be concerned largely with technological and material factors of IO – and with defeating a symmetric enemy, i.e., systems against systems. There is also no mention of culture. Yet, consider the definition of CMO as found in Joint Publication JP 3-57:

⁴⁴ Cebrowski, p. 55.

⁴⁵ Wentz, Slide 16.

The complex of activities in support of military operations embracing the interaction between the military force and civilian authorities fostering the development of favorable emotions, attitudes, and behavior in neutral, friendly, or hostile groups.

Information Operations Definitions

“Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems, while defending one’s own information and information systems...”
U.S. Joint Publication 3-13

“Continuous military operations within the military information environment that enable, enhance, and protect the friendly force’s ability to collect, process, and act on information to achieve an advantage across the full range of military operations. Information operations include interacting with the global information environment and exploiting or denying an adversary’s information and decision capabilities.”
U.S. Army Field Manual FM 100-6

“IO is not a warfighting function in its own right; it is an integrating concept that facilitates the warfighting functions of C2, maneuver,... Thus, the focus of Marine Corps IO will be upon the information-oriented activities that will best support the tailored application of combat power.”
USMC Combat Development Command CONOP

“The integrated employment of the core capabilities of Electronic Warfare Operations, Network Warfare Operations, and Influence Operations in concert with specified Integrated Control Enablers, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision-making while protecting our own.”
U.S. Air Force

Figure 1: Information Operations definitions.

It is remarkable that, in many ways this definition of CMO is indeed more like what IO has largely become. This reinforces the notion that CMO and IO are integral to military operations as well as to each other, and that, when winning the peace, CMO and IO are in reality the lead operations. While this was already true for ground operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, the much sharper cultural contrasts and xenophobic insurgent movements in Afghanistan and Iraq were acute enough to bring out these doctrinal incongruities. Now they are glaringly apparent: For especially IO, reality is now far ahead of doctrine.

The National Defense University, for example, has identified as a major lesson in a study on stabilization and reconstruction operations:

Lesson 8: Information operations require a comprehensive and integrated strategy from the inception of the operation through stabilization and reconstruction and nation-building to the desired end state. IO needs to shape and influence the information environment. Information operations (IO) are more than leaflet drops and Command Solo broadcasts, especially in the new world of global information and the 24x7 international media cycle. The can help establish legitimacy for the operation, win the hearts and minds of the local population, gain regional and international support, and influence an adversary’s decision. Communication with the local population is critical for

managing expectations, allaying fears and suspicions, helping establish legitimacy and support for the operation, and minimizing public unrest and possible interference with the operation. The United States has not done well in understanding its target audience and waging the information war. For example, the IO campaign in Iraq was inadequately integrated with the overall political-military effort. It was also slow to respond to threats and failed to utilize the most common venue accessible to Iraqis – the printed word. In many of the case studies, the product development, testing and approval cycle was cumbersome and lacked timeliness. In the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, it also proved difficult to measure the effectiveness of the information campaign and to make definitive judgments because there were no agreed measures of performance or effectiveness to support planning and assessment.⁴⁶

Perhaps another way of looking at IO is through the use of the term, “influence operations,” which would include public diplomacy, strategic communications, and public affairs, as well as information operations. As a minimum, the term suggests a more holistic approach to what IO has really become. Whether influence or information operations, however, IO in the era of network-centric, asymmetric warfare and a non-dimensional battlespace cannot be successfully approached using Cold War era cognitive models of war and peace, because there are now far too many dynamic variables – among these the interaction of cultures and belief systems that far transcend conventional norms of understanding power, influence and legitimacy. Moreover, IO cannot be an end in itself. It must support the obvious main operational effort in stability operations: CMO. CMO, in turn, now needs to incorporate IO as a core activity, and its main practitioners – Civil Affairs – must be better structured and trained to synergize CMO and IO.

