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Allies and Audiences: Evolving strategies in Defense and Intelligence

Propaganda

Introduction

This article will discuss traditional US/UK propaganda restrictions in intelligence and defense (explored further below), and recent propaganda strategy responses to the challenges posed by rapidly evolving media systems which challenge these restrictions. Propaganda is “a process by which an idea or an opinion is communicated to someone else for a specific persuasive purpose.” (Taylor 2003: 7). Both Britain and the United States have divided their propaganda capabilities according to audience, sensitivity of operation, and extent of persuasion used. In democracies, external propaganda traditionally permitted more aggressive persuasion including deception (particularly toward enemies), and commitments to the media's 'fourth estate' role allowed some scope for debate domestically. One reason given for these restrictions is transparency and ensuring domestically (and between allies) that propaganda remains 'uncontaminated' by messages intended for the enemy. This claim and institutionalised divisions have long been considered essential to present propaganda as justifiable within democracies. Taylor and Snow have called this a 20th Century 'democratic propaganda model' (2006: 390) yet it has in reality been far from democratic especially in intelligence. Other authors have pointed to the weakness of democratic claims (eg Miller and Sabir 2012) and demonstrate the void of accountability and reality of frequent avoidance of audience restrictions in the exercise of power and persuasion throughout 20th Century conflicts (inc. Bacevich 2006; Dorril 2002; Herman and Chomsky 2008; French 2012; Weiner 2008). Differences in US/UK defense, intelligence, and media also are significant in creating

divergent, if cooperative, approaches (Moran and Murphy 2013; Nagl 2005; Papacharissi and Oliveira 2008). Another, operational, reason underpins targeting: multiple messages are refined for separate audiences due to different persuasion objectives and cultural differences between those audiences. Messages not tailored for a specific audience are considered less effective (See for example Bernays 1928; Ellul 1973; Tatham 2008).

This article will present evidence that following 9/11, American and British planners sought to overcome what were seen as 'out-dated' propaganda systems, defined by their emergence in an old-media system of sovereign states with stable target audiences. Efforts to enhance operational effectiveness in a fluid propaganda environment will be shown to be harnessing the internet's fluidity which now challenges the new and traditional domestic media's freedom. The article argues that inadequate protections exist to prevent differences in national US/UK restrictions being used to enable activities that would otherwise raise concern. In propaganda this appeared more advantageous to the US, where legislative audience restrictions applied. Challenges raised by new media demand a reappraisal of propaganda restrictions, for which governments must allow greater transparency in order to enable debate, legal judgement and independent academic enquiry.

Methodology

The article draws on a broader research project analysing the evolving Anglo-American counter-terror propaganda strategies that spanned wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and reconstruction (2001-2013). A detailed analysis of British and American documentary sources was undertaken but the primary method for data gathering was

exploratory elite face-to-face and telephone interviews of which 66 were conducted. Where interviewing was not possible email correspondence was used (45 emails overall). Access was facilitated by introductions and 'snowball' sampling. The 75 US and British participants included Public Relations professionals, journalists; and foreign policy, defense and intelligence personnel [1]. 18 interviews and 9 emails were drawn on for the present article. The research design was not a strict comparative study but focussed on the negotiation of Anglo-American relationships and the role they played in policymaking and planning of propaganda. Thematic Analysis was applied to the data, identifying implicit and explicit themes or ideas within the data and coding these for analysis (eg. for co-occurrence etc) (Guest et al. 2012).

UK & US 'Democratic' Restrictions

In the US context, foreign-domestic propaganda authorisations and restrictions are often ascribed to the Smith-Mundt Act 1948, which in fact only applies to parts of the State Department not to Defense and is not 'anti-propaganda' as often thought. It restricted the State Department from 'monopoly' in the 'production or sponsorship' of information, however, and its propaganda had to be attributable. US Military and Intelligence propaganda is authorised under the 1956 US Code. Title 10 reserves the military's use of Psychological Operations [PSYOP], its strongest form of propaganda, for special forces under a Commander and in support of ongoing or 'anticipated' hostilities. DOD Directive S-3321.1 governs overt PSYOP during peacetime, and specifies "foreign countries". US Code Title 50 covers CIA-led Covert Action. Former CIA Station Chief Ren Stelloh described the difference:

“The Department of State is responsible for articulating [CIA] policy.

[where] the President determines, 'well we can't invade the country but

we still wanna... keep it boiling around the edges, so we oughta engage in non-attributable activities... if the military gets engaged, by definition, it's attributable. Cause they don't have those authorities. ... if you wanna do it in a truly clandestine way... then it's gotta be The Agency." (Stelloh 23rd June 2009).

Covert strategic propaganda operations are traditionally CIA responsibilities, not Department of Defense (DOD) but the global counter-terrorism campaign has expanded the range of DOD activities, and as Silverberg and Heimann state,

"labelling the ongoing effort a "global war" or even a "worldwide irregular campaign" greatly expands the range of activities that can be justified as a "military mission.'" (2009: 79).

