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EXERCISE/EXERCICE New Horizons

**Core Requirements for the Successful Development of a Psychological Operations  
Capability for the Canadian Forces**

By /par

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## ABSTRACT

Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) is a capability which has demonstrated the potential to be highly effective in a wide variety of military operational environments from peace keeping to high intensity combat operations. In the last two decades a significant amount has been written about PSYOPS and Canada's principle allies, the United Kingdom and the United States have published a number of lessons learned documents on their experiences. During this period Canada has taken tentative steps towards creating a PSYOPS capability of its own starting with individual augmentation of NATO and allied PSYOPS capabilities up to the creation of a formed PSYOPS unit. The future success of this Canadian PSYOPS capability rests on the ability of the Canadian Forces (CF) to learn from its allies and implement the key elements that are critical to the success of any PSYOPS capability. Failure to develop this capability using proven principles will result in the failure of the capability and the loss of a potentially potent weapon in the arsenal of CF field and operational level commanders.

## INTRODUCTION

Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) have been practiced for centuries in one form or another. There are numerous writings from Sun Tzu along with other military philosophers and theorists that implore military planners and leaders to focus their efforts against the weakness of their enemy, be that his military forces, his will to fight, or the political structure of his country. Many of these writings have been used to buttress the case for supporting and conducting PSYOPS. For the purposes of this paper however the scope of study will be limited to the last two decades and it will focus on proven PSYOPS successes and existing structures. Although Canadian and U.S. PSYOPS doctrine will be discussed in some detail later in this paper it is important to introduce its current Canadian doctrinal definition. According to the CF Joint Doctrine Manual, PSYOPS are defined as: “planned psychological activities using methods of communications and other means directed to approved audiences in order to influence perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, affecting the achievement of political and military objectives”.<sup>1</sup>

PSYOPS is a potent tool with the capability to add considerably to the winning of both battles and wars. The Canadian Forces is currently taking small steps towards developing a coherent PSYOPS capability. Two of Canada’s most important allies (the U.S. and U.K.) have enthusiastically endorsed PSYOPS as a viable capability and have built well equipped and manned joint and total force organisations to conduct PSYOPS in all levels of conflict. During Operation DESERT STORM the world watched in amazement as Iraqi soldiers clutching British and American PSYOPS leaflets surrendered

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<sup>1</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-313/FP-001 *Psychological Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004): 1-1.

or deserted by the thousands, crossing into allied lines as they were induced to do by tactical PSYOPS speaker teams. Both the U.S. and the U.K. have significant lessons that Canada can learn from as it develops its own PSYOPS capability. Lessons of particular import to Canada include: the requirement for early and integrated planning of PSYOPS in the operational planning process, the requirement for responsive and highly trained PSYOPS campaign planners and analysts along with the ability to force generate PSYOPS troops including dissemination and production teams (from both Regular and Reserve Forces), and above all, the requirement to develop a mechanism to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the PSYOPS campaign. This paper will present the key elements necessary for the development of a successful PSYOPS capability. These elements will be derived from both cases studies and existing doctrine. This will lead to general recommendations for the manning and structure of a combat effective PSYOPS capability for the CF.

## **CASE STUDIES**

### **Operation JUST CAUSE**

On 20 December 1989 the Panamanian national TV channel was commandeered by U.S. Forces from the 4<sup>th</sup> PSYOPS group (4<sup>th</sup> POG) and used to broadcast a series of well prepared advisories for the people of Panama. The Panamanian broadcast facilities were neutralised by Special Forces and mobile U.S. broadcast facilities immediately began their programming. The medium and the message were both carefully chosen, the channel selected was the same channel that General Noriega had commandeered in his

coup d'état in 1968 and the messages that were broadcast were intended to meet specific aims that PSYOPS had been assigned during the extended planning that preceded Operation JUST CAUSE. These aims were to: minimise U.S. and civilian casualties, minimise collateral damage, maximise speed with which the mission could be achieved and to counter hostile disinformation and propaganda.<sup>2</sup>

The PSYOPS mission used all available means of dissemination including TV broadcast from VOLANT SOLO (a specially configured C-130 aircraft), AM radio broadcasts, and speaker teams.<sup>3</sup> Production of material for each of these media required extensive planning and testing to ensure that products reached the intended target audience and achieved the intended result.<sup>4</sup>

