

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**IMPROVING THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL
SECURITY STRATEGY: AN INFORMED PUBLIC**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America communicates the President's and this nation's grand strategy developed from our national purpose. President Bush published the current NSS in September 2002. This strategy is comprehensive and detailed in many areas, but a careful reading of it shows it lacks a clear vision statement related to the informational instrument of national power. This paper discusses the need to have the President build an information and communications strategy that keeps the American public informed and cognizant of the threat to our national security from militant, Islamic fundamentalists. It will examine the U.S. Code *Title* 50 requirement that directs the President to complete a NSS and review the 2002 National Security Strategy from an information perspective. It then identifies the current militant Islamic threat to America's security as well as the strategic principles underlying the need to broadly inform the public. Additionally, it confirms the importance of knowing one's threat; discusses the historic precedence of informing the public from the national strategy level to show this war has many similarities to the Cold War waged against the Soviet Union and communism; and examines the recommendations from the 9/11 Commission Report and the Defense Science Board's report on strategic communications on how to improve our foreign and domestic policies. The paper concludes with specific recommendations to change the current security strategy to incorporate a presidential vision for an information strategy, issue a new Presidential Decision Directive to implement the strategy, and keep focused on the threat for the long run.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
IMPROVING THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY: AN INFORMED PUBLIC	1
WHY IS THERE A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY.....	2
THE CURRENT NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY.....	3
MOTIVATION.....	4
THE ENEMY.....	5
STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES	7
STRATEGIC VISION	7
STRATEGIC THERORISTS	8
HISTORIC UNDERPINNINGS OF AN INFORMED PUBLIC IN OUR NSS.....	9
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION	9
THE LONG TELEGRAPH AND NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL 68	10
MODERN NATIONAL DECISION DIRECTIVES	11
NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVES	11
PRESIDENTIAL DECISION DIRECTIVE	11
CURRENT CRITIQUES	12
THE 9/11 COMMISSION REPORT	12
DEFENSE SCIENCE BOARD REPORT OF 2004	12
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
CONCLUSION	14
ENDNOTES	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY	21

IMPROVING THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY: AN INFORMED PUBLIC

The United States Army War College's Strategic Formulation Model introduces senior U.S. and international military officers to a conceptual framework of ways, means and ends for the study and understanding of the United States National Security Strategy. Although not exclusive in nature, this framework discusses the paramount requirement to include strategic concepts (ways), national-level power instruments (means) and national objectives (ends) as one codifies the nation's strategic direction and grand strategy.¹ The President and United States' national leaders incorporate within this conceptual model much more including the international strategic environment, the political environment, national fiscal constraints and geopolitical events as they continually shape the nation's strategic direction. The President of the United States and his advisers must consider all of the above in order to properly develop a sound national security strategy.

Given this strategic context and model, the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America communicates the President's and this nation's grand strategy developed from our national purpose along with the associate ways, means and ends. By design, the NSS should also provide the President's vision and priority of the international issues of vital interest to the United States.² The NSS is the keystone document from which the cabinet, the interagency department directors and our senior military leaders draft their policies, directives and strategies that must accomplish the vision conveyed in this strategy.

President Bush published the current NSS in September 2002. This strategy is comprehensive and detailed in many areas, but a careful reading of it shows it lacks a clear vision statement related to the informational instrument of national power and its influence on national security, domestic and international public opinion.³ More specifically, this paper's research will show the current NSS does not integrate an appropriate amount of foresight on the use of information or informing the public concerning the nation's most immediate threat to its national interests: radical or militant, Islamic fundamentalists that have declared war against America. This study will recommend that the President republish the NSS in order to include presidential vision for an information strategy that keeps the U.S. public informed and cognizant of the threat to our national security from these Islamic fundamentalists.

To support the above recommendation this paper will briefly explain why there is a NSS, as well as examine the current NSS from an informational perspective. It will then address the specific motivation for this research and define the threat of militant, Islamic fundamentalists. This paper will then identify the strategic principles underlying the need to broadly inform the

public, and discuss the historic precedence of informing the public from the national level to show this war has many similarities, from an American perspective, to the Cold War waged against the Soviet Union and communism. Furthermore, it will examine two recent national critiques, the 9/11 Commission Report and the Defense Science Board's report on strategic communications, that recommend incorporating an informational strategy to enhance our national security. The paper will conclude by providing specific recommendations to incorporate informing the public of the threat of the militant Islamic factions into all facets of the U.S. national security strategy.