Prof. Thomas Wingfield, a legal authority in this area, said,

"Title 10 of the US Code does prohibit publicity and propaganda by DOD within the US, but the exception, unless "otherwise specifically authorized by law" allows Congress to permit DOD broad authorities (in Defense Authorization Acts, etc.) for public affairs, recruiting, etc. These prohibitions are much more about coordination and transparency in authorization than they are about preventing the activities themselves."

(Wingfield 1st May 2013).

They ensure for example funds are allocated correctly and responsibilities are clearly defined. Finally, Executive Order S-12333, governs intelligence and also 'covert action' more generally including by the military, it states it must not be "intended to influence United States political processes, public opinion, policies, or media".

Externally, the US has a fairly free reign. Former US Special Forces, Military and Intelligence Officer Joel Harding said that "the restrictions only apply within the borders of the United States, outside the US it is basically a free-fire zone, only the restrictions by the Ambassador or a military commander prevail" (Harding 30th April 2013). Prof. Wingfield confirmed this, stating that "PSYOP may be used whenever they are not specifically prohibited" and the CIA:

"can do almost anything that is 1.) authorized in a presidential finding, 2.) not targeted against a US person, and 3.) not a violation of a jus cogens norm" [2].

The CIA targeted US citizens repeatedly in its history however; recent revelations are preceded by domestic activities under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and G W Bush (See Weiner 2008: 223). In 1996 a Council for Foreign Relations independent task force recommended taking a "fresh look...at limits on the use of non-official 'covers' for hiding and protecting those involved in clandestine activities" including journalists. John Deutch, then Director of Central Intelligence responded at that time that there was "no need to change U.S. policy as Haass had advocated, since the CIA already had the power to use U.S. reporters as spies" (quoted in Houghton 1996).

In the UK, there is no direct equivalent to Smith-Mundt or US Code prohibitions. Military operations are governed by the Law of Armed Conflict (2004), which allows that "Ruses of war are not prohibited. Such ruses are acts which are intended to mislead an adversary or to induce him to act recklessly" and states that "mock operations and misinformation" are permitted. Britain must also abide by the four Geneva Conventions with three additional protocols and the Hague Regulations [3] (Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Geneva 12th August

1949) [4]. In legal terms for the British military, "There is a system of checks and balances in UK Information Operations operated through Central Legal Services within the MoD" (Anonymous 2013a). However, British defense has historically been less codified than the US, its rules mainly doctrinal, offering greater flexibility (Nagl 2005: 192). Legislation governing British intelligence makes no mention of propaganda. A FOI response advised that "the Department does not hold any specific policy regarding information operations and when legal advice must be sought" [5]. MI6 I/Ops potentially has more scope in what it is allowed to do, than its US equivalent as it doesn't require ministerial sanction in the same way the CIA needs congressional approval. By comparison, even CIA propaganda activities are subject to open debate. The Intelligence Services Act 1994 states the function of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) as "to obtain and provide information relating to the actions or intentions of persons outside the British Islands; and to perform other tasks relating to the actions or intentions of such persons" (Emphasis added). It makes the now-parliament appointed Intelligence and Security Committee responsible for governance and oversight of intelligence agencies including to the Joint Intelligence Committee and SIS. Recently, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee on Counter-Terrorism (30th April 2014) commented that they "do not believe the current system of oversight is effective" and expressed "concerns that the weak nature of that system has an impact upon the credibility of the [intelligence] agencies accountability, and to the credibility of Parliament itself". The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 has allowed monitoring of private communications, a power that has been extensively used (Kennedy 2007). Domestic targeting is also clear from work by Newbery (2009) for instance on Northern Ireland interrogations. Intelligence helps in targeting propaganda activities, and recently released documents

regarding GCHQ Joint Threat Research Intelligence Group clearly demonstrate the interconnect of these capabilities in Online Covert Action to 'Deny, Degrade, Distrust, Deceive' or for 'credential harvesting' through foreign journalists (Cole et al 7th February 2014). Intelligence is also used to assist with profiling by IO staff within the MoD (Taverner 23rd January 2013).

'Boundaries' between domestic (eg Public Affairs) and foreign (eg PSYOP) activities were stated by Air Cdre Graham Wright, the former UK MoD Director of Targeting and Information Operations, and other interviewees, to be an American construct (1st June 2009). Both countries' personnel sometimes voiced traditional narratives regarding propaganda audience protections. Former Dir. Media Operations (Policy) in Office of Director General of Media and Communication Col. Angus Taverner stressed that the MoD only do truthful PSYOP: "British doctrine for information operations [IO] is all white [6]. To the best of my knowledge we have not done black propaganda in the British military for many, many a long year" [7]. Former British Army Intelligence Corps, Former Director Plans, Office of Strategic Communications of Coalition Provisional Authority Baghdad Ian Tunnicliffe, stated that "their idea of legality was completely separate from ours. ... They seemed to be able to operate in ways that we couldn't." (Tunnicliffe 8th July 2013). But Former Director of Targeting and Information Operations AVM Mike Heath has insisted that, under directions of the Secretary of State, IO must be "truthful at all times" with the "very specific exception of that bit where we would try and lie and dissuade or persuade military commanders" [my emphasis] (House of Commons Select Committee on Defense. 3rd March 2004). It is possible to mislead without recourse to lies and is often more effective to do so utilising truthful information. Black

