

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

DOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIES AND  
MEANS DURING OIF: WERE THEY EFFECTIVE?

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## ABSTRACT

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The Department of Defense (DoD) conducted a public affairs campaign during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) that included a variety of strategies and means to communicate to the American public and the international community, the U.S. intentions concerning military operations in Iraq. Did DoD employ the appropriate strategies and means to meet the communication goals, and how did DoD measure the effectiveness of its communications strategies and means? This paper will examine DoD's effectiveness in communicating its strategies, goals, objectives about military operations during OIF and the means by which DoD executed the strategies and means.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..... iii

DOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIES AND MEANS DURING OIF: WERE THEY EFFECTIVE? ..... 1

**MEDIA OPERATIONS AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS (IO)**.....1

**PA CONTINUUM/HISTORY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND THE MEDIA**.....2

**DOD STRATEGIES DURING OIF**.....3

**DOD COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES DURING OIF**.....4

**MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS** .....5

**MEDIA EMBEDDING**.....5

**PRESS BRIEFINGS FROM THE PENTAGON** .....7

**THE CENTRAL COMMAND PRESS BRIEFINGS** .....8

**DIRECT MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**.....9

**MEDIA ANALYSIS DURING OIF**.....10

**THE ARAB MEDIA EFFORT** .....11

**RECOMMENDATIONS**.....12

        ESTABLISH FORMAL MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS .....12

        COALITION PARTNERS.....13

        MEDIA EMBED PROGRAM.....13

        FOREIGN PRESS.....14

        PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR PUBLIC RELATIONS .....14

**CONCLUSION** .....14

APPENDIX A DOD PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION ..... 17

APPENDIX B DOD PENTAGON BRIEFING UPDATE..... 19

ENDNOTES ..... 23

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 27



## DOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIES AND MEANS DURING OIF: WERE THEY EFFECTIVE?

The Department of Defense (DoD) conducted a public affairs campaign during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) that included a variety of strategies and means to communicate to the American public and the international community the U.S. intentions concerning military operations in Iraq. Did DoD employ the appropriate strategies and means to meet the communication goals, and how did DoD measure the effectiveness of its communications strategies and means? This paper will examine DoD's effectiveness in communicating its strategies, goals, and objectives about military operations during OIF and the means by which DoD executed the strategies.

The Pentagon strategies to communicate to the American public and the international community during OIF included media embedding; DoD briefings from the Pentagon, Central Command (CENTCOM) media briefings in the theater of operations, and other media operations that included editorial boards, letters to the editor and direct interaction (media facilitation) with news media representatives and organizations.

### **MEDIA OPERATIONS AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS (IO)**

Information is one of the elements of national power.<sup>1</sup> Commanders execute information operations (IO) with a goal of achieving information superiority.<sup>2</sup> Media relations present another strategy for the commander. Media relations is a subset of public affairs, which is by doctrine a related capability of Information operations. In a theater of operations, media relations activities include assisting news media representatives gain access to an area of operations (AO) and arranging interviews and briefings to help facilitate the timely flow of information about military activities to an audience. However, the overarching mission of public affairs is to conduct activities to inform, educate and communicate to the American and international public its goals, objectives or whatever information the U.S. deems necessary to further or protect its national interests. Media relations is usually the vehicle that accomplishes this critical mission. IO is defined as actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems.<sup>3</sup> Information Operations activities include psychological operations, military deception, electronic warfare, operational security (OPSEC) and computer network operations.<sup>4</sup> The information element of IO complements the other elements of national power which are economic, diplomacy and military.

In formulating and executing national security strategy, media relations is an important component in reaching or achieving the national security strategy and objectives. Media

relations span the entire spectrum of military operations. Media relations is one of the ways in which goals, objectives and other information are communicated to the American public and the world especially in times of crisis such as military operations in Iraq.

#### **PA CONTINUUM/HISTORY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND THE MEDIA**

Before analyzing DoD success in accomplishing its communications strategy and the means used for accomplishing that strategy, it is imperative that the relationship between the media and the military be examined. In the media relations continuum, the relationship between the military and the media has been a difficult one at best. Since Vietnam at least and including Operation Desert Storm, the relationship has often been described as stormy and adversarial. Both sides have accused the other of bad faith. The media charges that the military lies, manipulates and misleads while the military charges the media with being biased, unfair and unpatriotic. <sup>5</sup> Other factors that add to the tense relationship between the media and the military include the ever widening culture gap between the military and the media that began after the draft ended in 1972. <sup>6</sup>

But relations were not always so bad. During World War II, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and his staff routinely briefed reporters on highly confidential information about troop movements and battle strategies. This action exemplified his relationship and trust with the reporters and also their high regard for him. From all indications, no U.S. interests or American troops were ever compromised in news media reports.

