



**STRATEGY
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**MAKING INFORMATION WORK – A NEW APPROACH TO
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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This paper will evaluate the United States Government's ability to utilize the informational element of power. It will examine the organizational structure and composition of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government and assess its capacity to plan, coordinate, and manage the use of information in support of U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives. The paper will begin with defining what information is in the context of national power. It will examine future trends in foreign policy and national security as related to the elements of national power and demonstrate the increased need for the United States to possess a cohesive, well-choreographed, and synergistic information capacity. Finally, a few concluding thoughts will be offered along with several recommendations on how the United States Government can more adroitly manage information in the 21st century.

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MAKING INFORMATION WORK – A NEW APPROACH TO INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

There are four commonly recognized elements of national power - political, economic, military, and information. The importance of information as an element of national power is rapidly increasing, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Yet the government's ability to plan and implement national-level information strategies is not adequate. Unlike political, economic or military elements, no government department or agency has the lead in developing informational strategies, or managing the implementation of informational activities.

This paper will evaluate the United States Government's ability to utilize the informational element of national power. More specifically, it will examine the organizational structure and composition of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government and assess its capacity to plan, coordinate, and manage the use of information in support of U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives. The government's capacity to use information as an element of power will be contrasted with its corresponding capacity to integrate and utilize the other three elements of national power to achieve national objectives.

The paper will begin with defining what information is in the context of national power. It will include an analysis of the inefficient and complex management of information by the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government – to include an evaluation of the organization and responsibilities of the National Security Council (NSC), the United States Cabinet, and the White House Staff. The management of political, economic and military elements of national power will also be briefly described.

Next, the paper will examine future trends in foreign policy and national security as related to the elements of national power and demonstrate the increased need for the United States to possess a cohesive, well-choreographed, and synergistic information capacity. Each element of national power will be evaluated in terms of its applicability and utility in light of future challenges facing the United States.

Finally, the paper will offer a few concluding thoughts along with several recommendations on how the United States Government can more adroitly manage information in the 21st century to more efficiently achieve national objectives.

CONTRASTING ELEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

In the fast-paced and evolving environment of foreign policy and national security the distinctions between elements of national power and instruments of national security policy have become blurred by some political scientists who use these terms interchangeably. Some regard the broad-based political, economic, military, and informational functions of the government as elements of power. Others define

them as instruments of national security policy. To further complicate the matter, some analysts have recently expanded these basic categories by adding new determinants - like psychological. Nonetheless, the preponderance of current academic discourse and recent government publications indicates the use of elements of power to describe the political, economic, military and informational activities has emerged as the more universally accepted term. Included are both the United States Army War College and the National Defense University as well as Title 50 of United States Code. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, the broad-based elements of national power are defined as political, economic, military and informational. The many tools and activities within each element will be characterized as the instruments of national security policy.

National power is the means to further national strategy. It is the art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and informational powers of a nation-state, together with its armed forces during peace and war, to serve national objectives.¹ The ability to apply national power to achieve national objectives is strategic art. This is illustrated in the following quote by COL Richard Mullery, Professor of National Power at the U.S. Army War College, "Strategic art entails the orchestration of all the elements of national power to yield specific, well-defined end states derived from national interests."²

Dr. David Jablonsky, Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Army War College, offers a similar analysis of national power. He theorizes that there are two types of national power – natural determinants and social determinants. The natural determinants such as geography, resources, and population are concerned with the number of people in a nation and their physical environment. The social determinants are economic, political, military, psychological, and more recently, information. These social determinants are concerned with the ways nations organize themselves and relate with other nations.³

In the following paragraphs each element of national power is defined. Several of the supporting tools or instruments of national security policy are also discussed, along with a few recent examples of their application. Additionally, the government's method of managing each element is described.

POLITICAL

Within the political element of national power the main instrument is diplomacy. Diplomacy is the management of the relations between independent states by the processes of negotiation. It differs from foreign policy in that the latter deals with the framing of policy by elected representatives and the former with the execution of that policy. It is a process of dialog and the management of international affairs; and is often the first line of defense when potential conflict arises.⁴ Department of State manages all aspects of the diplomatic instrument of national security policy.