After action analysis of the effectiveness of PSYOPS in Operation JUST CAUSE indicated that the PSYOPS effort met all of the tasks that it was assigned. Key factors that contributed to this success included: detailed planning and integration of PSYOPS into mission preparation and execution, careful attention to detail in the production and delivery of PSYOPS products including post dissemination evaluation, thorough understanding of target audience, and availability of adequate troops and resources to rapidly respond to the requirements of commanders at all levels.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dennis Walko. "Psychological Operations in Panama during Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY." In *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, edited by Frank L. Goldstein, 249-277. (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 1996), 251.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>4</sup> The production of leaflets for example had to be tested and retested to ensure that correct symbols and colours were used. In one case a U.S. bald eagle was inadvertently superimposed over the eagle traditionally associated with the Panamanian government. In addition, it was discovered that a background colour for the leaflet was generally associated with a Panamanian opposition party which opposed the U.S.

<sup>5</sup> Walko, "Psychological Operations...", 275.

## **Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM**

Following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq an elaborate PSYOPS battle was waged between Saddam Hussein and the U.S. led coalition forces. The results of each campaign were markedly different with Iraqi efforts failing almost completely while coalition efforts were generally successful from the tactical to the strategic levels.

The PSYOPS structure of the Iraqi government saw Saddam Hussein at the top of an information pyramid in control of all messages and methods of dissemination including the media and the Ba'ath Party. Saddam used acknowledged sources of dissemination along with unacknowledged sources including foreign diplomats and media outlets that were paid to present the Iraqi viewpoint.<sup>6</sup> Tying kinetic action to his PSYOPS campaign Saddam aggressively used SCUD missiles to target both Israel and Saudi Arabia in order to dissuade participation in the coalition and to sow seeds of discord in the international community.<sup>7</sup> Saddam also attempted to use a number of tactics that had been successful against the U.S. in the past. One of these was a repeat of the use of downed U.S. airmen by the North Vietnamese as propaganda tools. During DESERT STORM Saddam provided video tapes of interviews with downed coalition airmen to various international news outlets hoping that the public in the West would react as the U.S. public had during the conflict in Viet Nam and call for a cessation of hostilities. This tactic failed to garner the desired response; instead it resulted in widespread condemnation from both the Western world and many Muslim nations.

Unlike General Giap, the Commander of North Viet Nam's military during the Viet Nam

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<sup>6</sup> Frank Goldstein, and Daniel Jacobowitz. "PSYOP in DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM." In *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, edited by Frank L. Goldstein, 341-356. (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 1996), 342.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

war and a master of propaganda, Saddam Hussein failed to accurately gauge the depth of support in the West for Operation DESERT STORM. General Giap on the other hand had accurately assessed that U.S. public support for the war in Viet Nam was weak and highly susceptible to images of military failure.<sup>8</sup> Other parts of the Iraqi PSYOPS campaign relied heavily on nationalistic rhetoric and religious symbolism neither of which resonated with the target audiences in the West, therefore much of the effect of the campaign was lost.<sup>9</sup> This lack of understanding of the target audience was to carry forward into Operation IRAQI FREEDOM where the fanatical claims of the Iraqi Information Minister gained him enduring cult status as “Comical Ali” on the internet.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Iraqi leaflets claiming that the wives of U.S. servicemen were at home in the U.S. sleeping with famous entertainers served only to entertain Coalition troops.<sup>11</sup> By comparison, the coalition PSYOPS campaign was considerably more successful.

As was the case in Operation JUST CAUSE, Coalition PSYOPS in DESERT STORM used all available message delivery media available including TV, radio, leaflets and speaker teams. Great care was taken to develop products that were culturally relevant to the target audience in both their content and their delivery. Wide use was made of Arab members of the Coalition in the development of PSYOPS products to ensure that they had the greatest possible impact. An important part of the campaign was

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<sup>8</sup> Peter MacDonald, *Giap: The Victor in Vietnam* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 33.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>10</sup> The moniker “Comical Ali” was inspired by Ali Hassan'al-Majid, a first cousin of Saddam Hussein who became known informally in the Western media as “Chemical Ali” for his leading role in the use of chemical weapons in the killing of thousands of Kurds. A ‘fan site’ can be found at: <http://www.welovetheiraqiinformationminister.com>. Accessed 14 April 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey B Jones. and Jack N. Summe. *Psychological operations in Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Urban Freedom*. Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army. (Arlington, VA.: Institute of Land Warfare, 1997).