Joint Publication 3-61 is the joint doctrine for public affairs in joint operations. Joint operations are how we currently conduct military operations and will be the way we conduct operations in the future. OIF is a joint military operation involving not only U.S. and coalition forces, but International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as part of the environment as well. DOD Principles of Information (annex A) outlines a governing set of measures on how information is communicated to the public and the conditions under which the principles are carried out. DOD says its policy is to "Make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy."

The United States went to war with Iraq on March 19, 2003. A March 21, 2003 DoD press briefing excerpt provided the following information concerning goals and objectives of the war.

Our goal is to defend the American people, and to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and to liberate the Iraqi people. Coalition military operations are focused on achieving several specific objectives:

1. To end the regime of Saddam Hussein by striking with force on a scope and scale that makes clear to Iraqis that he and his regime are finished.
2. To identify, isolate and eventually eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, production capabilities, and distribution networks.
3. To search for, capture, drive out terrorists who have found safe harbor in Iraq.
4. To collect such intelligence as we can find related to terrorist networks in Iraq and beyond.
5. To collect such intelligence as we can find related to the global network or illicit weapons of mass destruction activity.
6. To end sanctions and to immediately deliver humanitarian relief, food and medicine to the displaced and to the many needy Iraqi citizens.
7. To secure Iraq's oil fields and resources, which belong to the Iraqi people, and which they will need to develop their country after decades of neglect by the Iraqi regime.
8. To help the Iraqi people create the conditions for a rapid transition to representative self-government that is not a threat to its neighbors and is committed to ensuring the territorial integrity of that country.<sup>7</sup>

#### **DOD STRATEGIES DURING OIF**

In developing public affairs strategies for OIF, Ms. Victoria Clarke, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs received basic guidance from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The basic guidance included making sure that DoD conveyed the uncertainties and nature of the conflict (possible combat operations in Iraq) that was occurring at the time and that the communications plan be fully integrated into the military operations plan.<sup>8</sup> The overall Department of Defense public affairs strategy was highlighted in four key areas entitled – Expose, Preempt, Rapidly and Facilitate. The first strategy DoD identified was to expose key audiences to combat, humanitarian/civil and coalition operations. The hope was that by doing this, it demonstrated U.S. commitment to long-term security and care to avoid civilian casualties. The second part of the strategy was to expose Saddam Hussein's intent to develop and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and his record of torture and oppression.<sup>9</sup> The next strategy was to "preempt" Iraqi tactics by demonstrating past behavior. The next strategy was to "rapidly" respond and refute Iraqi charges. This strategy involved responding quickly to any misinformation released by the Iraqis concerning U.S. operations. The last strategy was to "facilitate" robust media access to counter likely Iraqi lies and disinformation, which was a key

consideration when the Iraq media machine started operating fully in the form of “Baghdad Bob.” An additional part of the “facilitate” strategy was for the media to highlight the professionalism of United States Armed Forces. <sup>10</sup>

In addition to the strategies identified by DoD, public affairs guidance (PAG) was also issued for “Possible combat operations in Iraq” and for “Embedding of media” during military operations in Iraq. PAG provides commanders and troops with basic public affairs information on dealing with the media and information that assists them if interviewed by the media. It is an additional way DoD and commanders make sure that information is communicated to the American public and the world by way of American service members. The PAG in this case contained an explicit intent for operations in Iraq and read in part --

Media coverage of any future operation will, to a large extent, shape domestic and international public perception of the national security environment now and in years ahead. We must correct disinformation/distortions as quickly as possible... All commanders are highly encouraged to aggressively reach out to the media at all levels – local, national and international – to bring our story to our nation and the world. <sup>11</sup>

PAG is widely disseminated throughout DoD using the traditional message traffic distribution system and also by mass e-mailing through a user group “subscription” system the Pentagon labels “AIG 8777.” <sup>12</sup> Receivers of the PAG message traffic included the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Service components (Army, Navy, and Air Force), the Service public affairs shops, the unified combatant commanders and other agencies.