Other tools or instruments of the political element include negotiation, advocacy, signaling, and intimidation. As a general rule, the more vital the national interest – the more severe or aggressive the tool applied. Individual political activities can include the following actions: negotiations, diplomacy,

special envoy, demarche, consensus building among other nations, treaty support, United Nations Security Council voting, travel advisories, and establishment or removal of diplomatic mission.⁵

ECONOMIC

Economic power stems from the well being derived from free trade - tempered by the view that economics is also the principal field of competition among nations. The United States must, therefore, take all necessary steps to ensure it comes out on top with regard to economic competition. Several different agencies and departments of the U.S. Government have economic responsibilities. However, it is the Economic Advisor to the National Security Council (NSC) that has the lead with regard to the use of economic activities in support of national security or foreign policy objectives.⁶

The tools or instruments of the economic element include foreign aid, economic sanctions, financial and macroeconomic policy, and international trade. We generally use foreign aid to help or influence our allies and friends and economic sanctions to punish adversaries. We also use economic sanctions in response to what we consider unfair trade practices by friends and allies.⁷ Individual economic activities can include actions like access or denial of natural resources, embargoes, freezing assets, and economic pressure through third-party nations.⁸

Economic sanctions, a significant part of any economic element of national power, is utilized in three basic categories of policy objectives. The three categories are national security objectives, other foreign policy objectives, and international trade and investment dispute resolution. However, the probability of success when applied toward achieving national security objectives is very low. They are much more likely to work when applied toward other foreign policy objectives or international trade and investment dispute resolution.⁹

While economic sanctions weakened Baghdad's ability to threaten its neighbors and also degraded Belgrade's support to ethnic Serb forces in Bosnia,¹⁰ they often have little impact. Consider their lack of success in achieving objectives in Cuba, Iraq, Nicaragua, Iran, Libya, and Haiti.¹¹

Economic aid also often fails to yield success when applied as an element of power, in part, because the United States does not commit sufficient resources to make instruments such as foreign aid effective.¹² In other cases, the collateral impact of economic elements may be too great or have unintended consequences that cause political damage. Consider when the U.S. threatened to withdraw China's most-favored nation status U.S.-China relations were harmed across the board.¹³

MILITARY

The military element of national power is, "the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or the threat of force".¹⁴ The Department of Defense manages all aspects of the military element of national power.

Some of the tools or instruments of the military element of power are intervention, show of force, theater engagement, strikes, blockades, and security assistance. Specific activities include logistical support, technology exchange, security assistance, humanitarian assistance, technical and tactical training, foreign military sales, strikes, demining and blockades. As in the diplomatic arena, the more vital the national interest – the more severe or aggressive the tool applied.

Recent examples include Panama (intervention), Somalia (humanitarian assistance and intervention), Northern Iraq/Turkey (humanitarian assistance), Libya (strike), Sudan (strike), Kuwait/Iraq (intervention), Honduras (humanitarian assistance, security assistance, demining).

INFORMATION

The informational element of national power is the use of all categories of information to pursue national strategic objectives. Information, as an element of national power, must be considered in the global context of diplomatic, economic, and military affairs.¹⁵

"American Cold War ideology – marked by emphasis on freedom, democracy, and marketplace – has triumphed, although it has not been fully practiced in transitional or troubled states. Public diplomacy is therefore evolving from the battle over hearts and minds to campaigns to persuade foreign governments and publics to support specific national policies".¹⁶

Informational activities and operations cross all department and agency boundaries. They even include civilian/non-governmental technology and activities. Yet there is no single lead or office of primary responsibility for the management of information.

Some examples of the tools or instruments of the informational element include: press conferences, briefings, speeches, worldwide web, news media, computer systems, tele-communications, information operations, and intelligence collection. As before, the more vital the national interest – the more severe or aggressive the tool applied.

For all its technological focus informational strategies must orient on the most crucial factor in all aspects of society and warfare – the human element. The ultimate targets of any information strategy are the will and ability of decision-makers, leaders, and commanders to observe, interpret, reason, and make and implement sound decisions.¹⁷

"... Winston Churchill demonstrated repeatedly that the pervasive distribution of targeted information can have momentous effects on intangibles such as national will".¹⁸ While this quotation underscores the overall value of information in achieving national objectives, it also serves to illustrate the

value in non-technical forms of informational activities. The applications of non-technical informational activities today are every bit as important as they were during Churchill's era. "As the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrated in the fall of 1989, a new fact of life in the international arena is that it is no longer possible for any nation-state to deny its citizens knowledge of what is taking place elsewhere".¹⁹

Ideas move around the world faster now than at any time in the past. This phenomenon underscores the importance of having a viable and comprehensive information program to exploit this trend and accomplish our international goals and objectives.