propaganda tends to be commonly designated to covert or clandestine activity. Though, compared to America, UK resource in influence is small, the number of personnel 'in the loop' is further restricted on some sensitive activities. This limited circle is also partly to protect individual operations from public exposure - it ensures their effectiveness where the credibility of a message might be affected if the source were known. According to MoD Assistant Head Defense Media and Communications Operations Plans, Ralph Arundell, "people that have been involved in this area you could probably count on the fingers of two hands at most, at the higher level anyway, probably not even that many". He stated that "not everybody at all levels, for example, would have been exposed to all of what we were doing in TIO" in line with this security restriction. Additionally, Col. Arundell confirmed that in the UK "there is a big difference between the sort of activity conducted at the tactical level and what has then been subsequently conducted at the strategic level" (18th April 2013).

Some practitioners across government have come to question boundaries they see as having prevented necessary coordination. Col. Arundell said culturally in the military it was almost an,

"urban myth. We all go: 'Go separate out IO and media' ...and you then turn to somebody and go 'Where's it actually written down that we've got to do that?' And everybody goes: 'Do you know, I've no idea. We just – we just don't do it do we?' Now, there are very sensible reasons why you would maintain a degree of separation but ultimately both sides have got to work to a common information strategy. I think we're getting to a much better place in terms of ensuring that IO and media are joined up. There needs to be a degree of separation but then, so long as you are delivering

clear straight factual information, I see absolutely no problem with coordinating it.”

Col. Arundell clarified US constraints, stating that:

‘The Americans are not allowed to conduct non-attributable information activity and have some very strict constitutional rules. The other area where they are extremely limited in what they can do is particularly with the internet ...the Americans can't conduct activity that could potentially play back against the US audience. [8]

Former National Security Council Director for Global Outreach Kevin McCarty described the US situation: "in the strategic communication, influence world, you start walking into a lot of lines that are really fuzzy and people are afraid to go there".

There was a strong belief that the existing US audience rules are out-dated. McCarty expressed the concern that "every Department, Agency or Office including that of the President, have limitations around what they can and can't do. And none of them were written for the world we live in now." (13th March 2013). McCarty is referring to a contemporary environment where internet fluidity disrupts geographical propaganda targeting and America's 'enemy' is transnational, not a sovereign state (The Smith-Mundt Act and US Code date from a time before the internet).

Some American interviewees asserted that British rules were less restrictive.

Former Advertising Executive Sean Fitzpatrick, as a CIA/DOD contractor also worked for the British in Northern Ireland, he said “I think your country has [counter-terrorism] better handled”. MI5, he said, is not bound by the constraints of the FBI is as a law enforcement agency and doesn't have to prove a criminal act:

“And if you screw up they’ll lock you up. Well you know, you’re in much more dangerous territory [as a government] But ... nothing sharpens the mind like the prospect of hanging in the morning” (Fitzpatrick 30th June 2009).

Potomac Institute for Policy Studies were contracted to the Pentagon's Office of Strategic Influence - their Director Dennis McBride commented that “the British are very clever, and ...don’t have the restrictions we do.” On domestic/foreign propaganda restrictions he said “the British were less concerned with that kind of problem” (5th June 2009). In public diplomacy, McCarty also compared America with the UK: "Whereas like, in the UK, ... the Government does things like this [operate or sponsor broadcasts to its own people]. I mean, there is no foreign - domestic line like there is in the United States." He pointed to the BBC, stating that the US cannot allow a broadcaster such as Voice of America to broadcast to and potentially influence Americans no matter how it were operated [9]. On this Prof. Wingfield said:

"your interviewees may have been right when they said that the US has more legal restrictions than the UK, BUT: the common core of both systems is much greater than the differences; there are slightly more restrictions; and the impact of these additional restrictions has little operational significance—they are much more about domestic approval chains, rather than flat-out prohibitions of this or that." [10]

The 'restrictiveness' being encountered may relate more to bureaucracy and the US military's formal hierarchical approval structures being cumbersome to navigate.

Fluid Propaganda Audiences

'External' propaganda's legitimacy hinges ultimately on feelings of insecurity in an anarchic international system, exploiting a fundamental suspicion of 'foreigners'. Sec. of State Colin Powell apparently discussed with his Chief of Staff, how much easier it was when there was a, distinct 'other' during the Cold War, and Lawrence Wilkerson recalled this, discussing how:

"...you always need an enemy, you need an 'other' ... in both our countries, we've always had the majority with a very distinct impression of the 'other' and it was easy to manipulate... propagandise and so forth"
(23rd June 2009).