Effective communications for any military operation is crucial and can in fact and do determine perceptions and outcomes. The great Navy philosopher Mahan said that “Communications dominate war; broadly considered, they are the most important single element in strategy, political or military.” <sup>13</sup> This statement alone verifies how important communicating our intentions and purpose are to world and the American public.

#### **DOD COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES DURING OIF**

The communications objectives DoD established during OIF included the following:

1. Demonstrate the nexus of terrorist states/WMD/terrorist organizations and why this is considered the primary national security threat of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
2. Neutralize disinformation efforts of our adversaries.
3. Build and maintain support for United States policy on the GWOT and Iraq.
4. Take offensive action to achieve information dominance early.

5. Demonstrate professionalism of the United States military; build and maintain support for the warfighter. <sup>14</sup>

### **MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS**

Measures of effectiveness (MOE) are tools used to measure the results, or lack of results, achieved in the overall mission and execution of assigned tasks. <sup>15</sup> In this case, it is the measuring of DoD's media strategy and the means to execute that strategy during OIF. Specific indicators to measure public affairs operations and their effectiveness are hard to establish. In many cases empirical data is hard to measure because the element of perception and observation come into play. MOE can also be a means to determine second and third order effects by establishing a cause and effect linkage between the usually observable and quantifiable first-order effects and the abstract and subjective second and third order effects. <sup>16</sup> Assessing the effectiveness of an information campaign is one of the most difficult challenges facing a staff because a lot of the dimensions within an information environment are not physical but are made of non physical concepts (e.g. information and information based processes). <sup>17</sup>

DoD public affairs used informal measures of effectiveness to assess whether its media strategy and means to execute its strategy were successful and the degree to which information was reaching its intended target. Ms. Clarke described DoD's MOE process as informal but aggressive. <sup>18</sup> Ms. Clarke said the measure they used to determine success of the embed program was to track and monitor the volume and accuracy of the reporting coming from the embedded reporters in the area of operations. The same type of parameters would also be used for the DoD press briefings as well. By monitoring the various news outlets – print, broadcast and internet – DoD could get an idea if its information strategy as communicated from the press conferences was getting out. The MOE for evaluating the direct media engagement was based on monitoring and observing the volume of interaction with reporters by members of the DoD Press Operations section in the Pentagon and also by what was reported in the news. <sup>19</sup> CENTCOM also established informal measures for the evaluation of its press conferences from the area of operations. <sup>20</sup>

### **MEDIA EMBEDDING**

Media embedding -- the process of putting reporters with military units during actual operations -- is not a new concept or event. However OIF was the first time that the process had been used to such a large scale to cover military operations. The embedded media program is a meaningful and effective way to decipher and exploit information under favorable conditions. Open access for the media tells the real story and helps reinforce a positive attitude.

<sup>21</sup> Prior to operations in Iraq, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of State issued a directive that stated:

We must organize for and facilitate access of national and international media to our forces, including those engaged in ground operations. Our goal is to get it right from the start, not days or weeks into the operation. We will commit communications systems and trained joint public affairs teams to facilitate the international press getting a firsthand look at coalition operations. <sup>22</sup>

At the height of OIF, more than 500 news media representatives and crews (journalists and photographers) were embedded with United States and British military units. <sup>23</sup> The news media representatives were selected from the top 100 media markets in the country. Prior to joining their designated units in Iraq, news media representatives underwent an intensive week-long military media boot camp where they learned basic military procedures such as how to react to a chemical attack. They also participated in physical activities like a five mile road march. The media training camps were held at various locations throughout the United States.

Reports from both inside the Pentagon and from news media representatives indicated that media embedding went well because the media had access to military operations at an unprecedented level, and most reporters were pleased with the level of cooperation they received from commanders. <sup>24</sup> A perspective shared by the media was that journalists had unusual access to military operations, especially at the tactical level and that by being with units and observing events first hand, they could challenge or confirm military briefings. <sup>25</sup> This knowledge or understanding of military operations would not have been available unless media had the access afforded during embedding. <sup>26</sup> A 2004 Rand report on the embedded media program said that “embedded press during major combat operations in Iraq, coupled with the decisive military victory and the by-and-large exemplary performance of U.S. forces, resulted in excellent public relations for the military. <sup>27</sup>

There were also criticisms of the embedded program. According to Jack Shafer, a writer who authored “Embeds and Unilaterals” for MSN Slate, an on-line publication, a troubling consequence of the media embedding program was that it created two different sets of reporters. There was the DoD embedded reporters who were credentialed and considered “official” journalists and were afforded access to information, soldiers and military events and then there were the unilateral reporters who did not have the blessing of DoD and who were not embedded with units. He said that these reporters were treated differently by the military and many were prevented from covering military operations in many of the southern cities like Basra, Umm Qasr and Nasiriyah. <sup>28</sup>

