

Psychological Operation? *51st Division*

- **Agence France-Presse, March 23.** “An Iraqi commander near the southern city of Basra said Sunday that his division, which Washington earlier said had surrendered, would continue to resist US and British forces. ‘I am with my men in Basra, we continue to defend the people and riches’ of the town, Colonel Khaled al-Hashemi, commander of the 51st Mechanized Division, told the satellite television channel Al-Jazeera.”
- **UPI, March 25.** “It's quite clear elements of the Iraq regular army the 51st Division that was west of Basra have pulled back into the town, of what scale and size, we're not quite clear.” Colonel Chris Vernon, UK Spokesman

By the 23rd, because of interviews with the commander who was supposed to have surrendered, it became clear the 51st had not surrendered.

If the first unit the Coalition encountered had surrendered as a group immediately, it would have been a powerful message to the rest of the Iraqi military to do the same. Certainly, it was not an intelligence failure. You would know if you have an entire division.

The US/UK announcement of the surrender of the 51st Division was a psychological operation.

The Brits seems to have been given lead on another strategic psychological operation.

Psychological Operation?

- **September 8 visit by General Ali Hasan al-Majid, a cousin and trusted member of Saddam's clan.**
- **Saddam Hussein has made secret plans to move his family and some members of the regime in case of a war.**
- **\$3.5 Billion deposited in Libyan banks.**
- **Not clear if Uday is part of the deal.**

The Times, UK

Assessment: Strategic PSYOPS with the target most likely the people of Iraq

It was a planted. The story reported that Saddam Hussein had worked a plan to take members of his family to Libya. The Secretary of Defense told us he was going to do this kind of thing.

I need to mentioned “black programs.” There are some very powerful historical

examples from the Cold War. A former CIA manager for clandestine operations has suggested some of that probably took place in this war. After one sees the pattern of the stories in the press, it is possible to see some black operations might have been generated by the US and the UK. Both countries have organizations whose missions are to generate these kinds of stories.

Milt Bearden raises a profound question for me. If we would manipulate truth, would we also manipulate evidence? That would be very serious. Is that what the Secretary of Defense meant when he said he was going to be doing strategic influence?

Black Programs

- **Historical**
 - US responsible for creating and experimenting with AIDS in Africa.
 - Soviet Army's use of bobby trapped toys in Afghanistan.
- **"It will be important to learn who was behind the fake Niger document and why and what other information driving American policies might carry their fingerprints." ...aluminum tubes?**
Milt Bearden, Former CIA Manager for Clandestine Operations

Here are some possibilities of black propaganda.

September 9th - IISS Report... "only months away if it were able to get hold of weapons grade uranium...from a foreign source."

Black Program?

- Niger nuclear materials documents came to the CIA through the Italians and the British.
- Mentioned in the President's State of the Union Message.
- Reported in the September UK Dossier on the threat from Iraq.
 - February - Joseph Wilson to Africa to investigate the reports.
 - Sept 24th - CIA to Congressional committee
 - Sept 26th - Powell in closed hearing
 - Dec 19th - State position paper; first public
 - Jan 28th - State of the Union Message
 - March 7th - IAEA reveal forgeries
- Fundamental questions is who had to gain by forging these documents?

It is fairly clear now the Niger documents were forged. We have to ask ourselves who would have benefited? For what groups was the fact that Iraq might be close to having nuclear weapons important? There are three possibilities.

The forgery could have been by someone inside the US Government probably

other than the CIA. It could have been done by parts of the Department of Defense. It could have been done by Israeli intelligence. Israeli intelligence was participating with the Department of Defense in the Iraq collection effort. Israel had a great deal to gain. There was a pattern of bad intelligence from the Iraqi National Congress. This could have been part of that pattern. If it were any of the three, the American people certainly have a “need to know.”

There was an interesting timing of the Africa connection. On September 9th, International Institute for Strategic Studies released a report about nuclear weapons that said Iraq was, “only months away if it were able to get hold of weapons grade uranium...from a foreign source.” The UK Dossier the came out shortly after that, quoted the IISS report and mentioned that Iraq had tried to get nuclear materials from Africa. Someone gave IISS bad information. Their argument was compounded in the Dossier by more bad information.

What about the case of George Galloway, a British member of Parliament?

Black Program?