WHY IS THERE A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

United States Code Title 50 directs the President to report on the national security of the United States in any year that he submits a fiscal year budget to Congress.⁴ The *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, now codified in law, first addressed the requirement for a national security strategy report. It stated that the report, the National Security Strategy, should include the following:⁵

- (1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.
- (2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.
- (3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).
- (4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.
- (5) Such other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.

As paragraph one above directs, this strategy should therefore address those issues of vital interest to the United States. Additionally, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* directed the President to prescribe potential ways to support, protect and accomplish those stated vital interests. A brief review of the current NSS will determine how well this strategy accomplishes the requirements discussed above, with a specific emphasis on the information component, to establish a solid foundation for further analysis.

THE CURRENT NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The 2002 National Security Strategy was the first and only NSS published since the September 11, 2001 attacks on America. In it the President provided his vision for the nation's security. This strategy covers eight far-reaching themes: human dignity; strengthening alliances to defend against global terrorism; diffusion of regional international conflicts; the prevention of the threats created from weapons of mass destruction; free markets and trade to increase global economic growth; the expansion of development and support to democracies; development and cooperation with other centers of global power; and the transformation of America's security institutions. In his preface to the 2002 NSS, President George W. Bush wrote: "Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government. Today, that task has changed dramatically."⁶ He continued: "Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us. To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal—military power, better homeland defenses, law enforcement, intelligence, and vigorous efforts to cut off terrorist financing."⁷ Particularly, chapter three of this strategy addresses the defeat of global terrorism most specifically.

Chapter three of the NSS presents the presidential foresights that the United States of America is fighting a threat against terrorism, and terrorists have global reach. It states that this great effort against terrorism is different from any other war this nation has fought in its history. This war will be waged on numerous fronts over a prolonged period of time, and that progress will come through "persistent accumulation of successes—some seen, some unseen."⁸ The NSS continues with its prescription of the President's vision of what the national government will do to combat terrorism.

The NSS states that the government will take the following broad actions to protect America from terrorism: lead continuous and constant action using all elements of national and international power; find and target those threats before they reach the internal borders of the U.S.; engage with other nations to do the same; and to deter them from sponsoring terror.⁹ The strategy continues by adding that the U.S. will also "wage a war of ideas" against terrorism that includes: viewing terrorism in the same light that as genocide, slavery or piracy; supporting moderate governments especially those in the Muslim world; focusing on international risk factors; and using effective public diplomacy to foster freedom in rogue states.¹⁰

As described, this strategy specifies a far reaching agenda that will take great effort from the United States using all instruments of national and international power. In the closing paragraphs of the National Security Strategy, the President wrote:¹¹

Just as our diplomatic institutions must adapt so that we can reach out to others, we also need a different and more comprehensive approach to public information efforts that can help people around the world learn about and understand America. The war on terrorism is not a clash of civilizations. It does, however, reveal the clash inside a civilization, a battle for the future of the Muslim world. This is a struggle of ideas and this is an area where America must excel.

From this brief review of the requirements that must be incorporated within the strategy and the NSS itself, one can appreciate the direct ties of this strategy to foreign policy. This is by design and congressional mandate through *Title 50*, but it is not exclusive of affecting the domestic agenda and public diplomacy. For example, in the NSS the President envisioned: "In a world that is safe, people will be able to make their own lives better."¹² It is not a difficult conceptualization to see that the NSS will have an influence on this nation's domestic ethos in today's globally connected environment. This similarity between national security, international policies and domestic affairs was clearly demonstrated in 1946.

MOTIVATION

Almost immediately following World War II, George F. Kennan, then serving as the State Department diplomat to Moscow, wrote what was to become famously known as the "Long Telegraph". Kennan reported back to Washington his perception of the emergence of the Soviet Union and its intended goals. His thoughts are best summarized when he described the Soviet Union as being "... committed fanatically to the belief that with the U.S. there can be no *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure."¹³ Kennan also recommended, "We must see that our public is educated to realities of the Russian situation. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this."¹⁴ This telegraph within three years became the outline for National Security Council (NSC) 68, which became the foundation for security policy for the next decade.