The following matrix illustrates the many diverse aspects of the informational element. It reveals who is in charge of specific informational activities (if anybody). It also lists some of the other key players in the informational arena who have a role to play. It is clear the business of information management is multi-faceted, very complex and evolving rapidly.

MAJOR CATAGORY	SPECIFIC ACTIVITY	LEAD	OTHER PLAYERS INVOLVED
Public Affairs	Press Conferences	None	All Depts/Agencies
	Briefings	None	All Depts/Agencies
	Speeches	None	All Depts/Agencies
Information Operations	Military Deception	DoD	None
	Physical Destruction	DoD	Industry, FCC, DoT, DoE
	Operations Security	DoD	DoS, NSC, Industry
	Electronic Warfare	DoD	NSA
	Physical Security	DoD	All Depts/Agencies
	Public Affairs	DoD	All DoD
	Information Assurance	DoD	All Depts/Agencies
	Counter-deception	DoD	
	Command Information	DoD	
	Civil Affairs	DoD	NGOs, IOs, USAID
	Comp Network Atk/Def	NSA	DoD
Psychological Operations	Media Influence and Manipulation	DoD	DoS
	Dis-information	DoD	All Depts/Agencies
	Counter-Propaganda	DoD	
Miscellaneous	Academic and Cultural Exchanges	DoS	All Depts/Agencies
	Intell Collection	DCI	DoD, NSA, NRO
	Counterintelligence	DCI	DoD, NSA
	Technology Advances	OMB	NSA, DoD, DoS
	Govt Radio Broadcast	BBOG	DoS, DoD, FCC

Table 1

In Table 1 Public Affairs is defined as those activities designed to communicate, officially or unofficially, policy or position of the United States to foreign audiences. Critical here is the need for public

affairs efforts by the many different U.S. departments and agencies to be consistent, and timed for maximum impact.

Information Operations are defined as the offensive and defensive use of information and information systems to exploit, corrupt or destroy and adversary's information and information systems, while protecting one's own.²⁰

Psychological Operations activities are defined as the use of any form of communication and other planned actions to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence emotions, attitudes, motives, objective reasoning, and behavior.

Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) are also an important dimension of foreign policy and national security. They do not appear in Table 1, however, because they represent the application of selected portions of the elements of national power prior to, or during, the early stages of a crisis. They are not, in and of themselves, separate elements but rather the collective application of the elements during a specific period, and in response to, a specific crisis.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The following paragraphs outline the executive branch's organization and functions with regard to the capacity for information management. Simply stated, none of the components of the Executive Branch are properly organized, staffed, or chartered to take the lead in planning or utilizing information as an element of national power.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY (USIA)

Historically the role of managing external information for the U.S. Government has been that of the United States Information Agency (USIA). The USIA was established in 1953. Its modern day roles and responsibilities came into being on April 1, 1978. In 1 October 1999 the USIA was abolished with most functions transferred to the Secretary of State.²¹

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The international information programs, formerly under the United States Information Agency (USIA), were integrated into the Department of State under the responsibility of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. USIA's Foreign Press Centers and WORLDNET interactive television programs are integrated within the Bureau of Public Affairs. USIA's geographic area offices are merged with their State Department counterparts within the regional bureaus. The International

Broadcasting Bureau, including the Voice of America, is now an independent agency, receiving policy guidance from the Secretary of State.²²

Based upon this reorganization, what was formerly consolidated under the purview of the USIA has now been split up with the bulk landing under the control of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The following chart reflects how the State Department has organized to manage information. The bold boxes reflect those bureaus and offices that specifically manage information.