The issue about embedded media versus unilateral media was also highlighted during a workshop conducted by the Center for Strategic Leadership in October 2003. The workshop included media representatives, senior commanders who participated in operations in Iraq as well as public affairs officers who served as media escorts in Iraq. Some panel members thought that a mixture of embedded media and unilateral coverage would best benefit operations because it would give a balanced view from both inside the units and outside.<sup>29</sup>

Keith Garvin, an ABC reporter who was embedded with CSSB 22 (Combat Service Support Battalion) part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force (Task Force Tarawa) had no problems with the embedded media program. He said they were able to get the information they needed during military operations in southern Iraq. He said the restrictions imposed by DoD were not a problem for him or his cameraman. He and his cameraman in fact imposed their own set of restrictions on how they would operate. Their self-imposed restrictions included not showing wounded soldiers up close or footage of dead soldiers.<sup>30</sup>

Using DoD MOEs, the media embedding process was a success. Through the embed process DoD exposed key audiences to military operations during OIF through the more than 500 news media representatives embedded with military units. Reporters broadcasted and reported in real time from locations throughout the AOR. The media embeds were also able to report on and in fact, counter misinformation from the Iraqi regime which was a part of the overall DoD strategy. A case that illustrates this is when the director of Iraqi information was reporting that there were no American forces in Baghdad and the American public was able to witness otherwise through embedded reporters. Because of the embed program and the 24 hour news cycle, America was able to watch as the military forces advanced throughout the area or operations and saw historic events unfold like the toppling of the large statue of Saddam Hussein.

#### **PRESS BRIEFINGS FROM THE PENTAGON**

Another effort to execute DoD's communication strategy and communicate its messages to the American and international public was through the Pentagon Press Corps and other media representatives who attended the Pentagon press briefings during operations in Iraq. Initially at the start of OIF, the Pentagon conducted daily press briefings, providing current updates on how the operations in Iraq were progressing. Secretary Rumsfeld conducted the DoD press briefings as well as other key DoD officials as needed. Usually sharing the platform with the Secretary of Defense was Gen. Richard B. Myers who became the fifteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Oct. 1, 2001.

The briefings were aired live by the major media networks that have representatives who maintain offices in the Pentagon in an area known as correspondents' corridor. In addition to the briefings aired live and by reporters on location at the Pentagon, the DoD news briefings were also transcribed as transcripts and posted on the DoD official website: [defenselink.mil](http://defenselink.mil). OSD also produced two key communications products each day that went to the unified commands and other major commands. The products usually contained information generated from the press briefings. One of the products developed was a Pentagon Briefing paper that contained current updates on the progress in Iraq and key points to emphasize when dealing with the media. It was distributed in mass electronically to the major commands. The other product was a joint collaborate effort between OSD and the Joint Staff. This product contained updates on past activities and also included strategic themes and messages for use by the recipients. (See Annex B)

However, after President Bush declared major combat operations over on May 1, 2003, the DoD press briefings were scaled back to approximately twice a week and the briefings started to include other key DoD officials that included Ms. Carke and a representative from the Joint Chief's staff or another subject matter expert (SME) depending on the subject for the press briefing. A difficulty the Pentagon Press briefings encountered was keeping up with the real-time reporting from the embedded reporters and attempting to put current operations in context for the media.<sup>31</sup> Media content analysis indicated that based on OSD's MOE, the Pentagon briefings accomplished their mission of getting information out to the American public and the international community.<sup>32</sup>

#### **THE CENTRAL COMMAND PRESS BRIEFINGS**

Another method that facilitated media operations by getting current messages concerning the war out to the national and international audiences was the daily Central Command (CENTCOM) operations briefing conducted from Doha, Qatar. Qatar is a small country strategically located on the Arabian Gulf, where the United States has been allowed to use the al Udeid air base since 2001. The location was established as the forward headquarters for the Central Command during OIF.<sup>33</sup> The news media representatives at Qatar represented agencies from around the world, with a large concentration of the international press. The approximate number of news media representatives in Qatar at the beginning of OIF was 500.<sup>34</sup>

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks was selected by Gen. Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander, to be the J3 deputy chief of operations and the designated spokesperson for operations in the Central Command area of responsibility. Brig. Gen. Brooks would become the