Unquestionably, NSC 68's relevance to the Nation's foreign affairs during that decade and the entire Cold War was paramount. Still studied in American military senior service schools, its guiding principles continued through the fall of the Eastern Bloc.¹⁵

On 12 June 1987, President Ronald Reagan spoke at the Brandenburg Gate, West Berlin. In this now famous speech, he spoke directly to the leader of the Soviet Union when he stated: "General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"¹⁶ While, Kennan's 1946 message and President Reagan's 1989 speech were separated by 43 years of peace and conflict between the two

super powers, there were many common threads during those four decades. One significant generational “truth” remained continuously relevant to the American public during this time frame; they continually learned about the threat from the Soviet Union and their suspected expansionist philosophies.

During those four decades, Americans from every corner of the society learned about the “communist threat” as exposed in Kennan’s prophetic essay in a variety of ways that remain vivid in my and many of my peer’s memory. For example, I remembered families who owned bomb and fall-out shelters in their backyards to protect from nuclear attack. I participated in grade school drills in the late 1960s that involved: going into the hallways; sitting down and placing our hands over our heads while leaning between our knees; and then following instructions or the “yellow bomb shelter” signs to the depths of the school’s basement. I also remembered the “Russian Bear” posters on the walls of the history and social studies’ rooms of the day; large, brown and with menacing looking teeth. Some of these messages could be considered propaganda campaigns based on American’s paranoia. While this would possibly be true in some cases, fear is a great motivator to many. Consequently, it is also true that the vast majority of this message was delivered based on the belief in Kennan’s writings that communism was a real threat to the American way of life. Furthermore, the general population was better served by knowing about this threat rather than a path of ignorance and ignoring its possible existence. American history clearly documented the threat communism presented to the United States.

The obvious corollary is that the communist threat of the past is conceptually similar to the current terrorist threat articulated in the 2002 NSS. This strategy clearly indicates that terrorism is a threat to the American way of life and the United States’ national security. In October 2004 the Pentagon’s Office of Force Transformation director, Admiral (USN Retired) Arthur Cebrowski, made the following remarks in his strategic appraisal on U.S. Armed Forces transformation that are similar to Kennan’s: “...knowledge of one’s enemy and his culture and society may be more important than knowledge of his order of battle.”¹⁷ He added that after the 11 September 2001 attacks a focus on conventional military force “... while more than adequate in most cases, needs to be complemented by some new thinking.”¹⁸ This paper will now examine and more clearly define the current enemy.

THE ENEMY

A challenge for a student, educator or citizen of the United States is how one defines or identifies the enemy when tasked in the National Security Strategy to “defend against global

terrorism.” For this paper the enemy is defined as militant, Islamic fundamentalists that use terrorism to accomplish their objectives. Today, these militant, Islamic fundamentalists are often labeled in two groups; radical, Islamic extremists or Salafist jihadists. Mary Jane Deeb, Professor of International Relations at American University, states that radical, Islamic extremists believe they can achieve a system of law through violence.¹⁹ Fawaz Gerges, author of *America and Political Islam* defines radical Islamists as: “... militant Islamists use mainly force to Islamicize society and politics and remain ambivalent about participating in the secular political process.”²⁰ The use of violence is a common thread through both examples of these militant, Islamic fundamentalists.

The most dramatic event perpetrated by the militant, Islamic fundamentalist that clearly demonstrated their use of violence conducted against the United States population were the sadistic attacks of 11 September 2001 (9-11). This experience dramatically altered the nation's domestic sense of security and affected their view of the international strategic environment. Although militant Islamists attacked US interests numerous times before (e.g., the Teheran hostage crisis, the Beirut Marine barracks bombing, the bombing of Khobar Towers, the USS Cole), 9-11 was remarkably audacious based on its scope, targeting and location. The militant Islamists chose a daytime attack using commercial airliners inside America's borders. They attacked the United States' largest city at arguably its most famous landmark (the World Trade Center Plaza) as well as the seats of U.S. political and military power (Washington DC and the Pentagon). The radical Islamic war was now being fought in the heartland of the United States. Notwithstanding the previous attacks and numerous other revelations since, it is difficult to understate the impact these terrorists and the 9-11 attacks had on our national psyche.