- **April 22nd**, London *Daily Telegraph* reports papers retrieved from Iraq's Foreign Ministry alleged payoffs to George Galloway, longtime critic of a hard line against Hussein
- **April 25th**, *Christian Science Monitor* reports Saddam Hussein had paid British member of Parliament, George Galloway, \$10M over 11 years. Obtained from a retired general.
- **May 11th**, British paper *The Mail*, reported to have gotten documents from the same source that were forgeries.
- **June 20th**, *Christian Science Monitor* reports their analysis revealed their documents were forgeries.
- **Who had anything to gain? Is this part of the pattern of punishment?**
 - Same retired general told the *Christian Science Monitor* he has documents proving 6 of the 9/11 hijackers learned to fly in Iraq.

Documents were forged to suggest direct links between George Galloway and the Iraq regime. Was this part of the pattern of punishment? Was this a black operation?

Documents were “found” which supported the US contention that Iraq planned a guerilla campaign. It does stretch the imagination, however, to believe that Saddam Hussein envisioned the eleven-step program that would go on after he had been removed from power. Who was to benefit by these found documents? Were they forged?

Black Program?

- **Iraqi Intelligence Service Emergency Plan, January 23, 2003**
 - Steps after the fall to American-British-Zionist allies, God forbid, discovered in Basrah (NYT, June 28)
 - 11 steps
 - Looting and burning government office buildings
 - Sabotaging power plants
 - Cutting communications lines
 - Attacking water purification plants
 - Infiltrating new political parties and Islamic groups, particularly in Najaf, a Shiite religious center
 - Buying stolen weapons
 - Assassinating Shiite and anti-Baathist leaders
- Rumsfeld - "...there are a lot of Baathists and Fedayeen Saddam still in the country, and that they are doing things unhelpful to the coalition..."
- Bremer - On "Fox News Sunday, July 20: "There has been some evidence of planning for the possibility of losing the war militarily and going into some kind of insurgency or organized resistance,"

What is so strange about this is that someone would have us believe that Saddam Hussein would put on his list of things to do actions that would have negative effects on the welfare of the Iraqi people. This is not a guy who cared much about that when he was in power, but now it becomes a major thrust of his popular campaign?

Feels like forgery. Feels like a black program.

Black Program?

- **Saddam Hussein in the Russian Embassy in Baghdad?**
 - First reported by Al Jazeera network.
 - White House, however, picked up on the story.
 - Lines were "hot" to Moscow over the issue.
- **Two possibilities:**
 - It was just a rumor.
 - It was a planted tumor
 - This is probably more likely because of the way the White House picked up on it.
 - There seems to be no other case in which the White House picked up on an Al Jazeera rumor.

Another story with a feeling of blackness was when Al Jazeera reported that Saddam Hussein was in the Russian Embassy. The White House picked up on the story and treated it as if it were truth.

Black Program?

Withheld Iraq Report Blamed on French

- “London - The French secret service is believed to have refused to allow Britain’s MI6 to give the United States ‘credible’ intelligence showing that Iraq was trying to buy uranium ore from Niger, U.S. intelligence sources said yesterday.

U.S. Intelligence sources believe the most likely source of the MI6 intelligence was the French secret service, the DGSE.”

Michael Smith, *London Daily Telegraph*
July 14, 2003

Someone planted a story that the French had a hand in denying credible evidence about Iraq buying uranium. This story burned out very quickly, but I have a feeling of strategic influence.

The strategic influence campaign had some other strange dimensions. It’s almost hard to believe. The Pentagon media consultants created a web site during the war entitled “Empower Peace.” Obviously, it would be wrong to conclude the US Department of Defense was trying to establish a peace movement. It seems as if this program were designed to give the impression that the people of the United States (children) wanted peace. It seems to have been aimed at the Arab audience set. It didn’t say that on the site. It looked like a grassroots effort. Seems like playing with truth.

The web site was very short-lived. This might have been because it could have been a violation of the Smith-Mundt act. The Smith-Mundt Act (1948) forbade the domestic dissemination of U.S. government materials intended for

The screenshot shows the EmpowerPeace website. At the top left is the logo with the text "EmpowerPeace". To the right are dropdown menus for "The Rendon Group" and "Student & Teacher Resources". A navigation bar contains "EP NETWORK", "PRESS ROOM", "ABOUT US", and "BROADCAST". The main content area features a large image of diverse children with the text "PROMOTING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING and tolerance between youth worldwide through communication. We look to promote this vision through video conferences for youth in participating countries. >MORE!". Below this is a news section titled "The Boston to Bahrain Broadcast was a resounding success!!!" with a paragraph of text. At the bottom, there are three columns: "2003: BOSTON to BAHRAIN" with a "WATCH THE LIVE BROADCAST!" button, "EMPOWER PEACE NEWS" with links for "March 2003 - Empower Peace Builds Worldwide Network" and "April 2003 - USDLA Joins", and "GET EMPOWERED!" with a "EXPLORE THE EP NETWORK!" button and a world map icon. A sidebar on the left includes "WATCH THE EP welcome video!", "How to Join!" with links to "Online Registration" and "Download Classroom Kit", "Who We Are" with links to "Our Mission" and "About Us", "Partners" with a link to "Coalition Partners", and "Guestbook" with a link to "State Your Peace!". At the bottom left is a "MAKE A pledge of peace" button with a "FIND OUT MORE!" link.