“face of the war.” Dealing with the media was nothing new for Brooks. During his time as a cadet at West Point and throughout his military career, Brooks had interacted with the media often.<sup>35</sup> Brooks also used informal MOEs for determining if the press briefings from Qatar were successful or not. One of the methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the press conferences was a term he called “reverberation,” a method he described as monitoring effects: “Are your words from the press conferences” being repeated by others in the way that you want them to be used. He also cited several other measures, one being feedback and another as keeping your boss out of conflict with other bosses.<sup>36</sup> Brooks said the CENTCOM media briefings were successful in that they were able to influence the reporting cycle of the Iraqi military spokesman. He said the Iraqis were listening to what he had to say during the press conferences.<sup>37</sup>

### **DIRECT MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

DoD public affairs used a variety of other means to communicate to the world and the American public. Direct media engagement is an area where DoD had a unique advantage. Major news media organizations have offices located in the Pentagon. Reporters assigned to cover events in the Pentagon have access to DoD senior officials and military leaders on a daily basis. As part of OSD public affairs, there is a press operations office -- approximately 30 military officers and civilians -- that work directly with news media representatives and media organizations. For the first six weeks of OIF, OSD press operations ran 24 hour operations. News media organizations also had reporters working in the Pentagon around the clock which aided in media facilitation because press operations officers were able to provide operational information or correct misinformation. During major combat operations for OIF, it was not uncommon to have 100's of reporters interacting with the OSD press operations section.<sup>38</sup> Ms. Clarke said the constant interaction with the OSD press corps by the media was important to what OSD was trying to do which was communicate to the world what the United States was doing.<sup>39</sup>

Other direct media engagements by OSD included reaching out to news media outlets and media organizations such as the Defense Writers Group to make sure DoD messages and news was conveyed to a variety of audiences. Other media facilitation events such as media round tables, letters to the editors and editorial boards were used but were of particular interest to the Pentagon press corps and the media inside the “beltway.” DoD use media roundtables to help highlight particular issues during OIF. OSD wrote opinion editorials prior to and during operations. Opinion editorials were used by OSD to highlight issues in Iraq as well as a way to

manage expectations after operations started.<sup>40</sup> Op-eds were also used in response to critical media issues that occurred during OIF such as the issue of sexual assaults by U.S. service members against other service members.

Direct media engagements were successful because they provided daily information to the American public and the world about operations during OIF. Secretary Rumsfeld routinely used the press briefings and direct media interaction with news media representatives to inform or clarify information about U.S. and coalition activities. Press officers were able to actively engage news media representatives, especially the ones located at the Pentagon, on a variety of issues, which was part of the DoD communications strategy. Other officials, working through press officers, were successful communicators as measured by the number of media contacts or “information appearing” within major media publications, as monitored by DoD.

### **MEDIA ANALYSIS DURING OIF**

OIF was also considered the first internet war.<sup>41</sup> In addition to the internet, there was still the 24/7 perpetual news cycle orchestrated by the traditional news media outlets. In the global information environment, the speed and dynamics at which news and information is passed to audiences often times without any context or filter, can shape an event and influence an audience. Major media outlets are losing their roles as gatekeepers (controlling the information) due to the many eye witness accounts on the internet by virtually anybody with a computer. The military is trying to shut down blogs that violate OPSEC due to the proliferation of information on the web.<sup>42</sup> Many military members are using the internet to get their stories out and to share operational information with others. In addition to internet reporting, reporters now are doing more “spot” reporting where detailed information is not available.<sup>43</sup>

Negative reporting from news media organizations to include Al Jazeera, Abu Dabi TV, CNN and BBC often degraded coalition attempts to bond with the Iraqis which undermined U.S. political and military efforts in the region and the war.<sup>44</sup> Good news stories do not provide the good visuals that a bad news story does especially in the era of spot news reporting.<sup>45</sup> As a consequence, many news media representatives often highlight military failure in Iraq and fail to report the success stories that are essential to winning the information war and ensuring that communication strategies and objectives are met.<sup>46</sup> After the fall of Baghdad, many embedded reporters left the region and returned to the United States to resume their normal reporting cycles. Many did not report on Iraqi issues once they left the country.<sup>47</sup> If there are not enough journalists to cover operations in Iraq and the number of violent events increases, the good news stories are over shadowed by the acts of the insurgents – car and suicide bombings – and

the news is perceived as overwhelmingly negative from Iraq.<sup>48</sup> Senior DoD officials routinely declined interviews from news media outlets and left the interviewing up to DoD media desk officers who were very skillful in media operations but lacked the situational awareness on a particular subject concerning operations in Iraq.