A second grouping of militant, Islamic fundamentalists is the Salafist jihadists. “Salafism is an ideology that posits that Islam has strayed from its origins. The word ‘salaf’ is Arabic for ‘ancient one’ and refers to the companions of the Prophet Mohammed.”²¹ Their movement was originally non-violent. They called for re-Islamization at every conceivable level because they believed faith had become “decadent over the centuries.” Furthermore, Salafists had grown more and more alienated during the 1900s due to their fundamentalism.²²

Michael G. Knapp, author of the article “The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam,” wrote: “The word ‘jihad’ means ‘struggle’ or ‘striving’ (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination ... It does not mean holy war. Unlike its medieval Christian counterpart term, ‘crusade’ (‘war for the cross’), however, the term jihad for Muslims has retained its religious and military connotation into modern times.”²³ Jihad does not mean “holy war” but the undertone of violence has taken hold in the militant, Islamic fundamentalists.²⁴

Therefore, as these two groups, the Salafist and the jihadists combined, they believed their “violence and terrorism was justified to realize their political objectives.”²⁵

The Salafist jihadist term is being used not only in an academic context today. General John Abiziad, Commander United States Central Command, used it to define the militant, Islamic fundamentalist threat his command faces daily: “Salafist jihadists. That is the term for the Muslim fundamentalists who use violent tactics to try to recreate what they imagine was the pure and perfect Islamic government of the era of the prophet Muhammad ... It is a loose network of like-minded individuals who use 21st-century technology to spread their vision of a 7th-century paradise.”²⁶ The infamous al’Qaeda grouping, responsible for the 9-11 attacks, is considered Salafist jihadist and their stated objectives against the United States are illustrated by the following quote.²⁷

All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on God, his Messenger, and Muslims.... [T]he jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the countries.... As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty... On that basis, and in compliance with God’s order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it.

- Osama bin Laden et al., in “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders,” 23 February 1998

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

To understand how to defeat a determined enemy, there are strategic principles that form the foundation for a strategy. Therefore, this paper will focus on the importance of a leader’s vision in developing that strategy as well as what can be learned from strategic theorists Sun Tzu and Clausewitz.

STRATEGIC VISION

The Department of the Army’s *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do* FM 22-100 states: “The skill of envisioning is vital to the strategic leader. But forming a vision is pointless unless the leader shares it with a broad audience, gains widespread support, and uses it as a compass to guide the organization.”²⁸ FM 22-100 continues: “For the vision to provide purpose, direction, and motivation, the strategic leader must personally commit to it, gain commitment from the organization as a whole, and persistently pursue the goals and objectives that will spread the vision throughout the organization and make it a reality.”²⁹ Additionally, Major General Richard A. Chilcoat in his role as the Commandant of the U.S. Army War College in 1995 wrote that

masters of the strategic art should provide strategic vision and focus.³⁰ Furthermore, envisioning, frame of reference development and communications are all strategic leader competencies that distinguish the best character traits of any contemporary strategic leader.³¹

As addressed earlier, *Title 50* tasks the President with communicating this nation's international interests, goals and objectives in his national security strategy report. He publishes this strategic vision and grand strategy in the National Security Strategy. In Dr. Marybeth Ulrich's article "Presidential Leadership and National Security Policymaking," she noted: "Presidents must make foreign policy a priority and set forth a day-to-day course that is driven by an overall strategic vision."³² This vision, combined with the understanding that our NSS provides strategic direction to the nation's department secretaries and directors of our national instruments of power, makes it imperative to our national security that the NSS incorporates a specific communications strategy. There are strategic leadership principles related to an informational strategy, in addition to the importance of vision, which can be applied from two important strategic theorists; Sun Tzu and Clausewitz.

STRATEGIC THERORISTS

If you know the enemy and know yourself; you need not fear the results in a hundred battles. If you know yourself, and not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.³³

- Sun Tzu

Although widely read and applied to the military and its realm as an instrument of national power, Sun Tzu's message above applies to the citizens of the warring nation state as well. Citizens should know the enemy; from this one can begin to understand the ways, the means and the desired ends of that enemy. While these lessons are taught in terms of the military battlefield, they are arguably important to the responsibilities a citizen has with respect to supporting his or her government. Today's citizens can better execute their responsibilities to the safety of a nation-state if they are informed about the enemy; the militant, Islamic fundamentalists. Sun Tzu's writings were not the only military theorist's contributions that can be applied to the citizens of our nation.