the combination of kinetic operations with psychological operations. One example of this was the distribution of leaflets and broadcast of messages to a target unit that at some given time a specified area would be bombed. When the bombing took place on time on target, the truthfulness of the Coalition PSYOPS messages was reinforced as was the impression of invulnerability of the Coalition as it was apparently able to act with impunity.<sup>12</sup>

Although there is considerably more that can be said and learned about PSYOPS from Operations JUST CAUSE, DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, it is sufficient here to note in each of these operations the importance of integrated and early PSYOPS planning, the significance of accurate targeting of and feedback from PSYOPS products along with the absolute requirement for the rapid deployment of sufficient numbers of trained PSYOPS operators. The following section will explore these key issues as they are reflected in current Canadian and U.S. doctrine.

## **DOCTRINE**

Having now briefly reviewed two recent PSYOPS case studies each demonstrating the usefulness and importance of PSYOPS it is possible to examine current PSYOPS doctrine. Ideally the doctrines of Canada's principle allies would be comparatively examined here, but the only unclassified doctrines available were those of Canada and the U.S. These two doctrines will not be contrasted; rather the key points from both the Canadian and U.S. doctrines will be examined in order to derive the

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<sup>12</sup> Frank Goldstein, and Daniel Jacobowitz. "PSYOP in DESERT...", 351.

essential components that must be included or considered in order to successfully field a Canadian PSYOPS capability.

As with any military doctrine, PSYOPS is described in terms of principles and factors within both the Canadian and U.S. doctrine publications. Canadian doctrine lists the principles and factors affecting PSYOPS as: research and evaluation, empathy, coordination, timeliness, acknowledgement of source, credibility, suitable target audience, and selection of credible themes.<sup>13</sup> U.S. doctrine lists the principles of PSYOPS as: clear task, clear product approval process, early planning, themes activities and symbols based on sound research, integration of PSYOPS into other military operations, appropriate media and medium selection, timeliness, continuous assessment and, measures of effectiveness.<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this paper these principles and factors will be grouped, reduced and discussed under the following headings: research and Measures of Effectiveness (MOE), planning, and timeliness. In addition, although it is not discussed in doctrine specifically, the issue of manning in terms of skill sets will also be discussed in this section.

### **Research and Measures of Effectiveness (MOE)**

Research in PSYOPS is essentially target reconnaissance yielding details about the nature of the target including its strengths and weaknesses. Lessons learned documents from a variety of recent operations where PSYOPS figured prominently are filled with tales of PSYOPS products that had no effect, marginal effect or the reverse of

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<sup>13</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-313/FP-001 *Psychological Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004) 1-2 – 1-4.

<sup>14</sup> United States. Department of Defense. *Joint Publication 3-53: Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*. (Washington: Department of Defense, 2003), I-5, I-6.

the intended effect all as a result of poor target audience research.<sup>15</sup> Similar failures have also occurred within the NATO environment.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, ‘measures of effectiveness’ can be seen as battle damage assessment, they serve to indicate if the operation has had the desired effect or not. Taken as a trilogy, research, mission and MOE form the core of effective psychological operations. They are the “targeteering” of PSYOPS and like any other targeting process they must be fully integrated into the planning cycle. Each of these functions presents significant challenges but perhaps the most difficult is MOE.

Measuring the effect of psychological operations on a given target audience is very difficult for a number of reasons not the least of which is that the target audience is often (although not always as in the case of many operations other than war) inaccessible to the PSYOPS teams. From an operational point of view, inability to determine effectiveness of PSYOPS makes it very difficult to determine if a target needs to be revisited or if the message and or medium need to be adjusted mid-operation. From an institutional point of view the inability to accurately and usefully assess the effectiveness of PSYOPS sometimes results in the function being relegated to a weak supporting role in the formation as was eventually the case in Bosnia.<sup>17</sup> Lacking simple solutions to a complex problem staffs often resort to counting those things that can be counted such as

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<sup>15</sup> As discussed in the previous Iraqi example.

<sup>16</sup> During operations in Bosnia large quantities of newspapers were produced and disseminated in the local market. The vast majority of the newspapers were used to either wrap market products or were taken by the bundle to light fires. Research had not indicated that most of the farmers and their customers were illiterate. In this case speaker teams or handbills that used simple cartoons would have been far more effective.