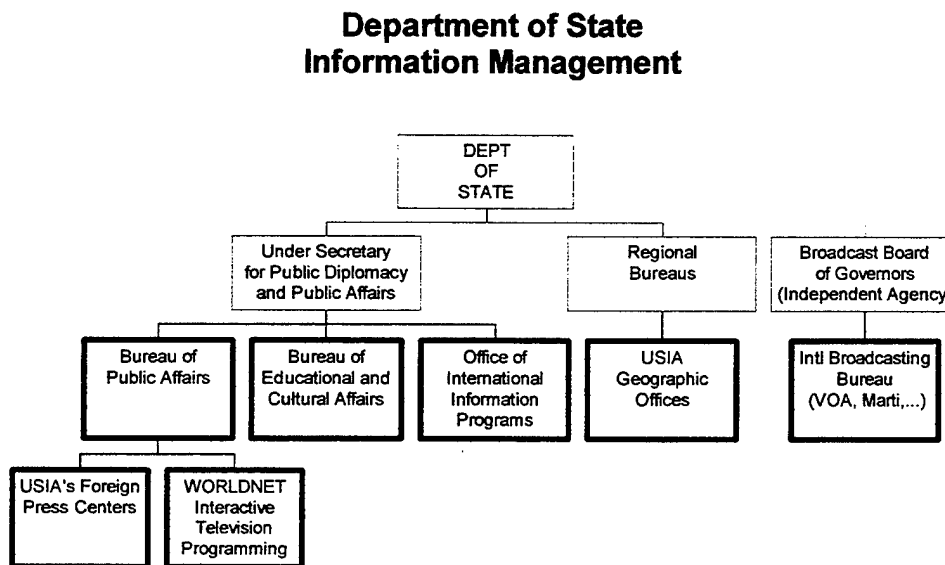


Figure 1

The Bureau of Public Affairs carries out the Secretary's mandate to help Americans understand the importance of foreign affairs. It vigorously pursues the Secretary's vision to get the Department's message to the American people and to feed their concerns and comments back to the policymakers.²³ Of note here is the intended audience and goal of the Bureau of Public Affairs – help Americans understand the importance of foreign affairs. It is clear, therefore, that the Bureau of Public Affairs is ill equipped to manage information as an element of national power. Instead, it is well suited to coalesce U.S. national support for internal political decisions.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs fosters mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. The bureau does this in close cooperation with State Department posts overseas in two ways; first, by promoting personal, professional, and institutional ties

between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad; and second, by presenting U.S. history, society, art, and culture, in all of its diversity, to overseas audiences.²⁴ It is clear that the goal of this bureau is to improve the ties between the people of the United States and the people from foreign countries. Admittedly, there is some informational value in these cultural and academic exchanges programs. They could be a part of an overall larger and more comprehensive information program. Nonetheless, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs cannot be reasonably expected to manage all the information programs outside the Department of State that can be brought to bear as part of the informational element of national power.

The Office of International Information Programs (IIP) is the principal international strategic communications service for the foreign affairs community. IIP designs, develops, and implements a variety of information initiatives and strategic communications programs. These reach — and are created strictly for — key international audiences, such as the media, government officials, opinion leaders, and the general public in more than 140 countries around the world.²⁵ The office's products and services — including web sites and other Internet services, electronic journals, speaker programs, print publications, and CD-ROMs — uniquely are designed to support the State Department's initiatives, as well as those of other U.S. foreign policy organizations.²⁶

The IIP is the only remnant of the old USIA that appears to still have a mandate to use information to influence foreign audiences. Undoubtedly the use of information by this office to achieve national security objectives amounts to an important part of any overall information strategy. However, the office lacks the expertise, staffing and resources to adequately assume the lead in information for the entire U.S. Government. Lacking are the control and understanding of much of the technical facets of information (traditional NSA purview) and the psychological operations application of information (traditional military purview). Additionally, from a public affairs perspective the IIP cannot easily influence official foreign policy statements of other key government officials (President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, et al).

It is clear that what was the USIA, now folded into the department of State, is simply not suited to be the lead for national information programs. Information, in its many complex and diverse forms, requires a much larger and more prominent proponent to be fully integrated as a cohesive and valuable element of national power

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC)

The functions, membership and responsibilities of the National Security Council were originally established in the National Security Act of 1947. It was intended that the President would consider the professional advice of key officials in planning national security policy.²⁷

In addition to the director, the NSC in 1947 had four statutory members, the President, Vice President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Each U.S. President during the past 50 years has adjusted the NSC staff, its subordinate committees and utilized the NSC differently in the formulation of foreign policy. On 20 January 1993 President Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 2 (PDD-2) in which he decreed the NSC, along with its subordinate committees, "shall be my principal means for coordinating Executive Departments and Agencies in the development and implementation of national security policy."²⁸