During the first quarter of the 19th century, the famous war theorist Carl Von Clausewitz emphasized the influence the "people" had within a nation state. He described the concept of a trinity of will composed of: the people of a nation; that nation's military commander and his army; and lastly, the government of the nation.³⁴ This trinity must be considered during all facets of peace and war. In the translation of his works, *On War*, the following best supports the

people's need to know: "... only those general principles and attitudes that result from clear and deep understanding can provide a comprehensive guide to action."³⁵ Again, the importance of knowing the environment, the threat, and the enemy is an emphasized strategic principle for understanding and executing national policy.

Today's civilian and military leaders continue along similar areas of emphasis, as recommended by the two historic strategists, when formulating national strategy. For many years, professional military schools delivered the messages and importance of the diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) instruments of national power relative to national strategies.³⁶ In the current strategic studies and analysis courses at the Army War College students apply a MIDLIFE-model (Military, Information, Diplomatic, Legal, Intelligence, Finance and Economic) toward studying elements of national power.³⁷ Once more, information is imbedded as a specified element within the model. This information element is included because an informed public is one that can rationally and appropriately support its nation's interests in times of peace and war. Having examined the underpinnings of the strategic principles concerning the importance of knowledge and information about an enemy, this paper will briefly review two historic examples of the United States' prior strategies to keep its citizens informed: the establishment of the Committee of Public Information and NSC 68's vision on foreign policy and public diplomacy.

HISTORIC UNDERPINNINGS OF AN INFORMED PUBLIC IN OUR NSS

THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

During World War I there were dedicated strategic-level efforts toward using information as an instrument of national power. In April, 1917, the United States government established the Committee on Public Information led by George Creel, an American journalist and Presidential appointee.³⁸ Creel's defined goals and mission for this committee were: build support and belief in the U.S. and its allies; improve the morale of United States service members; combat the negative portrayal of the U.S. in the foreign press; and convince the Central Powers of the national ideals and overall invincibility of the United States.³⁹ The executive branch charged the committee with educating the world about America, and their efforts were not exclusively dedicated toward counter-propaganda.

The Foreign Information Service (FIS) grew from the Committee on Public Information's beginnings and vision. The FIS worked with foreign language correspondents to communicate positive information and varied aspects of the nation's policies. Additionally, it was dedicated to reporting factual information and immediately retracting false reports as soon as they had been

confirmed.⁴⁰ Interestingly, Creel emphasized that the committee's and the FIS's mission should be used during wartime only to avoid political controversy during times of peace.⁴¹ This example is relevant because it established a government focus and an organization that provided information to its citizens and others around the world during conflict.

THE LONG TELEGRAPH AND NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL 68

In the spring 1987 Issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the editors wrote an introduction to Walt W. Rostow's Cold War containment article where they stressed the importance to American foreign policy of George Kennan's "extraordinary article," the Long Telegraph, and its "analysis of Soviet foreign policy, its motives and ambitions."⁴² The editors wrote: "... the article presented a strong prescription for American policy. The policy was in fact already evolving in the Truman Administration, but Kennan gave it an intellectual and analytical framework and brought it to public attention."⁴³ This journal confirmed the importance of Kennan's prescripts for foreign affairs and the issues interrelated between foreign policy, information distribution and public diplomacy that merit further examination.

NSC 68 was the successor of George Kennan's famous Long Telegraph. It delivered a most successful policy vision advising cabinet level officers on what they should do in terms of strategic information, psychological operations and public diplomacy. It described using information in support of national objectives to create a positive image of the United States for foreign audiences while attracting those audiences' attention away from communism.⁴⁴ NSC 68 advised the executive branch and the interagency processes to steer clear of information conflicts or seams in policy positions and actions. Additionally, it influenced coordination between the political (diplomatic), economic and military instruments of national power in terms of correctly distributing each branch's message in terms of its strength as compared to its competitor in the communist regimes to the east.⁴⁵ Furthermore, NSC-68 clearly and importantly stated that the U.S. government should "keep the U.S. public fully informed and cognizant of the threats to our national security so that it will be prepared to support the measures which we must accordingly adopt."⁴⁶

This report on foreign policy has since been declassified, and as *Foreign Affairs* noted in 1987, one can see its far-reaching effects on the four decades of foreign policy through the final demise of the Soviet Bloc and communism. Furthermore, during the last three decades of the 20th century, American presidents published additional guidance supporting their strategic vision in National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) and Presidential Decision Directives

(PDDs) to direct significant foreign and domestic policies that specifically addressed public information and understanding.