THE CIVIL AFFAIRS PROBLEM

Because the vastly greater cultural dimension and predominant role of CMO and IO in winning the peace, another emerging military development is the recognition that operations in the Global War on Terror require more special operations forces like CA and PSYOP, as well as interagency capabilities for nation-building and constabulary operations, partly in order to preserve the combat power of what Thomas P.M. Barnett calls “Leviathan” forces. In his proposed bifurcation of the military, Leviathan forces would be designed to change regimes and hunt down and destroy “bad guys”. They would be in essence a largely hard-power force. The softer alter ego, the “System Administrator” force, would include constabulary and CA.⁴⁷

Constabulary forces such as the French *Gendarmerie* and the Italian *Carabinieri* offer distinct advantages in stability operations. “The presence of uniformed, international civil police in a community can increase the sense of personal security of local citizens who would

⁴⁶ Hans Binnendijk and Stuart Johnson (ed.), *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, Washington, D.C., 15 December 2003, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁷ For a more detailed discussion, see Barnett’s *The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 2004, especially Ch. 6.

be intimidated by or opposed to the presence of armed, foreign troops in their community”.⁴⁸ While the U.S. has no such forces, the most suitable type of System Administrator forces which could transition to a kind of constabulary are found in the National Guard, which has a civil disturbance as well as wartime mission. And, like most of CA, they speak “civilianese”.

CA, which has its roots in postwar Germany and Japan, are an essential leveraging element in the transition from war to peace. During combat, CA helps minimize civilian interference on the battlefield to ensure a rapid conclusion of hostilities and reduce civilian casualties and damage. These soldiers are also the military’s primary instrument for coordinating with both local civilians and civilian relief and reconstruction agencies, which they seek to empower. As the fighting subsides, they facilitate humanitarian relief and help restore civil order, promote the resumption of basic public services such as electricity, water, police, and medical care, and normalize daily life for the populace.

As the emphasis shifts from relief to reconstruction, CA brokers the establishment of governance and public administration to turn more and more responsibilities over to civilian relief and reconstruction agencies and, ultimately, local public administrators, enabling fulfillment of the military’s “exit strategy”. The whole CA force, less than the size of two infantry brigades and costing much less to equip, are the most exigent and cost-effective means the military has to execute U.S. foreign policy and political-military strategy to win the peace on the ground. The current capability to execute this increasingly strategically vital mission is less than 6,000 in the Army and Marines. This is astounding: Including PSYOP (a total of about 10,000 with CA), less than one half of one percent of the entire U.S. military force structure is dedicated to soft-power applications to winning the peace and leveraging the “end state” in stability operations – and the budget share is half again as proportionate. About 96% of CA is in the Reserve Components, mainly because they tend to be better suited for intense interaction with civilians and because of the plethora of civilian skills they bring—skills that cannot be duplicated in the active forces without great expense.

Although CA was somewhat effective in Iraq, their effectiveness was hampered by a number of impediments, many of which are self-inflicted. Many are the repeated lessons of an under-appreciated and poorly resourced force. They included: the lack of a clearly defined and articulated civil-military road map delineating the functions of CA in support of the overall operation, due to a lack of CA expertise in the initial operational planning stages; military command and staff and CPA misunderstanding of CA and CMO; complex and ambiguous command and control of CA forces, contributing to a lack of CA mission clarity; shortfalls in equipment to shoot, protect, move and communicate, even though CA forces are among the most exposed on the battlefield; and poor coordination and information management modalities and convoluted reporting systems, compromising both CMO situational understanding and depriving vital real-time information to support the IO effort. In addition, mostly because the prevailing prediction was for a massive humanitarian and refugee crisis in Iraq, CA was not structured, prepared or resourced to move more quickly into reconstruction rather than relief. In the first critical months, there was a void of money resources immediately available to CA to address both relief and humanitarian-related reconstruction issues.

⁴⁸ Robert M. Perito, *Where is the Long Ranger When You Need Him?*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., 2004, p. 5.