Under PDD-2 the President, Vice President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense are still statutory members. The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) were identified as statutory advisors and directed to attend NSC meetings. In addition, new members of the NSC were established to include the Secretary of the Treasury, the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the Chief of Staff to the President. Finally, the Attorney General, the Heads of other Executive Departments and Agencies, Special Statutory Advisors to the NSC and other senior officials shall be invited to attend meetings as appropriate.²⁹

The NSC Principals Committee (NSC/PC) consists of all statutory members (minus the President), statutory advisors, and special advisors. It is chartered with reviewing, coordinating, and monitoring the development and implementation of National security policy. It was designed to be a flexible forum for Cabinet-level officials to resolve issues not requiring the President's participation.³⁰

The Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs chairs the NSC deputies' Committee (NSC/DC). It consists of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs, and the Deputy Assistant to the President for Economic Policy. Representatives of other Executive Departments and Agencies and other senior officials may be invited to meetings as needed.³¹

"The NSC/DC shall review and monitor the work of the NSC interagency process."³² Critical here is the responsibility to monitor the interagency process. It is the interagency process that is riddled with many problems. If a specific NSC representative or member is not placed directly in charge of the other departments or agencies the entire interagency process becomes cumbersome, difficult to track, and difficult to supervise.

When the NSC confronts a military-related issue it is logical to give the lead to Department of Defense. Department of Defense is the consolidated place where most military expertise lies. When the issue is political or diplomatic it is logical to give the lead to Department of State for it is the focal point for all political and diplomatic-related expertise. When the issue is economic there is a permanent economic advisor within the NSC to take the lead - for he is best postured to take charge. But when the issue is information-related there is no obvious member of the NSC, NSC/PC or NSC/DC to take the lead.

The arena of information is so broad and multifaceted that no one agency or department understands all of it, or has sufficient expertise to take the lead. Confronted with this shortfall DoD or DoS is usually chosen to take the lead in resolving the issue or making the policy recommendation – even if they lack authority or capacity to effectively take charge. Herein lies the problem. It is very unlikely that the Departments of Defense or State can adequately take the lead with regard to the informational element of national power. When you consider the enormously broad span of information-related activities and actions it is unrealistic to expect DoD, DoS, or any other department or agency, to successfully design cohesive and integrated information policy or to adequately use information to compliment the other elements of national power. At best, random information activities will be recommended without achieving cohesion or synergy.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF

The Executive office of the White House is not organized to properly manage information as an element of national power. The Office of Communications sounds like it might be loosely associated with information management. However, it historically serves a strictly political function – using information to influence elections, reelections, and national perceptions of the President and his political party's performance.³³ It is ironic that the skills and techniques used by the Office of Communication are ideally suited for using information in the international arena for purposes of national security, however, they are practiced solely for internal political consumption.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been recently chartered to be the government lead agency in information technology. This includes the government-wide goals of improving the use of information and decreasing the number of troubled investments in information technology.³⁴ In response to that charter OMB published a Memorandum in March of 1997 in which three interagency groups were established: Chief Information Officers Council, Government Information Technology Services Board, and Information Technology Resources Board.³⁵

Unfortunately, OMB's charter is limited to only technical aspects of information management. Moreover, the focus is internal rather than external. Most goals are designed to increase the efficiency and interoperability of government agencies rather than coalesce their informational capabilities into a viable element of national power.

CABINET

The Cabinet of the U.S. Government consists of fourteen departments. They are illustrated in the following chart:³⁶

Cabinet Departments (1998)			
Department	Year	President	Personnel
State	1789	Washington	24,692
War/Defense	1789	Washington	810,424
Treasury	1789	Washington	151,379
Interior	1849	Polk	73,750
Agriculture	1862	Lincoln	112,503
Justice	1870	Grant	109,384
Commerce	1913	Wilson	35,779
Labor	1913	Wilson	15,339
Housing/Urban Development	1965	Johnson	11,511
Transportation	1966	Johnson	63,141
Energy	1977	Carter	18,636
Health/Human Services	1980	Carter	59,490
Education	1980	Carter	4,753
Veteran Affairs	1988	Reagan	253,317

Table 2

It is apparent that none of the departments listed in Table 2 have a charter for the overall management of national-level information as an element of national power. All have an internal public affairs apparatus. Some have information-related technological capabilities, and some are even beginning to plan for the use of information as part of a larger department-level approach to influencing foreign actors or nation-states (DoD with Information Operations and PSYOP as well as DoS with USIA). However, none are capable of integrating and orchestrating the enormous body of information-related activities into a comprehensive national effort that crosses interagency lines and maximizes the overall information potential of the United States.