There are some important questions I was not able to answer. Did the Rendon Group pay for this effort with money from its DOD contracts?

“The Iraq Crisis Bulletin” was another strange web site. There was absolutely no indication of the sponsor of the site, but the articles were by Voice of America correspondents.

It was fairly good and was even recommended to reporters by the American Press Institute. The problem is the Voice of America is prohibited from doing communications for the American press, but during Gulf II, it was getting the message to them.

I contacted the press office at VOA and asked if they were aware of the “Iraq Crisis Bulletin” and who maintained the site. No response.

VOA Serving the US Press

- **“Iraq Crisis Bulletin” a web site that provided daily update and reports from around the world about the crisis.**
 - **Subscribe by e-mail**
 - **No indication of the source of the stories.**
 - **Most of the authors, however, were from the VOA.**
- **A recommended site by the American Press Institute.**
- **Question: Who was maintaining the site? Who was paying?**

After I had gotten a handle on the stories that were part of psychological operations and those that were false or engineered for the purpose of either information operations or strategic influence, it was possible to go back over press briefings and score them. Of the topics covered, which were part of PSYOPS and which were false or engineered? I added a category of “no information” in order to see how much truth we were getting.

This is the first brief of the war with Rumsfeld and Myers. As one might expect, the opening remarks were heavy on PSYOPS content.

Collateral Damage

March 20, 2003, DOD Press Briefing

| | No Information | PSYOPS | False or Engineered |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------|---------------------|
| Rumsfeld: 1. Hit leadership | | X | |
| 2. Fight or help | | X | |
| 3. Use of WMD | | X | |
| 4. Military in free Iraq | | X | |
| 5. Protect civilians | | X | Influence theme |
| 6. Humanitarian | | X | Influence theme |
| 7. Coalition | | | Influence theme |
| 8. Includes muslims | | | Strategic influence |
| 9. War against regime | | X | Influence theme |
| 10. Coalition | | | Influence theme |
| 11. Security | | | |
| 12. Men and women | | | |
| 13. Coalition | | | Influence theme |

Collateral Damage

March 20, 2003 DOD Press Brief

| | No Information | PSYOPS | False or Engineered |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Myers: 14. Operational security | | | |
| 15. Troops | | | |
| 17. Full information | | | |
| Q&A: 18. Oil fires | X | | |
| 19. Oil fires | X | | |
| 20. Regime and WMD | X | | |
| 21. Liberation | | X | |
| 22. Rising up | | X | |
| 23. Leadership attack | | | |
| 24. Saddam killed | X | | |
| 25. The "Plan" | | | |
| 26. Liberation | | X | |
| Total | 4 | 10 | 4 (plus 3 also PSYOPS) |

That continued through the question and answer part. Even if you give them slack for not giving any information, it turns out that more than half the answers were not truth.

I'll accept I might make the criteria for truth someone tough. Maybe a better way to say it would be that if an American (or Brit) who were diligent about wanting to understand the war, he could not rely on the statements made by the US Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In less that 50% of the topics covered, the answer would have been "no."

Doing the same kind of analysis on a press briefing on April 7th, I found a similar pattern. The briefing opened with heavy psychological operations.

Collateral Damage

April 7, 2003, DOD Press Briefing

| | No Information | PSYOPS | False or Engineered |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------|---------------------|
| Rumsfeld: 1. Leadership isolated | | X | |
| 2. Forces surrender | | X | |
| 3. "Chemical Ali" end | | X | (Bad Intelligence?) |
| 4. Tribute to troops | | | |
| 5. Terrorist, execute prisoners | | | Influence theme |
| 6. Humanitarian | | X | Influence theme |
| 7. People no longer fear regime | | X | |
| 8. Meyers: Tribute to troops | | | |
| 9. Facts of the operations | | | |
| 10. "Chemical Ali" | | X | (Bad Intelligence?) |
| 11. Avoiding civilians | | | Influence theme |