A globalised media environment means a full informational monopoly whilst isolating audiences is difficult. Audiences cannot be treated as distinct, and targeted with differing messages without risking contradiction. The Pentagon recognised this back in 2003; Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said that the global media age meant covert PSYOP messages were increasingly entering the US domestic media (Department of Defense 30th October 2003). Crucially, government propaganda campaigns cannot be seen to contradict; the lack of a consistent and culturally nuanced message destroys credibility. As the former Chief of Staff to Sec. of State Lawrence Wilkerson put it, the propaganda message "can't be the same for the Indian Muslims, as it is for the Indonesian Muslims", and "you can't send the same signals to the 1.5bn Muslims, as you're sending to your own people to Ra-Ra them up for the conflict" [11].

In interview, Former NSC Director of Global Outreach Kevin McCarty, challenged the US organisational structures, saying that "Our government agencies are divided by borders and rules that don't exist anymore" [12]. US planners

recognised this early on, Retired US Air Force Colonel Sam Gardiner, in 2003 said the US had "allowed strategic psychological operations to become part of public affairs" (8th October 2003: 4). In 2005, Col. Jeffrey Jones, former NSC Director for Strategic Communications and Information, concluded that "traditional dividing lines between public affairs, public diplomacy, and military information operations are blurred" (2005: 109). The 'global counter-terrorism campaign' expanded the range of DOD activities. Legally, military PSYOP must be associated with a specific military mission but Silverberg and Heimann state that,

"labelling the ongoing effort a "global war" or even a "worldwide irregular campaign" greatly expands the range of activities that can be justified as a "military mission." (2009: 79).

Coordination of PSYOP and Public Affairs involved institutional struggles in both countries, but particularly 2005-2008 in the US (See: Briant In Print 2014).

Successive planners have become increasingly concerned with adaptation and finding a solution for what is seen primarily as a coordination problem not one of ethics.

Intelligence personnel play a prominent role in strategic coordination of US propaganda. Former US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (2009-2012) Doug Wilson stated that:

"in the time I've been in government, with stretches of service over 40 years, there's a greater involvement now of intelligence organisation Public Affairs Officers in discussions involving national communications strategy. Public Affairs Office Representatives of the NSC, the State Department, the Pentagon, and the intelligence agencies all on the same line talking together" (10th May 2013).

Strategy coordination also occurs in the UK government and since 2010 takes place through the Cabinet Office NSC Communications Team. Kirsteen Rowlands Head of Afghanistan Communications in the NSC Communications Team describes its role as to:

"coordinate all the activity across Whitehall and theatre on communications... around Afghanistan.... the overarching strategy, our objectives, the top line messaging and ... the direction." (17th April 2013).

Col. Arundell stated that the big question for planners became "how do you conduct an operation for effect, for an informational effect against a constantly fluid enemy that has no tangible borders?" [13]. Now those responsible for the domestic message have accepted 'playback' of international messages in the UK, and vice-versa as inevitable and seek to avoid conflicting messages. In the UK, the essential elements of key foreign messages that will be used for the theatre audience are being worked into the domestic, Media and Press Office output. On the NSC Communications Team, Rowlands said,

"We absolutely recognise that ... what we say to our domestic audience will be replayed to other audiences and ... we see one of our key jobs as banging home that message to all our people who are messaging on Afghanistan. ... it's an easy one to forget when you're giving a message to domestic audiences, on for example, draw-down. That you need to balance that message ... recognising that it'll be picked up by Afghan audiences where the message is our long-term commitment. So we try to

make sure we don't talk about draw-down without talking about our on-going commitment post-2014."

Rowlands reaffirmed that:

"There is no longer such a thing as a clearly defined domestic audience...

Anything that runs in our media gets picked up... by the Afghan media.

The growth of the Afghan media has been utterly explosive..."

The priority is consistency of message - prioritising the conflict outcome and overall defence objectives: "We try to think more about the effect, rather than targeting to specific audiences" [14].

McCarty also described pressures that faced US practitioners in a changing media environment and made old approaches to influence seem outdated. For practitioners, it is not enough to establish a large propaganda organisation or broadcaster and get it pumping out information, its messages will get lost among the numerous other competing voices and rival, respected, news organisations. McCarty observed that "It's become a very pull environment" - he argued today's highly segmented audiences require a different approach for governments. He contended that, instead, the message needs to be carried on a medium already being 'pulled' by the target audience, a source that is already credible and widely accessed. McCarty argued that,

"there's so many voices out there, so many media channels ... the old model of building a BBC or ... your own website ... there's already a thousand of them out there, you build one more... how much of an impact is it going to have? So the infrastructure approach of making communications work, to me is an old model that doesn't work. It has to

be about how do you affect the information flow. How do you insert into that, get it to grow." [15].

‘Insertions’ can be overt or covert and these are coordinated. Regarding UK covert messaging Britain's Col. Arundell said that "increasingly we're going to shift" to "messaging an audience directly", but this needs to be credible. A younger audience's chief information source is "stuff that's relayed by their mates through social networking sites –Twitter" and "if I say I'm Col Ralph Arundell from the British Army they'll go 'I'm not listening to that'" but if "done in the right way" it might go viral. This gives an advantage as "Nobody looks at a viral video on YouTube...and goes who planted that?" But it needs to be from a known source [16].