For his second term, in addition to appointing Secretaries to the fourteen Cabinet Departments, President Clinton accorded "Cabinet-level rank" to several other officials. They are listed as follows:³⁷

- Chief of Staff to the President
- Director, Central Intelligence Agency
- Director, Office of Management and Budget
- Chair, Council of Economic Advisors
- Director, Environmental Protection Agency
- United States Trade Representative

- Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Director, Small Business Administration
- U.S. Representative to the United Nations
- Counselor to the President

Unfortunately, none of these newly accorded Cabinet-level people have the background or charter to manage the entire spectrum of informational activities of the United States.

INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHMENTS, GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS, AND QUASI-OFFICIAL AGENCIES

There are some 65 different Independent Establishments, Government Corporations, and Quasi-Official Agencies. Several could have, or do have, a small piece of the informational element of national power. They are listed as follows:³⁸

- Export-Import Bank of the U.S.
- Federal Communications Commission
- Federal Trade Commission
- Trade and Development Agency
- U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
- U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency
- U.S. International Trade Commission

Each of these organizations has an internal public relations capacity. Each has the ability to influence a narrow portion of a foreign government, organization or audience. Some have technology that could be utilized for informational purposes. Yet without an overall national lead for managing information, the individual capabilities of these organizations cannot be properly harnessed and integrated with the informational capabilities of other departments, organizations and agencies.

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

The National Security Agency (NSA) is part of the United States national intelligence community. The NSA has a twofold mission to protect U.S. information systems, and produce foreign intelligence information. More specifically, the Executive Order 12333 of 4 December 1981 established that the resources of the NSA are organized for the accomplishment of two national missions – an information assurance mission and a foreign signals intelligence mission.³⁹ The information assurance mission

provides the solutions, products and services, and conducts defensive information operations, to achieve information assurance for information infrastructures critical to U.S. national security interests.

The foreign signals intelligence or SIGINT mission allows for an effective, unified organization and control of all foreign signals collection and processing activities of the United States. NSA produces SIGINT in accordance with objectives, requirements and priorities established by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) with the advice of the National Foreign Intelligence Board.

As the world becomes more and more technology-oriented the information systems security mission of the NSA becomes increasingly challenging. The post-Cold War era is characterized by a diffusion of power, geopolitical uncertainties, and technology-driven change. An information revolution is sweeping the world, forcing change as radical as that caused by development of the atomic bomb.⁴⁰ The NSA certainly will continue to play a critical role in managing information in the future.

However, the focus of the NSA, both now and in the foreseeable future, will likely remain highly technological. While extremely valuable, this technological orientation of the NSA renders them not very well suited to be the national lead for all information programs. They simply do not have the people or experience to facilitate the larger non-technological aspects of the informational element of power. Additionally, Department of Defense Directive 51100.20, dated December 23, 1971 established that the Director of the NSA shall always be a commissioned officer with at least a rank of three stars who is appointed by the secretary of defense and approved by the President.⁴¹ Therefore, the Director of the NSA probably does not have the clout to function as the national lead for all informational activities.

WHY CURRENT METHODS ARE FAILING

While coordinating the activities of multiple government agencies has always been a problem, the challenge is growing for several reasons. "During the Cold War, coordination among agencies and policy instruments was simplified by the overwhelming priority given to containing Soviet communism. In the post-Cold War era, there is less clarity about which goals are central and which are peripheral."⁴² This quote illustrates that managing information is difficult today – and the difficulty is compounded by the challenges of coordinating across interagency lines.

To make matters worse, policy analysts and political leaders regularly evaluate individual instruments of national power. However, they often fail to evaluate the effects these instruments have on one another.⁴³ This is a significant failure and is symptomatic of a piece-meal approach to information management. Without a holistic approach, especially regarding information, we will succeed only by luck. The application of elements of national power to achieve complex foreign policy objectives cannot be approached the way one chooses items from a menu in a restaurant. Rather, they must be selected carefully, their implementation timed meticulously, and the successes or failures assessed constantly to adjust as needed.