<sup>17</sup> Steven Collins. “Army PSYOP In Bosnia: Capabilities and Constraints”. *Parameters*, (Summer 1999). Journal on-line; available from [www.peace.ca/psyopinbosnia.htm](http://www.peace.ca/psyopinbosnia.htm); Internet; accessed 4 April 2007. As the mission developed and it remained difficult to quantitatively demonstrate how well PSYOPS had performed, it became increasingly difficult to convince new mission commanders of the merits of PSYOPS.

number of newspaper disseminated or number of radio broadcasts made. This shortfall was noted by Colonel Serookiy in his analysis of the performance of Soviet PSYOPS in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> An attempt at more useful metrics was made during Op DESERT STORM where enemy defectors and prisoners of war (EPW) were interviewed to determine if the PSYOPS campaign had been a factor in their surrender or defection. Data was also collected on how many defectors and EPW were carrying PSYOPS leaflets.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of the difficulty of conducting MOE analysis, it is critical to mission success.<sup>20</sup>

### **Planning**

Recent experience has demonstrated the importance of early and continuous involvement of PSYOPS staff in the planning process. This implies that PSYOPS staffs must be seen as integral members of the unit or formation planning staffs. To be effective these staff members must be thoroughly familiar with both PSYOPS and formation/national planning procedures which, in the case of Canada, means familiarity with or mastery of (depending on staff level) the CF Operational Planning Process.

This requirement for staff integration is reflected in non-PSYOPS doctrine in the U.S. including the U.S. Army's Counter-guerrilla Operations handbook which states that

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<sup>18</sup> Colonel Yu. Ye., Serookiy. "Psychological-Information Warfare: Lessons of Afghanistan". *Military Thought; Military Module* vol 13, Iss 1 (2004): 198

<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey B. Jones and Jack N. Summe. *Psychological operations in Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Urban Freedom*. Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army. (Arlington, VA.: Institute of Land Warfare, 1997), 7.

<sup>20</sup> Lisa Burns. "An Overview of Psychological Operations". *AllPsych Journal* [journal on-line]; available from <http://allpsych.com/journal/psyops.html>; Internet accessed 25 April 2007. The problem of evaluating advertising is analogous to the PSYOPS MOE problem and advertisers have spent billions of dollars trying to solve the problem.

“PSYOP officers must be involved in all planning”.<sup>21</sup> The requirement was also reflected in both operations JUST CAUSE and DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. For some time prior to mounting operations in Panama, U.S. PSYOPS staffs were heavily involved in target development and product preparation.<sup>22</sup> Although a substantial amount of the prepared paper materials such as handbills had to be refocused and tested before deployment as a result of changes in the target environment, the planning and target preparation ensured that PSYOPS forces were ready to engage their target audience when the kinetic operation began. In the case of DESERT STORM PSYOPS planning was well established and was tremendously successful in engaging the target audience. This was achieved through early deployment of both PSYOPS troops and planners during DESERT SHIELD. Unfortunately, during DESERT SHIELD the interagency approval process required for release of PSYOPS themes was extremely slow. Authority to mount PSYOPS was not received until December even though USCINCCENT had approved the overall plan in September.<sup>23</sup> This delay in approval cost the coalition three months, time which PSYOPS units could have used effectively to prepare Iraqi forces for DESERT STORM.

### **Timeliness**

Timeliness in both U.S. and Canadian doctrine refers to the speed with which PSYOPS themes can be approved and put into action including the time required to pre-test, re-test, produce and disseminate products.

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<sup>21</sup> United States. Dept. of the Army U.S. Army Counterguerrilla Operations Handbook. (Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 2004), H-8.

<sup>22</sup> Walko, “Psychological Operations...”, 250.

<sup>23</sup> Jones. *Psychological operations...*, 2.

Using the previous example of DESERT SHIELD, an operation conducted largely by a single nation, it is clear that a long approval chain, and the impact that this had on timeliness, can have a significant impact on the conduct of PSYOPS. Operations in a multinational environment such as NATO with near peer forces can be similarly affected by an unresponsive product approval process. During NATO led operations in the Balkans there were large contingents from a number of nations but the lion's share of PSYOPS forces in theatre were American. These troops answered to the U.S. chain of command for PSYOPS issues. The time it took for the U.S. chain of command to authorize themes bred mistrust amongst the British and French allies which eventually resulted in both nations fielding their own PSYOPS capabilities, which in turn led to eventual coordination problems amongst the different PSYOPS contributing nations.<sup>24</sup> For PSYOPS to be successful the approval chain for operations and themes must be as short as possible with authority delegated to as low a level as is practicable.