Former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told how US messages are designed to cross borders:

"we cannot do perception management here in the United States, that's against our law, but if we were going to do perception management in Europe this would be a covert operation where we'd insert ... certain stories in certain newspapers that would try and affect, for instance, the thinking of Saddam Hussein..." (21st July 2009).

Covert actions hinge on deniability. They are hidden from the public even after action has occurred. What international media content is ‘perception management’ is impossible for the public to know. Deniability gives intelligence agencies an ability to act even where actions may be publicly unacceptable, as it limits the scope for debating activity [17]. It ensures credibility of the source being 'pulled'. And it raises

the concern that PSYOP messages could re-enter domestic media, should restrictions be ill-equipped to prevent this.

US Checks and Oversight

Deliberate targeting of a US domestic audience would be unlawful and it is required that the 'intent' be to target a foreign audience [18]. With overt operations, in terms of liability, the assurance that deliberate domestic targeting will not occur rests on compliance with directives and "chain of command, for military MISO ops [Military Information Support Operations, formerly referred to only as PSYOP], with legal review at the brigade level and higher" (Wingfield 10th May 2013). But regarding US PSYOP flowing into the US media, there is little to prevent this accidentally happening. There is little active effort to minimise impact to the domestic media or weigh whether risk is proportional. As Wingfield states:

"as long as you had the right target, got the right authorizations, and took the right precautions, then it doesn't matter what kind of spillover happens--there's nothing blameworthy in your op. Stuff happens, especially in this line of work." (21st May 2013).

Furthermore, proving a state of mind such as 'intent' is difficult. To ensure Commanders comply, Wingfield stated that in covert PSYOP "The process requires the President to take personal responsibility (in writing) for each covert op" and legal opinion will be obtained (22nd May 2013). The lawyer would need to take into account proportionality considering whether the risk of the PSYOP output entering US domestic media is outweighed by the value of the operation. There is also post-operation oversight by Congress but they have "no role in prior approval" [19]. Ren

Stelloh explained congressional oversights for the CIA through four principal committees. The Senate Appropriations Committee and House Appropriations Committee, who "say 'ok we're gonna give you a hundred million dollars to go and do that". Then the House Permanent Select and Senate Select Committees on Intelligence. But these are "not full committees, it's the covert action staff [20] [which] has the ability to be intrusive and ask questions..." [21]. Wingfield stated that:

"I think Congress is looking out for English-language covert PSYOP that could have an effect on the US public if inappropriately released through our media - although, in their case, almost always [22] after the fact" [23].

He said Congress and the President "both have an institutional interest in keeping an eye on sloppy PSYOP that might leak to domestic media" [24].

In reality, however, regarding the 'proportionality' of covert operations, concern is more focussed on 'kinetic' covert action, where lives are at risk. There is considered to be little risk of 'harm' where the fall-out is informational - "PSYOP almost never produce the kind of physical damage required for a full-on law of war analysis with distinction and proportionality evaluations" [25]. So any operation that spilled back into US media, would still likely be considered 'proportionate', despite the difficulty of proving any 'benefit' or impact of a propaganda campaign in shaping battlefield outcomes, or effectiveness in-theatre. When asked about this and Wingfield stated that:

"You're right that there can never be absolute certainty about the ultimate effect of any military operation, but the concern is somewhat reduced if it is a cyber or psyop intel activity that, even in a worst-case scenario, wouldn't kill anybody. Some leakage to US audiences is probably

inevitable, but as long as the intent is not there to target the US, and all reasonable precautions have been taken, then a well-designed operation has a very small chance of blowing back and becoming a US media sensation." [26]

If the lawyer, or congress or whoever, is weighing a campaign's down-sides, against its positive impact, the assessment of proportionality is dependent on measures of effect. This raises an important question explored below:

Interviewer: Even if it doesn't become a damaging 'media sensation' in the US, if you can't prove the operation was effective in theatre, how can any leakage to the US be proportionate?

Wingfield's reply: "Measuring the effectiveness of PSYOP is a whole other problem, if they are targeted at a public and not a few identifiable decision-makers. The proportionality thing is only a legal requirement if you're killing people and blowing things up--otherwise, it's just a good idea." (8th June 2013).

The following account indicates that if propaganda re-enters the US, as long as those responsible make a case to demonstrate the propaganda was 'intended' for an external audience Congress are satisfied. Former CIA Station Chief Ren Stelloh recalled how after 9/11,

“within a few weeks our then [Deputy Director of Operations] Jim Pavitt sent a back-channel to the domestic chiefs asking that we redouble and if we hadn't started, start right now, scrubbing the commercial world, ... for tools that we could bring to bear on the war on terrorism”

PhaseOne, a propaganda contractor who kept a very low-profile [27] forecasted psychological persuasiveness of communications for both DOD and CIA, developing propaganda. Their profiling and forecasting techniques initially were developed by SIS and CIA during World War 2 then perfected in commercial and academic applications afterwards. Stelloh described how even among foreign audiences “the lingua franca of the internet is English!” so this means

“the lawyers will ... say obviously you’re targeting English speakers... and we say ‘well, yeh... [laughing] but they’re not Americans!’...well how can you ensure that? ...so you go through things ...to try to make that case.”