Another factor that affects the communication strategy is the proliferation of news sources. In particular, the increased number of satellite television news services and internet connections which if selected properly create multiplication of venues to communicate information which ultimately can influence opinions and attitudes regional, or even globally.

The U.S. military also had several media issues that drew world wide attention and caused many people and especially the media community to doubt whether the United States was telling the truth about the issues. One issue was the operational pause at the beginning of operations in Iraq and the second issue was the Jessica Lynch rescue. The military had a hard time communicating what actually took place in both instances.

With the operational pause issue, there were mixed messages from DoD and commanders on the ground. The military had a difficult time explaining the concept of an "operational pause." Reporting from the embedded media showed long lines of military units stopped and at a stand still. DoD was not able to quickly explain what was occurring operationally. Because no information was coming quickly to the American public, the indications were that the United States was encountering strong Iraqi resistance.

The Jessica Lynch rescue operation drew fire because news media representatives thought this was an opportunity for DoD to plant a good news story and take attention away from how operations were really occurring. A major criticism from the news media was that there were no news media representatives on the rescue mission. DoD provided file footage of the rescue that was carried out by Special Operations Forces. Media reports criticized the military for what it called "staging" a military rescue operation to gain American support. Incidents like these hurt the military's credibility in regard to media relations and a lot of energy goes into repairing relationships and damage control. Both events demonstrated that because DoD was not quick to engage the media in a timely manner, the media filled in the "blanks" of the stories with information from other sources. DoD missed an opportunity to correct misinformation.

#### **THE ARAB MEDIA EFFORT**

One of the largest Arab news organizations to emerge from military operations in Iraq was the Qatar based news organization, the Al Jazeera news network. Al-Jazeera was founded in

1996 and is considered the fastest growing network among Arab communities and Arabic speaking people around the world.<sup>49</sup> Besides being the largest Arab media network - Aljazeera is also the most controversial Arabic News Channel in the Middle East offering news coverage 24 hours a day, with programming primarily focused on news coverage and analysis. But the station came under criticism because it seemed to overly sensationalize its media coverage by showing bloody footage from various war zones as well as giving disproportionate coverage to various fundamentalist and extremist groups.<sup>50</sup> It was also noted that criticism from various governments helped the channel increase its credibility with an audience that was used to censorship and biased coverage from official government outlets.<sup>51</sup>

Al-Jazeera's coverage of military operations during OIF drew negative reaction from many fronts, to include Congressional members, U.S. Administration officials, and independent analysts when the station broadcasted images of dead U.S. soldiers and U.S. P.O.W.s being interrogated after their capture in March 2003.<sup>52</sup>

On Aljazeera's website an article appeared on March 23, 2003 accusing the United States of controlling information by the use of the embedded media process. The article written by David Miller, a member of the Glasgow University Media Group in Scotland, Britain, says this in part:

The attack on Iraq looks set to be the most information controlled conflict of modern times. Coverage in the mainstream media will be manipulated as never before. The U.S. is going to unprecedented lengths to ensure that its spin will dominate media agendas across the West. And it will expend massive resources in minimizing critical coverage across the world.<sup>53</sup>

Reportedly, during the conflict, the Iraqi Information Agency recognized the power of Al-Jazeera and went so far as to infiltrate that organization with its agents in order to help slant the coverage to be more pro-Iraqi. Reports also indicated that the coalition attempted to take Iraqi television news service off the air through both bombing and electronic jamming – as much, if not more, for the impact it was having outside Iraq than for the impact it was having within the country.<sup>54</sup>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **ESTABLISH FORMAL MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS**

DoD had measures of effectiveness, but they were informal in nature based on how public affairs activities are usually done. As part of the communication plan, recommend that formalized evaluation procedures be identified as part of the communications strategy. Formal measures of effectiveness provide a baseline for evaluating your media activities.