It is similarly important to ensure that PSYOPS products are produced and tested quickly in order to support field commanders operating in dynamic environments. Well trained speaker teams made available at the tactical level can have a significant local effect. Radio, television, and printed materials tend to have longer range both in terms of geographic reach and duration of the effect of the message delivered however development of their products can be time consuming. Printed material can be produced

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<sup>24</sup> Steven Collins. "Army PSYOP In Bosnia: Capabilities and Constraints." *Parameters*, (Summer 1999). Journal on-line; available from [www.peace.ca/psyopinbosnia.htm](http://www.peace.ca/psyopinbosnia.htm); Internet; accessed 4 April 2007.

within the theatre of operations or from some other remote location such as a neighbouring state or in the home nation of the PSYOPS team.<sup>25</sup>

### **Manning**

Canadian doctrine includes a lengthy discussion of the structure of a generic PSYOPS staff and possible groupings, but little is said about the core competencies of the people who make up these staffs and groups. In a perennially resource constrained environment such as the one in which the CF traditionally works, careful consideration must be given to those who will man any PSYOPS capability as their military skills, background knowledge and availability for deployments may drive force structure. An early but still relevant operational research study conducted by the U.S. Army Operational Research Office determined that there are six core personnel components required to conduct PSYOPS: “Idea Men”, administrators, liaison staff, creators, researchers and technicians.<sup>26</sup>

Briefly looking at each of these groups provides some guidance for a CF PSYOPS capability. The U.S. Army study concluded that technicians must not only be competent in the support of their unique equipment, they must also be creative enough to continue the production process while lacking key supplies and spare parts. In essence, the study indicated that even the technicians supporting PSYOPS must be mission focused and

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<sup>25</sup> Balancing the requirements for manning, equipment and maintenance in theatre against the reliability and availability of out of theatre production is a key decision that PSYOPS staffs must make and re-evaluate as any mission progresses. The remote development of television and radio broadcasts is technically relatively simple given sufficient communications infrastructure. Before deciding to operate a remote broadcast facility it is critically important that command and control issues and responsiveness levels are clearly articulated to ensure that the requirements for specific products by in-theatre commanders are satisfied.

<sup>26</sup> Operations Research Office. “PSYOP Personnel Requirements Profile.” In *Military Propaganda: Psychological Warfare and Operations*, edited by Ron D. McLaurin, 84-103. (New York, N.Y. : Praeger, 1982): 87.

field ready. Closely related to the technicians are the creative teams. In a modern production environment creative teams are easily trained and require only sufficient basic creative talents that the individual be trainable.

On the other hand, the study indicated that there is a very strong requirement for well versed and staff capable liaison officers. This was borne out again in both operations DESERT SHIELD and STORM. Liaison officers were relied on heavily to coordinate activities amongst PSYOPS and other staffs but their most significant contribution was the liaison that they effected with the forces and governments of the host nations.<sup>27</sup>

All of the personnel staff requirements discussed above can be sourced from military personnel from most trades, environments and force components (Regular or Reserve). The “Idea Men” or “PSYOPS campaign designers” and researchers are more difficult to develop or source. Both require a broad understanding of a wide range of specialties ranging from history and sociology to psychology and politics. In addition to the obvious requirements for these two groups to be intimately familiar with the current target audience, they must also have the ability to address numerous disparate target sets consecutively or sequentially in order to allow for sufficient planning and preparation for contingency or follow on operations.

## **ALLIED AND CANADIAN PSYOPS STRUCTURES**

The preceding sections of this paper have demonstrated a number of key elements  
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should be considered and heeded in the development of a Canadian PSYOPS capability. What follows is intended to highlight some of these areas through a brief description of U.K. and U.S. PSYOPS structures followed by a description of current Canadian PSYOPS structures within the CF.<sup>28</sup>

### **United Kingdom – 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group**

The U.K. has one dedicated PSYOPS unit, 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group.<sup>29</sup> As of March 2004 it had a unit strength of 38 people drawn from all three environmental services.<sup>30</sup> Target selection for the PSYOPS Group starts at the strategic level with the Directorate of Targeting and Information Operations (DTIO). With a staff of approximately 100, DTIO develops and promulgates strategic guidance on cross-governmental information campaigns. It has a number of specialist staff members along with contracted support from a number of civilian companies and universities.<sup>31</sup>

In keeping with the U.K. Governmental approach of ‘joined up’ cross-government initiatives, the PSYOPS Group has been used in all spectrums of operations from war fighting to reconstruction. It has been recognised by the MoD that the effectiveness of both PSYOPS and Information Operations appear to be closely linked to their early

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<sup>28</sup> It would be ideal to have been able to discuss the PSYOPS doctrine of the U.K. but its doctrine is unavailable. Despite this their general PSYOPS force structure is available and unclassified. As Canada has provided PSYOPS augmentee troops to both the U.K. and the U.S. it is well worth discussing their structures here even though the U.K. doctrine has not been discussed.