This clearly leaves a wide berth for subjectivity and interpretation and Stelloh’s account demonstrates a nonchalant response of Congress to occurrences of ‘feed-back’:

“There is a requirement however that, if anything spilled... there is always a foreign focus, ... whatever activities undertaken should never be designed to influence an internal audience, ... and if there is inadvertent spill-over, say the New York Times picks it up and replays it and you, ‘Oh shit.’ We go tell Congress and say- And, 9 times out of 10, they say... ‘ok!’” (His Emphasis) [28]

Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control on the National Security Council Franklin Miller observed that during wartime “I don’t know that we’ve had that many operations... actually... denied” (3rd August 2009).

Anglo-American Coordination

In this section relationships in the propaganda context will be examined in relation to defense and intelligence. Some interviewees said that Britain's capabilities were prized, partly in the context of US restrictions some found outdated. Britain's legislative restrictions, were perceived as weaker and advantageous to planning. As part of an overall war effort, coalitions account for differing skill-sets and capabilities of their members in producing a division of labour that will allow members to perform an assistive, complementary role, and optimise their overall resource in meeting operational objectives. British policy after 9/11 emphasised 'interoperability', converging doctrine, and providing unique capabilities in an attempt to secure 'fit' and relative value to America, all factors which shaped the propaganda war. One writer stated in 2009 that about 40% of CIA activities to prevent terrorist attacks on America are focussed in Britain (Shipman 28th February 2009).

As a coalition, different countries can complement each other and widen the range of possible engagement for each. Beyond material resource, the balance of restrictions of two countries at any time can also affect the balance of what each country brings to an overall war effort. The extension of a US 'military mission' had this effect. During preparations for Iraq, and before the war, Ian Tunnicliffe described US/UK legal differences in IO:

"the no-fly zones ... had been previously defined as areas in which we could operate ... whereas outside of them it was still Iraqi sovereign territory. ... An effort to broadcast into that was technically an aggressive act."

On this occasion, for Britain it meant, "In the run-up... you didn't get any active IO ... there was covert stuff ... not run out of MoD ... other agencies might've been doing things" [29]. The US defining a wider military mission often enabled its military engagement. In another example, Air Cdre Wright explained that,

“if we wanted to do something in the Maghreb, because our military say look we’re worried about [Al Qaeda from Mesopotamia] Our policy people in the MoD would say ... We’re not doing military operations there”

This would restrict Britain to relying on embassies, which could be restrictive, as FCO, "don't have the capabilities that [MoD] do in terms of doing things on the ground in other places". In contrast, America could act where a military response was deemed necessary due to its widely defined reach; in this case “doing influence activity, in its broadest sense, in Africa to prevent operations ever happening” [30]

Besides weak restrictions, some interviews indicated that Britain is seen as providing particular or complimentary skill in covert IO. As Former Director of the US Advisory Commission for Public Diplomacy Matt Armstrong notes, different countries including Britain also have different areas of specialism in "The black arts'... what I mean is covert information operations. Their PSYOP and MISO type of stuff" and this means "there are things where we look for from our allies and they look for from us" (Armstrong 6th March 2013). Within the MoD Col. Ralph Arundell confirmed this: "the Americans like to think we're very good at this sort of activity. Because we have a long historical background with it" [31].

The scope of each country's intelligence agency activities is complimentary. The two countries have worked together increasingly as 'threats' were seen as requiring global 'solutions', and attempts were made to draw on any propaganda capabilities that might complement each others' objectives. Placing false stories in foreign media with the intention of them re-entering the country was something Dr Stephen Dorril said he thought the Americans had been taught "by MI6". 'Surfacing' has the potential advantage of circumnavigating domestic audience targeting rules and distances the propagandist from the propaganda, giving the message some wider credibility. Dorril said an SIS agent would first,

"plant a story in a third country, you tell the journalist who's your contact ... He gets the story ... he comes back to you [the agent] and you say yeh it's true, they can build a... nuclear weapon in 6 months. Then he puts the story in the press that 'intelligence sources confirm that...'"

This 'double-sourcing' adds credibility to the story, and "the person who usually backs it up is also the person who planted the story in the first place" (20th July 2010). UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter was asked to provide SIS with "information on Iraq that could be planted in newspapers in India, Poland and South Africa from where it would 'feed back' to Britain and America" (Rufford 28th December 2003, See also Ritter 2005: 281). Seymore Hersh has also revealed how the CIA relationship with SIS operates to enable a deniable route to get US messages into wider media (31st March 2003). SIS functioning this way could be argued to provide a complementary and 'unique' capability within the alliance, particularly given how London's reporting sets the agenda for US coverage of world events. Different 'capabilities' in the intelligence community, or military, would clearly prove the Anglo-American relationship advantageous in wartime.