For CA and PSYOP, the good news is that more and more commanders on the ground have come to appreciate and understand their integral role in military operations across the spectrum of conflict. The bad news is that the demand for such forces has skyrocketed. The ability to continue to deploy and rotate CA forces is rapidly diminishing. Counting the more than 1,800 CA troops initially deployed to Iraq and over 400 on station in Afghanistan the previous year—along with the 1,000 and 200 CA soldiers, respectively, who were their replacements—by the end of the summer of 2004, three fourths of all deployable CA personnel had gone at least once to Iraq and Afghanistan. Without radical changes, the military will simply run out of CA even for current missions in 2005. Even a non-voluntary recall of CA personnel previously deployed at best staves off the inevitable implosion of the force structure for perhaps a year. CA forces as structured cannot support both the rapidly burgeoning direct support CMO-IO mission among ground force units, along with the general support need to facilitate interagency nation-building.

Beyond addressing the more immediate aspects of the shortfalls above, USACAPOC, the Army Special Operations command which has charge of managing and training CA, is addressing fundamental questions of doctrine and force structure. This, unfortunately, may be too little, too late. More needs to be done than just adding incremental numbers of CA personnel, improving CA planning capability, streamlining doctrine, and addressing material and resource problems. The qualitative issue of how CA forces are used is the crux issue. Combat units down to battalion level need their own organic CA staff and teams. CA training and education needs to be upgraded. Most importantly, overhauling the way CA is mobilized and employed, and integrating it with a new civil-military, interagency stability and reconstruction command and control structure could ensure an effective national capability to conduct these vital operations. The command and control architecture and method of employment for CA forces within a theater of operations need to be streamlined to promote operational flexibility, relieve field commanders of the burdens and distractions of trying to execute the stability and reconstruction mission simultaneous to more core military missions, and better exploit the inherent advantages of Active and Reserve Civil Affairs.⁴⁹

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The U.S. rightly accepted difficult stabilization and reconstruction challenges in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but it needs to get serious about its capabilities to exploit and employ its soft-power capabilities to win the peace and secure the victory. So far, the U.S. Government response has been repeatedly to cobble together plans, people, and resources ad hoc, allowing the good will of newly freed populations as in Iraq to wither away before much can be done to help them. Improvements in the surge capacity and capabilities of the civilian agencies would facilitate their ability to take over many of the non-security missions that have burdened the military.

Efforts such as the proposed legislation “The Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act of 2004” by Senators Lugar and Biden aim to establish a robust civilian capability to respond quickly and effectively to post-conflict situations, while the State Department’s new Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and

⁴⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the CA problem and solution, see “Civil Affairs at a Crossroads”, Michael Baranick, Larry Wentz, and Christopher Holshek, National Defense University, August 2004.

Humanitarian Information Unit would look to improve interagency unity of effort in S&R operations. Although these are promising, adjustments are needed not only in civilian capabilities but also within the military in order to create an integrated civil-military stability and reconstruction operations capability, with CMO and IO as core operations. The observations and lessons on CMO and IO in this short treatise offer heuristic examples of what is to be done, with much more yet to be discussed than determined already. Moreover, CMO and IO, as depicted in Figure 2⁵⁰, should create a synergy that multiplies the effects of both hard and soft power, requiring key components for success:

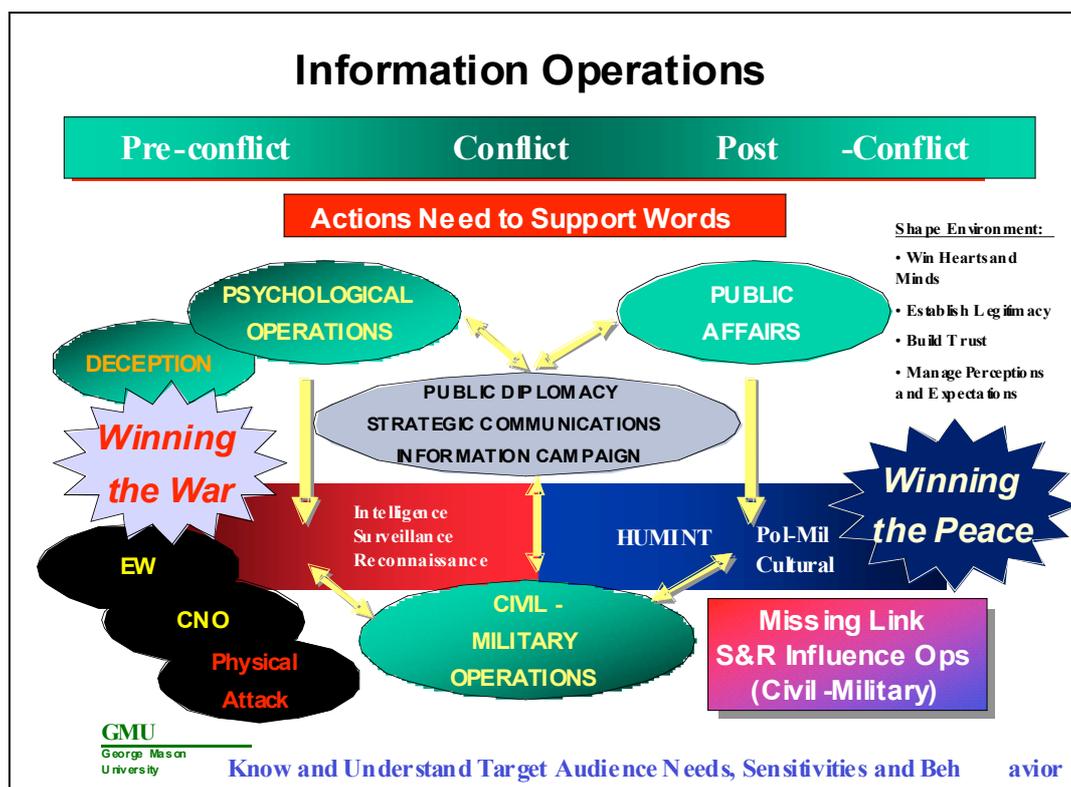


Figure 2: Information Operations.

- CMO and IO emanate from a National Security Strategy driven synchronization of soft and hard power elements of national power, reflecting an interagency and even U.S.-led multinational approach to winning the peace through winning hearts and minds and effecting cultural transformation (or, to use Barnett’s term, a “system perturbation”) through greater connectivity with the globalized world – working at the strategic, operational and tactical centers of gravity. The most effective way this connectivity be achieved, beyond government public diplomacy, is government-assisted commercial involvement in the process, the development of civil dialogue through an independent media, and education development and contacts. While the intelligence community also plays an important role (and has great interest in the information obtained through these activities, from a “HUMINT” perspective), clear civil-military and interagency protocols from top to bottom must be established to maintain a discreet relationship between

⁵⁰ Wentz, Slide 25.

“intelligence” and “information” and mitigate any potential loss of legitimacy of “open source” activities.