## COALITION PARTNERS

To more effectively reach and influence a wider national and international audience, the United States must get additional coalition partners to participate in media events promoting and explaining coalition goals and objections in the global war on terrorism. British leadership had no problem in communicating the coalition's objectives and goals. The United States and Great Britain were two of the more visible members of the coalition in communicating to the world although the coalition at any one time averaged about 30 coalition members. Because coalition building and support can be a very sensitive and a politically diplomatic process, many countries of the coalition did not want their names mentioned publicly because of perceived future implications that could occur if they supported the United States such as terrorist attacks in their country or the partner perceived as aligned with the United States. Many coalition partners did not commit troops but did supply equipment and other services. Coalition partners must be willing to support the coalition with the third party endorsement that is essential to the communication process especially in world opinion matters.

On a limited number of occasions, military briefings included Iraqi interim leadership, but not enough times to adequately portray Iraq's commitment to the process of creating stability in the region. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, former commander of Combined Joint Task Force – 7 said in October 2004 that "strategic communication was a challenge for us from the very beginning, and we struggled with it through the entire time I was there." To support this recommendation of including coalition partners in the communication process, Sanchez said that a key element would have been to get the Iraqis to do a better job of role playing in the reconstruction of their country.<sup>55</sup> Gen. Sanchez was commander of CJTF-7 from July 2003 until May 2004.<sup>56</sup>

## MEDIA EMBED PROGRAM

Keep and sustain the embedded media process beyond major combat operations. It worked well during the initial phases of OIF and it put a personal face on the global war on terrorism. Some commanders are always hesitant to engage the media because of the perception that by talking to them, they put their career at risk. The media embed program worked well in accomplishing DoD's media strategies. According to a Center For Lessons Learned Newsletter 04-13, reporters embedded with units developed a relationship with the unit and embraced the unit, which could translate well into future operations.<sup>57</sup> In addition to media embeds, a balance should be established with unilateral reporters who felt that they were not receiving as much information as the embedded reporters.

## FOREIGN PRESS

Another recommendation is to continuously engage the Arab and international press. Aljazeera emerged as the leading Arab media outlet during OIF, but there were other major Arab publications and media outlets that included Al Manar and Azzaman. The Pentagon was also very hesitant to engage BBC because of the aggressive style and nature of their reporting. DoD must engage foreign press if communication strategies are to be successful. If additional media training is warranted to make sure press officers and DoD officials are comfortable with dealing with foreign press, then incorporate the training as part of normal press operations.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Also in helping to win the war of words, DoD may consider contracting a civilian public affairs agency to assist in media relations. Civilian public relations agencies have the expertise, resources and international experience to effectively analyze and formulate media plans that address specific issues. Civilian agencies are also more prone to “think outside the box” and are not easily influenced by a military bureaucracy.

## CONCLUSION

Media relations play a vital role in our national security strategy formulation and execution. Effective media relations can help further the aims and achievements of military, political, economic and informational objectives thereby achieving or promoting the national security strategy. It is also one of the key ways the United States can influence support and shape attitudes especially among coalition members and other international players and partners. It is just as important for building support in the United States. A governing factor in whether the United States goes to war or enters into any conflict is “does it have the support of the American people?” Communicating our message to the American public is part of the process of building that support. The recent embedding process during OIF and its success by all accounts, both inside and outside the military, indicates that media will play a major role in future operations and national strategy. The United States can not rest entirely on the success of the embed program and must continue to engage media, especially the international media, at every opportunity if we are going to maintain or hope to maintain information dominance and superiority. Direct media engagements and press briefings must continue as they augment and clarify operations and information from other sources.

The Department of Defense (DoD) conducted a public affairs campaign during Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) with the goal of keeping the American public and the international community informed about the U.S. strategy and conduct of operations during OIF. The

program included a variety of strategies and means that attempted to clearly communicate the U.S. resolve for operations in Iraq. Effective communication strategies and the means to execute those strategies when communicating to the American public and the world will ensure that the United States continues to promote its national security strategy around the world as it continues its role as world leader in the global war on terrorism.

WORD COUNT=6026





# Principles of Information

*It is the policy of the Department of Defense to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress and the news media may assess and understand the facts about national security and defense strategy.*

*Requests for information from organizations and private citizens will be answered in a timely manner. In carrying out the policy, the following principles of information will apply:*

Information will be made fully and readily available, consistent with the statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by current and valid security classification. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Act will be supported in both letter and spirit.

A free flow of general and military information will be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents.

Information will not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the government from criticism or embarrassment.

Information will be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces.

The Department's obligation to provide the public with information on its major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination within the Department and with other government agencies. The sole purpose of such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public; propaganda has no place in Department of Defense public affairs programs.