The remarks of MoD Assistant Head Defense Media and Communications Operations Plans (and former Assistant Head - Targeting and Information Operations) Col. Arundell were noted above on the existence of US constraints to "non-attributable" campaigns and "activity that could potentially play back against the US audience". Importantly, American IO operatives were pushing to change these restrictions (Briant In Print 2014). During interview Arundell was asked whether this meant Britain was of high value to the US in this kind of activity, he replied, "Yes, of course it is." Arundell clarified his point:

"...And that's not because we can be used as a pawn to do America's bidding. We could come up with a bright idea and say right we want to do X the Americans might go 'that's fabulous, you crack on and do that. We'll ensure we deconflict with that' " [32].

From this military account, for the UK to be of high value in this area would require it to be proactively connected with the US in order to be able to anticipate, provide complimentary operations, and de-conflict. These connections do seem to be firmly in place, ensuring dialogue about objectives, interests and desired outcomes.

When asked where US restrictions have made British assistance valuable, one American interviewee confirmed that this applies to a specific area, when: "there are restrictions on its ability to have covert information, unattributed information, intentionally come into the United States" (Anonymous 2013b). This intent, of course, makes an activity illegal for military or intelligence personnel, according to Prof. Wingfield's analysis. Former NSC Director Franklin Miller nervously said, "If it's influencing our own people, which is I know, forbidden by law... then you wouldn't

really want your ally to be doing for you what you're not allowed to do yourself..."

[33]. But Joel Harding, former US Special Forces, Military Intelligence and Director of the IO Institute confirmed:

"Both the US and the UK can take advantage of one another's laws to skirt around restrictions, legal and otherwise. If the UK could not do something with a UK citizen, for instance, the US can assist. I'm especially thinking of extremists. That could be a repugnant situation, however, as we honestly think of you guys as family. At least I do, as do most veterans.

But as a former intelligence officer I've used that relationship a few times... especially when I was working in Special Operations. 'nuff said."

(3rd May 2013).

The extent of this is unclear. America's press already relies heavily on official sources (Papacharissi and Oliveira 2008), so it seems likely use of the relationship would have greatest value online. According to Former Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communication and Global Outreach Mark Pfeifle this depth of coordination is more about individuals' initiative than an overall policy: "I would hope that there were that much coordination and insight, I would think, to a point, but not from a global or overall level" (12th July 2013). Edward Snowden has revealed evidence of a reciprocal domestic surveillance relationship between British and American intelligence agencies and a system of British oversight weaker than the US (Hopkins & Ackerman 2nd August 2013) and parallels exist in propaganda. American use of US journalists would engage US oversight but activities anticipated by British intelligence or military and undertaken in pursuit of common objectives may receive less US scrutiny, and indeed, it seems, little within Britain.

Allies delivering IO would follow their own country's doctrine and oversight. But some inter-country coordination seeks to ensure a common purpose is maintained and allows the partner to consider the content and evaluate 'risk'. Regarding this, Matt Armstrong stated that, with covert information coming back into the states, "What somebody will say to that, might be to watch, what we would call the Washington Post-test. ... 'Am I comfortable with seeing this on the front page of the Washington Post?' - That's not law. ... That is probably the bigger driver..." as far as whether objections might be raised or a plan approved [34].

Conclusion

As governments introduce changes, it is crucial to consider all propaganda as a global communication issue that impacts on our national, domestic populations to whom planners owe a responsibility. 'Boundaries' are becoming more fluid and indeed never really were inviolable; as these underlie a perceived mandate for propaganda, government policies must be re-examined. The present research demonstrates the weakness of governance in intelligence and military propaganda 'feedback' practises and complacency among government personnel regarding potential for harm. Key differences in US/UK propaganda leave both countries' publics with few protections in this area.

Recently, the Head of GCHQ Sir Iain Lobban recently was required to comment on an allegation that they were using relationships with the US services "in order to circumvent British law"; he stated that "We are subject to the law" (Intelligence and Security Committee 7th November 2013). Leaked documents

regarding GCHQ clearly suggest that in surveillance too, British oversight is more flexible than that of the US, and that the US seeks to exploit the differential: weakness of British laws was considered to be a "selling point" with the Americans [35]. This research found evidence of this in the area of propaganda from multiple government sources. The use of international relations to evade propaganda restrictions bypasses the already weak systems of domestic oversight that give a veneer of accountability in the UK and US.

The development described here of intelligence and defense propaganda planning responses to the rise of the internet and globalised media adds to existing challenges in reporting (Dorril 2002; Gup 2004; Lashmar 2013). Evidence of greater targeting of credible news sources poses a particular concern, particularly if it includes covert propaganda 'insertions'. Calls for transparency often emphasise censorship but covert propaganda can be just as distorting to our ability to challenge the direction of British and US foreign policy, if not more so. This is particularly so, where information sources are seen as reliable, and indeed they are targeted for that reason.