<sup>29</sup> United Kingdom. *15 (UK) PSYOPS Group*. [www.army.mod.uk/15psyops/eqpt\\_and\\_vehs.htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/15psyops/eqpt_and_vehs.htm) accessed 11 March 2007. 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group is equipped with air transportable wheeled production facilities capable of independent operations. They can produce high quality paper products from leaflets to newspapers along with FM radio and television broadcasts. The Group is also equipped with loudspeaker teams that are both man-packed and vehicle-borne.

<sup>30</sup> The unit is composed of 2 civilians, 8 regular force and 28 reservists. In a report to the British Parliament in 2004 it was announced that this strength was expected to at least double over the next year.

<sup>31</sup> United Kingdom. House of Commons. *Lessons of Iraq: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2003-04*. [Report on-line]: available from [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmdefence/57/5718.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmdefence/57/5718.htm), Internet accessed 10 May 2007.

commencement and depth of research and preparation. Of significant interest, the MoD has also recognised that establishing MOE is both critical and extraordinarily difficult. They have made several attempts to quantify success through both internal and contracted out analyses but they have yet to develop a conclusive method to determine to what extent or indeed if, PSYOPS are effective. Although this incertitude has affected both manning and equipment decisions within MoD, the Group is well equipped to conduct PSYOPS at the tactical level.<sup>32</sup>

### **United States – 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group (Airborne)**

Within the Department of Defense (DoD), PSYOPS is primarily the responsibility of the U.S. Army although the U.S. Navy has a limited capability and the U.S. Air Force (USAF) provides support from a number of aerial platforms. Within the U.S. Army the primary PSYOPS unit is the 4<sup>th</sup> POG. The 4<sup>th</sup> POG is an active Army unit of approximately 1,300 soldiers and civilians. It represents approximately one quarter of the full U.S. Army PSYOPS capability with the remainder being provided by the Army Reserve.<sup>33</sup> The USAF also provides a robust PSYOPS capability, one which must be integrated into theatre level flight and PSYOPS planning.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Global Security. [www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/4psyopgp.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/4psyopgp.htm) accessed 11 March 2007. The Group is organised centrally into a number of battalions each intended to support a different regional Combatant Commander. There is also a Group command element along with a Dissemination Battalion and an Operational/Tactical support Battalion. The group is capable of producing a wide variety of PSYOPS materials from handbills and speaker teams through to high quality television programming including ‘infotainment’ and news along with radio productions on AM, FM and short wave. In addition to the 4<sup>th</sup> POG’s integral resources the USAF has the capability to provide air assets to air deliver PSYOPS products. The USAF provides a small fleet of EC-130E COMMANDO SOLO PSYOPS aircraft which have the ability to act as airborne television and radio production and dissemination facilities. Although this capability is unmatched by any other country it adds another level of complexity to mission planning, reinforcing the requirement for early and detailed PSYOPS planning at all levels and amongst different components.

<sup>34</sup> Haulman, Daniel. “USAF Psychological Operations, 1990-2003.” [www.afhra.af.mil/short\\_studies/usafpsychologicaloperations.pdf](http://www.afhra.af.mil/short_studies/usafpsychologicaloperations.pdf). Accessed 25 April 2007.