*The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs has the primary responsibility for carrying out this commitment.*



November 9, 2001

Date

Donald H. Roosevelt  
Secretary of Defense

THE PENTAGON





**US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
 Talking Points on **Operation Iraqi Freedom**, March 31, 2003 - *PM*

"Day by day, we are moving closer to Baghdad. Day by day, we are moving closer to victory ... And when victory comes, it will be shared by the long-suffering people of Iraq who deserve freedom and dignity."

*President George W. Bush*

*Philadelphia, March 31, 2003*

**Operation Iraqi Freedom: Mission Objectives**

End the regime of Saddam Hussein.	Collect intelligence on Iraq's illicit WMD activity.
Eliminate Iraq's WMD, systems, and facilities.	Secure Iraq's oil fields/natural resources for the Iraqi people.
Capture or drive out terrorists sheltered in Iraq.	End sanctions and immediately deliver humanitarian relief.
Collect intelligence on terrorist networks.	Help Iraqis rapidly transition to a non-threatening, representative form of self-government that preserves the territorial integrity of Iraq.

**Mission Objectives are Being Achieved**

- **Coalition forces continue to make good progress toward our objectives of ending the Iraqi regime, freeing the Iraqi people, and disarming the country of weapons of mass destruction.**
  - Roughly 300,000 Coalition forces are deployed in support of combat operations; approximately a third of those are inside Iraq.
  - Coalition forces continue to hit command, control and communication targets and air defense sites in Baghdad and northern Iraq, and to engage enemy positions throughout the country.
  - Approximately 1,000 sorties were flown over Iraq yesterday, mostly against the Medina, Hammurabi, Baghdad and al Nida divisions of the regime's forces.
  - Coalition troops are within 50 miles of Baghdad, approaching Baghdad from the north, south and west.
  - Iraq's only port, and its coastline, are now securely under Coalition control.
  - Coalition bombing continues to weaken the Iraqi leadership. Since the Coalition strike on Saddam's headquarters at the outset of the war, the world has seen only video of the Iraqi leader or his sons.
  - About two thousand US and Coalition forces per day are pouring into the country. The end of the Iraqi regime is clear.

- **It is also important to note what has not happened:**
  - No Iraqi Scud missiles have been fired into Israel.
  - Iraqi oil fields have not been torched *en masse* as they were in Kuwait, wreaking enormous economic and environmental damage.
  - There has been no humanitarian crisis or mass exodus of refugees.
  - And, although we regret every casualty, there has been no massive loss of life among either Iraqi civilians or Coalition forces.

***Liberation Update:***

“‘We’ve been waiting for you for 10 years. What took you so long?’ said an Iraqi man who, along with more than 500 others, surrendered near the Rumailah oil fields. Many had written such phrases as ‘U.S.A. O.K.’ on their arms or hands. Some even tried to kiss the hands of the nervous young Marines guarding them.” -- *Newsday*, March 24, 2003.

Coalition Update: 49 nations are now publicly committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom

- The Coalition for the Immediate Disarmament of Iraq continues to grow stronger.
- Contributions range from direct military participation, logistical and intelligence support, specialized chemical/biological response teams and over-flight rights to humanitarian and reconstruction aid, and political support.

***Disinformation Update:***

**Report:** *Due to supply route attacks by the Iraqi forces, US troops are not getting the food and supplies they need; ground forces are outrunning their supply lines.*

**Ground Truth:** Re-supply is a continuous activity. There is no shortage of supplies to Coalition forces.

**Report:** *The continuing flow of US troops into the region indicates that the U.S. did not have adequate forces on hand at the start of the operation.*

**Ground Truth:** Current troop deployments to the Gulf region are part of the previously planned force flow.

Defend America

For up to the minute news and information about *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, click or visit: [www.defendamerica.mil](http://www.defendamerica.mil)



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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>11</sup> Department of Defense, Office of Public Affairs, *Public Affairs Guidance on Embedding Media During Possible Future Operations/Deployments in the U.S. Central Commands (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, March 2003), 1.

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<sup>16</sup> David C. Grohoski, "Measures of Effectiveness in The Information Environment, Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin," [n.d.]; available from <[www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi01BS/is\\_3\\_29/ai\\_106699529/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi01BS/is_3_29/ai_106699529/print)>; Internet; accessed 1 February 2005.

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<sup>52</sup> Jeremy M. Shart, "The Al-Jazeera News Network: Opportunity or Challenge for U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East?" *Congressional Research Service* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Library of Congress, 23 July 2003), 7.

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