Collateral Damage

April 7, 2003, DOD Press Briefing #2

| | No Information | PSYOPS | False or Engineered |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------|--|
| Q&A: 12. Sarin found near Karbala | X | | |
| 13. WMD Chair of Custody | | | |
| 14. Missile unit mentioned by Powell | X | | Myers appeared not to have heard of the unit |
| 15. Free Iraqi Forces | | | |
| 16. Impact of Basrah on Baghdad | X | | |
| 17. Post-conflict organization | X | | |
| 18. Execution of POW's | | X | Influence theme & cover of previous |
| 19. Tipping Point | | | |
| 20. Republican Guard | | | |

This briefing also had two strange exchanges. I have already mentioned the exchange about which prisoners (if any) had been executed. Also during this briefing, General Myers was asked about the chemical missile unit Secretary Powell had talked about in his UN speech as being on the outskirts of Baghdad with WMD warheads ready to fire. He was very evasive saying that he did not recall ever having heard about such a unit. I categorized that as "no information," but it is easy to see why he did not want to respond. It is impossible for me to believe he did not remember the unit.

Collateral Damage

April 7, 2003, DOD Press Briefing #3

| | No Information | PSYOPS | False or Engineered |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|---------------------|
| 21. Fragging | | | |
| 22. Post-conflict government | X | | |
| 23. Governments supporting Iraq | | X | |
| 24. Friendly fire | | | |
| 25. Character of victory | | | |
| 26. Stabilization | | | |
| Totals | 5 | 8 | 3 |

At the end of the briefing, we were left with fewer false stories, quite a few PSYOPS and some “no information.” Were the American people helped understand the true nature of what we were involved with in Iraq? They were not.

Strategic Influence Scorecard

| | Desired Influence | Some Desired Influence | No or Negative Influence |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Iraq | | ✦ → | |
| U.S. | ✦ → | | |
| West | | | ✦ |
| Arabs | | | ✦ |
| Rest of the World | | | ✦ |

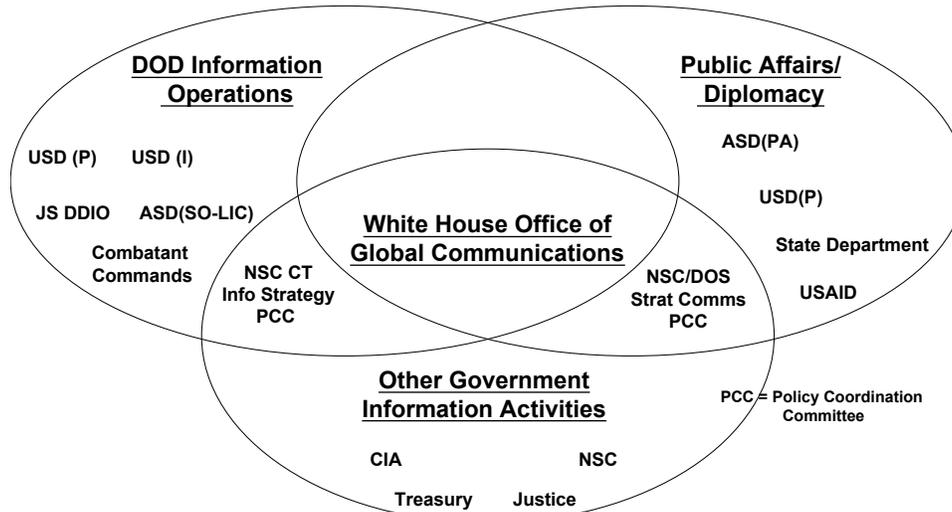
Source: The concept of the five separate perception wars comes from John Rendon, 2 July 03. 91

One of the Pentagon media consultants said there were five separate audiences in the perception war. After all these efforts, it’s possible to come back to the conclusion that the truth is best story. Only two audiences were influenced positively by the strategic influence campaign, and that influence is now diminishing.

According to the UK PSYOPS specialists I heard at a conference in London the first week in July, they are convinced that one of the reasons we are currently having problems in Iraq is because we oversold our story. We told them too many times and too strongly that we would make it better and fix things.

Organizing for Combat

Players in USG Strategic Communication



Source: Capt. Gerald Mauer, Assistant Deputy Director for Information Operations, Joint Staff, 2 July 03 92

One way to view how the US Government was organized to do the strategic communications effort before, during and after the war is to use the chart that was used by the Assistant Deputy Director for Information Operations. The center is the White House Office of Global Communications, the organization originally created by Karen Hughes as the Coalition Information Office. The White House is at the center of the strategic communications process.

Its important to note that there are two Policy Coordination Committees, one that deals with the information component of the war on terrorism and one that deals with strategic communications in general.