Target development, research and MOE analysis are all provided through resources integral to regional support Battalions with augmentation provided by the Group HQ as required. The regional support Battalions provides the staff elements to the supported HQ J3 Operations staff while the Group HQ provides the Theatre PSYOPS Commander, staff and HQ infrastructure for large operations such as the U.S. involvement in Bosnia and operations in the Persian Gulf.<sup>35</sup> On major operations the regional support Battalions are augmented by members of the Army Reserve. The structure worked well for operations DESERT SHIELD and STORM however it was noted that the Reserves tended to produce more HQs and HQ staffs than were required leaving tactical support teams short in a number of areas<sup>36</sup>

### **PSYOPS In The Canadian Forces**

In 2000/2001 the DCDS commissioned a study to determine the capabilities and force structure required to meet future asymmetric threats and weapons of mass destruction.<sup>37</sup> Amongst its recommendations, the report called for an increase in CF IO Capabilities suggesting a mix of high, medium and low readiness (augmentation) units.<sup>38</sup> This recommendation was accepted and in March 2002 the Chief of the Land Staff was directed to establish a PSYOPS capability from within existing resources.<sup>39</sup> After considerable further study the capability was assigned to the Reserve component of the Land Forces and fielded under the aegis of the Land Force Reserve Restructure (LFRR)

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<sup>35</sup> Global Security. [www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/4psyopgp.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/4psyopgp.htm) accessed 11 March 2007

<sup>36</sup> Jones. *Psychological operations...*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *Report 2001-1 DCDS Asymmetric Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Prepared by Ajilon Canada, August 2001, S-4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, S-13.

<sup>39</sup> Vice Admiral G. Maddison, *DCDS Planning Directive – Implementation: Asymmetric Threat Study Recommendations*. NDHQ: 3000-1 (DGJFD), 11 March 2002.

project Phase 2.<sup>40</sup> At the present time the Land Force has committed approximately 80 positions to PSYOPS which is composed of a mix of Regular and Reserve Force members along with a small number of contracted civilians.<sup>41</sup> The military component of the capability is primarily composed of part time soldiers with only 9 full time positions all of which are currently employed in staff or training positions.<sup>42</sup>

The initial cadre of PSYOPS troops was established as a centralised unit in Montreal to take advantage of the relatively large number of Reserve Force units in the area which draw from a linguistically and ethnically diverse population. In addition, Montreal has a large number of post secondary institutions some of which offer specialties useful to PSYOPS including propaganda studies and graphic arts.<sup>43</sup> Until 1 April 2006 all reach back support for deployed operations were conducted from Montreal coordinated by Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) HQ. On 1 April 2006 this responsibility was transferred to the Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC) in Kingston following the change in reporting lines for PSYOPS from the Quebec region to Land Force Doctrine and Training System (LFDTS).<sup>44</sup>

The reach back capability in Kingston includes an FM radio station, RANA FM, which produces its material in Kingston but broadcasts it in Kandahar using forward

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<sup>40</sup> Chief of Land Staff. *Implementation of Land Force Reserve Restructure Phase 2*. NDHQ, 10 July 2003.

<sup>41</sup> At the present time there are no PSYOPS capabilities within the CF's Maritime or Air components although CF air assets have been used recently to deliver PSYOPS products in Afghanistan.

<sup>42</sup> Lieutenant General A. B. Leslie, *CIMIC/PSYOPS Expansion*. NDHQ: 3300-4 (DLFR 9), 21 December 2006. In fiscal year 2007/2008 the commitment to full time positions is expected to grow at least threefold.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Major B. Mainville, A/COS CA PSYOPS Directorate, 9 May 2007.

<sup>44</sup> The PSTC reports to LFDTS and is responsible for all Land Force PSYOPS training. The PSYOPS mission was moved to LFDTS to aid in developing synergy with other Land Force IO capabilities already resident there. It is the intention of the Land Force to maintain the reach back capability in Kingston and use recently assigned additional resources including the full time positions to establish small PSYOPS capabilities in each of the Land Force's Areas.

deployed transmitters. Other reach back capabilities include target analysis, MOE analysis and limited media production. Deployed PSYOPS teams also make use of indigenous facilities including local radio stations and printing houses.

## **ANALYSIS**

Through this short review it is clear that there are several issues that can be identified as being critical to the success of any future Canadian PSYOPS capability. These include: early and integrated planning of PSYOPS in the operational planning process, responsive and highly trained PSYOPS campaign planners and analysts, ability to force generate PSYOPS troops including dissemination and production teams, and a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the PSYOPS campaign. In such a short space it is difficult to make specific recommendations for further development of CF PSYOPS however some general points can be drawn out.