MODERN NATIONAL DECISION DIRECTIVES

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVES

Throughout the 1980s, NSDDs 75, 77, and 130 implemented national policy for foreign affairs, information policy, and public diplomacy. NSDD 75, *U.S. Relations with the U.S.S.R.*, directed several national-level agencies and departments on broad activities they should incorporate to support the President's national strategy. In its section labeled "Articulating the U.S. Approach: Sustaining Public and Congressional Support," President Reagan specifically noted: "It is therefore essential that the American people understand and support U.S. policy."⁴⁷ Similarly, NSDD 77, *Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security*, directed the National Security Council to develop a Special Planning Group (SPG).⁴⁸ The SPG was responsible for several programs that ensured effective public support to the President's national security policies. Specifically, NSDD 77 required coordinated public affairs efforts "to explain and support major U.S. foreign policy initiatives."⁴⁹

NSDD 130, *U.S. International Information Policy*, directed the nation's global information strategy. It combined information and public diplomacy as two of the nation's strategic security instruments and stressed the need at the national level to coordinate all instruments of national power in combined policy formulation.⁵⁰ As in the previous efforts throughout the 20th Century, these NSDDs recognized the need to shape public opinion and study cultural factors when considering the impact of national security policies and strategies.⁵¹

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION DIRECTIVE

The most recent presidential directive associated with information policy and strategy is PDD 68, *International Public Information*, signed by President Clinton in April 1999. President Bush revalidated this PDD that directs the development of an internal public information strategy with an aim toward distributing information to audiences abroad.⁵² It specifically identifies public diplomacy, public affairs and international military information as instruments of an international public information strategy that promotes national interests.⁵³ Again, there is an attempt within PDD 68 to combine the efforts of the elements of national power in a coordinated strategy to put forth coherent public information to positively affect national security. PDD 68 is the launching point to our current NSS in terms of its general references toward executing an information strategy.

CURRENT CRITIQUES

After the 9-11 attacks, there were numerous assessments commissioned to consider the effectiveness of United States Government policies to provide for its overall security. This paper will specifically review *The 9/11 Commission Report* and *The Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* to determine how they addressed public information within their security assessments.

THE 9/11 COMMISSION REPORT

In the “General Findings” section of the executive summary of the 9/11 Report the commission reported: “... none of the measures adopted by the U.S. government from 1998 to 2001 disturbed or even delayed the progress of the al Qaeda plot. The terrorist danger from Bin Laden and al Qaeda was not a major topic for policy debate among the public, the media, or in the Congress. Indeed, it barely came up during the 2000 presidential campaign.”⁵⁴ The report continued and identified that this new form of terrorism presented unforeseen difficulties to governmental organizations that they were not prepared to meet.⁵⁵

Specifically, in terms of the relationship between foreign policy and public information, the 9/11 Commission acknowledged that American foreign policy is part informational message, and right or wrong, its policies have consequences. They continued: “The United States must do more to communicate its message.”⁵⁶ Additionally, the report recommended the following to improve our national security and policies: “The U.S. Government must define what the message is, what it stands for. We should offer an example of moral leadership in the world ... just as we did in the Cold War; we need to defend our ideals abroad vigorously.”⁵⁷ The Commission also recommended: “The President should lead the government-wide effort to bring the major national security institutions into the information revolution. He should ... create a ‘trusted information network.’”⁵⁸

DEFENSE SCIENCE BOARD REPORT OF 2004

The Defense Science Board’s (DSBs) *Report of the DSB Task Force on Strategic Communication*, published in September, 2004, is the most current critique on Department of Defense policies as they relate to strategic communications and public diplomacy.⁵⁹ This analysis was an extensive study that interviewed numerous cabinet and national-level offices including: the National Security Council, the White House Office of Global Communications, the Departments of State and Defense, and the Broadcast Board of Governors. The DSB concluded that U.S. strategic communications must be transformed. Most importantly it asserted: “Strategic communication is vital to U.S. national security and foreign policy.”⁶⁰