- Following this, CMO and IO are thus integrated (or at least synchronized), both horizontally across civil-military, interagency and multinational stovepipes, and include some level of joint targeting, message and media development, and assessments, using fusion cells or working groups and synchronization matrixes as tools to attain unity of effort. The more joint, interagency and multinational the effort, the greater credibility it can gain at the strategic, operational and tactical centers of gravity. Here again, the importance of a multinational character to the operation is not just important for reasons of political legitimacy. In many cases, as seen in Bosnia and Kosovo, U.S. allies often have complementary or more effective ways to reach the population than less culturally sensitive Americans.
- CMO and IO embrace a strategy of interior lines to engage all community leaders and promote civil dialogue as an alternative to violence. This strategy empowers and enlarges friendly change agents and stakeholders (as information and resource “haves”) oriented to the future and marginalizes spoilers (information and resource “have-nots”) oriented to the past, creating a bandwagon effect and making peace pay. This is the key to winning the peace. (Or, as Petraeus puts it: “Getting as many Iraqis as possible to feel they have a stake in the future.”) In that regard, it is more than just hearts and minds or mere “information dominance”. The overall objective is political credibility and mission legitimacy, especially among the disenfranchised that are the targets of insurgent and terrorist recruiting. It is fear among these traumatized populations that the spoiler elements play on – it thus fear and not the spoilers who are the real enemy. Hence the importance of concentrating on children – in other words, “it’s the kid’s, stupid”. Generally speaking, if they are happy, then Mom is happy; and if Mom is happy, then Dad (who is often under pressure to being a spoiler to the process), is more likely to become part of the solution rather than the problem. In respect to friendly operations, kids and youth are usually the most accessible segment of the population. Well-done efforts at winning over children and youth can be most difficult for spoilers to counter, because the youngest have the greatest stake in the future, whereas spoilers are almost always about the past (or at least the status quo), and because change agents can have more to offer them.
- They are deliberate, proactive, and adaptive, based on simple, culturally and situationally relevant themes intended to build trust, confidence and legitimacy – especially for the new government structures and institutions, where messages are backed up with substance and fact. Moreover, efforts and capacities should be civilianized and ultimately localized as an end state. The creation of a free and independent media as a key political and social institution must be a priority.
- They incorporate a marketing approach to both operational analysis and execution, exploiting a significant cultural comparative advantage of Western societies. In this regard, focus groups and market analysis techniques are used rather than traditional military operational analysis methodologies. Knowing

the target audience, its culture, values, language, behavioral rules, issues, needs, etc., is prerequisite. In military terms, using market research methods and emphasizing “cultural intelligence” would greatly enhance the “intelligence preparation of the battlefield” process – as long as the relationship between intelligence operations and CMO and IO are discreet. In addition to more expansive use of CA and PSYOP in “CMO-IO” marketing at especially the tactical level, at the strategic and operational levels, it may be a good idea to contract major marketing firms, both from Madison Avenue and Hollywood as well as from major international partners, to assist the effort, creating incidentally the segue way for greater private sector involvement in stability and reconstruction operations, and thus greater foreign direct investment earlier. In fact, private industry needs to be a bigger part of the process earlier (imagine, for example, computer and software firms donating used computers en masse to schools and universities – making school more attractive to youths, connecting them to the world, and creating potential economic growth and markets in other than commodities). This brings the transforming soft power of globalization into the process earlier, creating a virtuous cycle of change based on a rising (versus a diminishing) level of expectations among the target population. Using this approach, CMO and IO operators should see the target population as customers and potential markets, making operator behavior more positive, proactive and culturally sensitive.

The U.S. stands at the crossroads of its ability to win the peace and not just the war. If its *modus operandi* as Chairman of the Board of Planetary Management maintains the same trajectory, its credibility and thus ability as a force for positive change will eventually collapse, perhaps sooner than later. Which direction it goes will be in the answer to two questions: first, how much the political leadership is willing to win the peace as well as the war; and second, how much the military leadership values the ability to leverage its shorter stay and therefore preserving U.S. forces for other missions. If both are in the affirmative, then the appropriate policies, doctrines, training and education, force structuring, resources and executive or command emphasis need to be applied. At the strategic level, soft-power military capabilities like CA and PSYOP are already a bargain considering their program costs in relation to their value-added in dealing with the near-term, serious threat of global instability and terrorism, especially when compared to large and expensive forces designed to fight big wars which may not come again in decades. Like combat operations, however, stability and reconstruction operations cannot ultimately come on the cheap, especially as the lines between combat and peace operations have blurred. You get what you pay for.

Unless quoted or referenced, the opinions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the author.