FUTURE TRENDS

All the elements of national power will become more interrelated in the future. To underscore this point consider the use of a blockade. This combines both military and economic instruments. Armed embargoes also combine military and economic instruments. Trade and economic warfare combine political and economic instruments. Additionally, access to information will be a prerequisite for economic growth (in developed states) and you can use information (access to the Internet) as a tool of economic power. Also, information technology is creating a vehicle to export U.S. culture into previously isolated areas. In the future we may be able to use information (exporting our culture via the Internet, TV, movies, etc) to replace diplomatic or military efforts to co-opt an enemy or potential enemy (replace extremist view with our own, etc).⁴⁴

Also likely in the future is the decrease in utility of some of the other elements of national power. Consider that "information technology is displacing heavy industry as the source of national power."⁴⁵ Previously, heavy industry was at the core of both the military and economic elements of national power. It only stands to reason that as informational technology replaces heavy industry the importance of information as an element of national power will gradually increase as economic and military decrease.

Also, the use of military aid (hardware, training, etc) as a form of military national power has been decreasing for years. With the exception of Israel and Egypt, only small amounts are given each year. This reveals yet another aspect of the military element of national power that is decreasing.⁴⁶ We are going through an information revolution in which technological innovation is driven by commercial capital rather than government investment. The military will no longer be the principal sponsor of technological innovation and, consequently, from a purely technological point of view, information may replace some military applications of power in many future scenarios.⁴⁷

Along these same lines, as a result of resource constraints and new threats, some of the tools and instruments of the former mainstays of defense and foreign policy – such as strategic nuclear forces (military) and foreign aid (economic) – will be less central in the future.⁴⁸

Not only will the utility of military and economic elements decrease, the changing environment will increase the likelihood that the application of informational power can make a difference. "Even as some other aspects of power have gone into relative decline, America's influence as a source of ideas and as a shaper of culture has increased."⁴⁹

"Four components are required to support high-level information-oriented foreign policy strategies: a new-world order (information-based civilizations and global interdependencies), computer proliferation, a global information network, and megabyte money in a financial economy (vast sums of money and transactions that exist primarily in cyber space)."⁵⁰

It seems readily apparent that the U.S. and a great portion of the rest of the developed world have evolved to this status. It is essential, therefore, that the U.S. develop a robust and well-managed capability to exploit these systems abroad while protecting them at home.

CONCLUSION

"With the growth of American power and influence in the world and more immediate and complex international interactions between nations and economies, the United States can best pursue or protect its national interests through the coordinated application of all aspects of national power. All elements of power are interrelated and interdependent and should be considered together."⁵¹

Information will increase in importance and cross the boundaries into the political, economic, and military arenas. As foreign policy goals become more complex and a greater variety of elements are brought to bear on any one problem, interagency coordination and clear policy direction become increasingly more important.⁵²

However, information is not so important as an element of power that it should "stand alone" or replace any of the other elements. On the contrary, elements of national power must be combined to succeed. The degree to which the elements of power are combined to compliment and reinforce one another the greater the synergistic effect. "In this context, the elements of national power, no matter how defined, can be separated only artificially. Together, they constitute the resources for the attainment of national objectives and goals."⁵³ It is precisely for this reason the Theater Commander in Chief (CINC), in peacetime and war, always utilizes his assets to support the other elements of national power.⁵⁴

The U.S. Government is woefully ill equipped to maximize the use of information as an element of national power. Failure to centralize the planning, integration, and management of informational activities relegates this important element to disjointed efforts and hindsight. Without a well-resourced and consolidated lead for information we are likely to fail in the application of this important element.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider major rethinking on this issue at the national level similar to the rethinking that occurred within the DoD which generated the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1987. Whereas the military embarked on a massive program to achieve "jointness" in warfighting, the executive branch of the U.S. government needs to initiate a similar program. This is necessary to achieve a more cohesive and efficient interagency posture with regard to information management. This will, in turn, lead to greater success in utilizing the informational element of national power.

Recommend the President promulgate a Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) to direct establishment of a new information agency to take the lead on all informational matters related to national

security and foreign policy. The agency head should enjoy cabinet-level designation and answer directly to the President through his National Security Advisor. The agency should receive sufficient staffing and budget to accomplish, at a minimum, the following roles and responsibilities:

- Plan the national, strategic-level informational campaigns designed to accomplish U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.
- Integrate and coordinate the informational capabilities of other departments, agencies, commissions, offices, and administrations to affect maximum synergy.
- Develop and publish national-level information doctrine and milestones.
- Provide information-related policy guidance to other departments and agencies.

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