Included in this study was an analysis of today's strategic environment compared with the strategic environment during the Cold War. It maintained that during the Cold War, the United States used the diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of power to advance the national interests and security. The DSB wrote: "There is a conviction held by many that the 'War on Terrorism' will have a similar influence in the 21st century. There are indeed similarities between the two struggles, and strategic communication will be as central to this war as it was to our Cold War strategy."⁶¹

The DSB report specifically addressed the importance of presidential vision and leadership. It reported on how leaders must lead from the front. The DSB continued when it discussed presidential direction, vision and strategic communications: "Only White House leadership, with support from cabinet secretaries and Congress, can bring about the sweeping reforms that are required. Nothing shapes U.S. policies and global perceptions of U.S. foreign and national security objectives more powerfully than the President's statements and actions, and those of senior officials."⁶²

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three specific recommendations based on this research: (1) the NSS should include a Presidential vision statement on informing the American public on the threat of militant, Islamic fundamentalists similar to how NSC-68 informed the public on the threat of communism; (2) the President should publish a new PDD incorporating the recommendations made by the DSB on strategic communications for the entire U.S. government; (3) the President, the nation's departments and agencies must stay on message for the foreseeable future.

This first recommendation requires the next NSS to speak directly toward informing the American public about the threat to United States national security from militant, Islamic fundamentalists. As discussed, the DSB extensively reviewed the NSS and determined: "... the current national security strategy (October 2002) says nothing about the power of information nor does it allude to the necessity of integrating all of the forms of national power and authority."⁶³ Similar to Kennan's Long Telegraph and NSC 68, this would provide the opportunity for American citizens to learn of the President's prioritized vision about this threat to national security. Additionally, a presidential vision statement on public diplomacy incorporated in the NSS will immediately invigorate the interagency processes to include this important element of a nation's strategy in their directives.

The second recommendation implements in concrete terms the President's vision on the needed information element of the national security strategy. It incorporates the DSB's strategic communications report's recommendations for an improved public diplomacy, information distribution and strategic communications into a new Presidential Decision Directive. At a minimum, the new PDD should incorporate this DSB recommendation:⁶⁴

- (1) Strengthen the U.S. government's ability to understand global public opinion, advise on the strategic implications of policymaking, and communicate with global audiences;
- (2) coordinate all components of strategic communication including public diplomacy, public affairs, international broadcasting, and military information operations;
- (3) provide a foundation for new legislation on the planning, coordination, conduct, and funding of strategic communication.

The final recommendation is for the President, the nation's departments and agencies to stay on message that militant, Islamic fundamentalists currently and for the foreseeable future threaten U.S. national security. To stay on message for this recommended public diplomacy and information strategy, the NSS must continually revisit its vision toward this new public discourse concerning the threat of militant Islamism. During presidential administrations that utilized NSC-68 as a back drop to their national security policies and postures, they specifically and consistently delivered the important information concerning the communist threat that was continually revising itself in the Eastern Bloc. This is true in terms of today's threat as well, as terrorism continues to change its focus and operations. It does not become dogma or a tired message if the threat still exists.

CONCLUSION

This research paper discussed the need to have the President build an information and communications strategy that keeps the American public informed and cognizant of the threat to our national security from militant, Islamic fundamentalists. The paper discussed the U.S. *Title 50* requirement that directs the President to complete a NSS and reviewed the 2002 National Security Strategy. It then identified the enemy to America's security as well as the strategic principles underlying the need to broadly inform the public. Additionally, it affirmed the importance of knowing one's threat; discussed the historic precedence of informing the public from the national strategy level to show this war has many similarities to the Cold War waged against the Soviet Union and communism; and examined the recommendations from the 9/11 Commission Report and the Defense Science Board's report on strategic communications on

how to improve our foreign and domestic policies. The paper concluded with specific recommendations to change the current security strategy to incorporate a presidential vision for an information strategy; issue a new Presidential Decision Directive to implement the strategy; and keep focused on this issue for the long run.

WORD COUNT=5,943

ENDNOTES

¹ U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security Strategy, *War, National Security Policy and Strategy Course Directive* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 25 August - 22 October 2004), 4.

² Ibid.

³ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 2002), vii.

⁴ *Title 50, War and National Defense, U.S. Code*, section 404a (2003).

⁵ *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, 99th Congress, 2d session, 1986; available from <<http://www.ndu.edu/library/goldnich/goldnich.html>>; Internet; accessed 10 February 2005.