MPs have questioned the unclear laws in the area of surveillance. But Len Scott rightly questions why scholars examining the intelligence agencies focus on comparatively well-researched information gathering, rather than "clandestine diplomacy" and "secret intervention" which is crucial to exposing hidden political agendas (2004: 322). It is important to highlight surveillance - to "monitor...the human terrain" - is fused with strategic influence operations - to "shape" it [36]. In the online world, GCHQ is moving towards a greater 'offensive' role. With 'Squeaky

Dolphin' it's "crafting messaging campaigns to go viral" using Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Facebook [37]. The speed of adaptation has left policy and oversight behind in propaganda too. Sir Menzies Campbell has asked whether the "existing legal framework is adequate to deal with the enormous consequences of the revolution in technology?" (Intelligence and Security Committee 7th November 2013). Frequent re-examination and public engagement in the development of controls and restrictions in national security propaganda is necessary for US and British Government transparency and accountability, as well as the formation of policies that both respect citizens and build positive foreign relations.

Common Acronyms

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency (US)

DOD - Department of Defense (US)

GCHQ - Government Communications Headquarters (UK)

IO – Information Operations

MISO - Military Information Support Operations (US)

MoD - Ministry of Defence (UK)

NSA - National Security Agency (US)

PSYOP - Psychological Operations

PA - Public Affairs

PD - Public Diplomacy

SIS - Secret Intelligence Service (UK)

USIA - United States Information Agency (US)

Endnotes.

1. 40 UK participants - 37 UK interviews & 8 UK emails. 35 US participants - 29 interviews and 36 emails (including 1 Iraqi-American & 1 Egyptian-American). Plus 1 Australian email participant who worked closely with UK/US personnel.
2. Op.Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 1st May 2013. NB According to Wingfield 'Jus Cogens Norms' fall under crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and common article 3 human rights violations.
3. FOI Response. 4th June 2014. MoD: Ref. FOI2014/01246.
4. See the Geneva Convention which mentions propaganda in relation to 'respect for the moral person of the prisoner' and for 'voluntary enlistment' in an occupied territory (12th August 1949).
5. FOI Response. 4th June 2014. MoD: Ref. FOI2014/01246.
6. White, black and grey are terms used to describe propaganda. White propaganda is overt, sourced and the information largely accurate; Black propaganda is covert, may be falsely attributed and is often lies; Grey propaganda is characterised by uncertainty either of the source or its accuracy (Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992: 11–15).
7. Op.Cit. Taverner, Angus. 23rd January 2013.
8. Ibid..
9. Op.Cit. McCarty, Kevin. 13th March 2013.
10. Op. Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 1st May 2013.
11. Op.Cit. Wilkerson, Lawrence. 23 June 2009.
12. Op.Cit. McCarty, Kevin. 13th March 2013.
13. Op.Cit. Arundell, Ralph. 18th April 2013.
14. Op.Cit. Rowlands, Kirsteen. 17th April 2013.

15. Op.Cit. McCarty, Kevin. 13th March 2013.
16. Op.Cit. Arundell, Ralph. 18th April 2013.
17. Op.Cit. Department of Defense. 30th October 2003.
18. Weiner for example cites cases where he argues US Presidents were unaware of questionable or illegal CIA activities which protected that organisation or credibly denied US involvement (2008).
19. Op.Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 29th May 2013.
20. See above, on US Code Title 50 which designates covert action as traditionally CIA-led.
21. Op.Cit. Stelloh, Ren. 23rd June 2009.
22. When asked to clarify this, Wingfield stated that "Although under the US system of congressional oversight most reporting to the two committees is after the fact, it is possible to imagine a before-the-fact case in which funding for a large intelligence program is sought which proses unlawful elements. Members of the committees could raise their concerns at that point in negotiations with the executive. More likely, though, anything that would violate jus cogens international norms, almost all of which are uncontroversial parts of US domestic criminal law,would not be written in to a program plan, but rather would emerge as violations in execution--identified and dealt with after the fact (ala Abu Ghraib)" Op. Cit. Email. 15th July 2014.
23. Op.Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 22nd May 2013.
24. Op.Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 29th May 2013.
25. Op.Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 21st May 2013.
26. Op.Cit. Wingfield, Thomas. 29th May 2013.

27. Stelloh, while still CIA Station Chief, became increasingly involved with PhaseOne. The day after leaving the CIA he became their Chief Operating Officer and President. They have recently been bought by SI (<http://www.thesiorg.com/>).
28. Op.Cit. Stelloh, Ren. 23rd June 2009.
29. Op.Cit. Tunncliffe, Ian. 8th July 2013.
30. Op.Cit. Wright, Graham. 1st June 2009.
31. Op.Cit. Arundell, Ralph. 18th April 2013.
32. Op.Cit. Arundell, Ralph. 18th April 2013.
33. Op.Cit. Miller, Franklin, C. 3rd August 2009.
34. Op. Cit. Armstrong, Matt. 29th April 2013.
35. Op.Cit. Hopkins, N & Borger, J. 1st August 2013.
36. Op.Cit. Cole, Matthew et. al. 7th February 2014
37. Ibid.

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