⁶ Bush, i.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹¹ Ibid., 31.

¹² Ibid., iii.

¹³ George Kennan; quoted in "Introduction: NSC 68: The Theory and Politics of Strategy," in U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security Strategy, *Core Curriculum Course Two: War, National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 25 August - 22 October 2004), 429.

¹⁴ Ibid., 433.

¹⁵ National Security Council, *NSC-68, A Report to the National Security Council*, in U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security Strategy, *Core Curriculum Course Two: War, National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 25 August - 22 October 2004), 494.

¹⁶ Ronald W. Reagan, "Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate West Berlin, Germany," 12 June 1987; available from <<http://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan/speeches/wall.asp>>; Internet; accessed 27 January 2005.

¹⁷ Keith J. Costa, "Cebrowski: DOD Planners Need to Focus on Understanding the Enemy," 28 October 2004; available from <http://www.oft.osd.mil/library/library_files/article419_Inside%20The%20Pentagon.doc>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2004.

¹⁸ Ibid.

- ¹⁹ Mary Jane Deeb, "War against Radical Islamists," interview by Lou Dobbs, *CNNfn*, 13 June 2002.
- ²⁰ Fawaz Gerges, "War against Radical Islamists," interview by Lou Dobbs, *CNNfn*, 13 June 2002.
- ²¹ Bruce Livesey, "The Salafist Movement," 25 January 2005; available from <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/special/sala.html>>; Internet; accessed 9 February 2005.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Michael G. Knapp, "The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam," *Parameters* 33 (Spring 2003): 82.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Livesey, 1.
- ²⁶ David Ignatius, "On the Trail with Gen. Abizaid: No Easy Victory in the Long War," 3 January 2005; available from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_10&categ_id=5&article_id=11467>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2005.
- ²⁷ Knapp, 82.
- ²⁸ Department of the Army, *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, Field Manual 22-100 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, August 1999), 7-14.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Richard A. Chilcoat, *Strategic Art: The New Discipline for 21st Century Leaders* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), 8.
- ³¹ Roderick R. Magee, II, ed., *Strategic Leadership Primer* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, 1998), 58.
- ³² Marybeth Ulrich, "Presidential Leadership and National Security Policymaking," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security and Strategy, July 2004), 231.
- ³³ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translator, Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 84.
- ³⁴ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, translators, Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 108.

³⁶ J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., ed., *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security and Strategy, July 2004), 279.

³⁷ John R. Defreytas, "Elements of National Power: Tools of National Security Policy," briefing slide, Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College, 11 October 2004.

³⁸ George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1920) 3 - 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴² Ann Mosely Lesch, "Containment: 40 Years Later: Introduction," *Foreign Affairs* 65 (Spring 1987); available from <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19870301faessay7843/none/containment-40-years-later-introduction>>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2005.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ National Security Council, "NSC-68, A Report to the National Security Council," *U.S. Army War College Core Curriculum Course Two: War, National Security Policy and Strategy, Readings Volume Two*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 25 August - 22 October, 2004), 451 - 496.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 458-459.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 494.

⁴⁷ Ronald W. Reagan, *U.S. Relations with the U.S.S.R.: National Security Decision Directive Number 75 (USDD 75)*, 17 January 1983; available from <<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-1963t.gif>>; Internet; accessed 26 September 2004.

⁴⁸ Ronald W. Reagan, *Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security: National Security Decision Directive Number 77 (NSDD 77)*, 14 January 1983; available from <<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd/23-1966t.gif>>; Internet; accessed 26 September 2004.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Ronald W. Reagan, *U.S. International Information Policy: National Security Decision Directive Number 130 (NSDD 130)*, 6 March 1984; available from <<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-2213t.gif>>; Internet; accessed 26 September 2004.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² William J. Clinton, *International Public Information: Presidential Decision Directive 68 (PDD 68)*, (Washington D.C.: The White House, 30 April 1999), 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁴ 9/11 Commission Report, "Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Executive Summary," 22 July 2004; available from <<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/22jul20041147/www.gpoaccess.gov/911/pdf/execsummary.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 9 January 2005.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ 9/11 Commission Report, *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 377.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 376-377.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 418.

⁵⁹ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 2004) i.

⁶⁰ Ibid., v.

⁶¹ Ibid., 33.

⁶² Ibid., 30.

⁶³ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 63.

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