It would seem that for effective planning and integration of PSYOPS to occur there must be a robust PSYOPS staff in CEFCOM HQ. This staff will need tasking authority over assigned assets including dedicated reach back capability. Although CEFCOM is certainly the most likely Command to benefit from PSYOPS support, Canada Command and Canadian Special Operations Command must also be considered.<sup>45</sup> If this PSYOPS staff is to be effective it must also have the ability to provide target audience analysis at least at the operational level. This would imply that

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<sup>45</sup> It is clearly understood that PSYOPS is not conducted on friendly forces or on the population of ones own nation which would seem to indicate that there is no requirement for PSYOPS in Canada Command. This is not the case as there may be an opportunity to influence an actual or potential belligerent force operating inside or outside Canada which is threatening Canada.

they have an embedded analytic capability or at least tasking authority over a full time analytic capability. Nothing short of a full time staff would be able to achieve the integration required for a robust and sustained PSYOPS campaign especially when the requirement for contingency planning is factored in which was the decisive factor in U.S. PSYOPS in Panama. These positions need not be drawn from the Regular component of the CF. It is most likely that Regular component members would provide the requisite planning skills while a mix of civilians and Reserve component members would provide the creative depth referred to earlier as the “idea men” which would create the depth required for sustainment of a PSYOPS campaign.<sup>46</sup>

While the staffing of an operational level PSYOPS staff tends to be suited to full time manning, the generation of forces for deployment has a stronger part time component. That is not to say that there is no role for full time soldiers in the field PSYOPS force however their apportionment to the force generation role must be carefully weighed against their usefulness in planning staffs and quick reaction units. As the U.S. and the U.K. have demonstrated, there is very real requirement to have the ability to rapidly respond to a situation anywhere in the world on short notice. This short notice capability is best suited to full time soldiers with follow on forces being provided by the Reserve force. One only need look at Canada’s deployments to Haiti and deployments to the African continent to appreciate the requirement to maintain a rapid response capability. While Afghanistan is *a* mission it is not *the* mission and as such the

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<sup>46</sup> Operations in Panama, Bosnia and the Persian Gulf have all demonstrated that there is an

CF should avoid falling into the trap of building a PSYOPS force structure designed to meet sustainment needs while falling short of the capacity to surge or deploy rapidly. While some of this force generation can be achieved through decentralised, small units throughout the Land Force there must be a 'Centre of Excellence' (CoE) that provides the critical mass for both the generation of PSYOPS leaders and professional skill sets. This concept was supported in the DCDS Asymmetric Threat Study.<sup>47</sup>

Although not explicitly stated in any of the reference material reviewed for this study, there is an underlying question in the minds of many members of the Regular component of the Land Forces regarding the true value of PSYOPS. In the words of a Reserve Force member who has worked in the PSYOPS milieu for some time "[The Regular Force] could not have cared less if [the PSYOPS mission] had been given to the Russians". In a resource constrained environment no existing capability will willingly relinquish resources for another capability that can not empirically prove its own effectiveness. The issue of MOE therefore takes on a twofold meaning for Canada – it is required to demonstrate the usefulness of PSYOPS, and it is a key targeting and battle damage assessment tool. Without MOE the existence of the entire capability relies on the support of a few well placed proponents and its use in deployed operations is akin to firing artillery without an observer party. While successes in recent operations including Op MEDUSA in Afghanistan may go some way to increasing the credibility of PSYOPS they will do little for increasing its effectiveness unless MOE are developed.<sup>48</sup> While it

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<sup>47</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *Report 2001-1 DCDS Asymmetric Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Prepared by Ajilon Canada, August 2001. S-6

<sup>48</sup> During Op MEDUSA PSYOPS teams were used well forward with the assault companies. Speaker teams broadcast music and battle noises to keep the Taliban distracted and awake. The noise was also used to mask the movement of Canadian reconnaissance troops. A coordinated leaflet drop on the [Footnote continued on next page.]

has been recognised by both the U.K. and the U.S. that developing MOE is a very difficult problem to solve it is one that Canada must dedicate considerable effort towards.

## CONCLUSION

The case studies in this paper have demonstrated that well targeted and integrated PSYOPS can contribute significantly to the success of missions and campaigns. In Panama, PSYOPS is credited with reducing casualties to both U.S. troops and Panamanian citizens while speeding the exit of U.S. troops from the area. In Kuwait countless lives were saved as thousands of Iraqi troops defected or surrendered as a result of the coalition PSYOPS campaign. Analysis of existing doctrine and allied PSYOPS structures coupled with the lessons learned from the case studies has shown that if Canada wishes to develop a robust PSYOPS capability there are some key enablers which must be taken into account. A Canadian PSYOPS capability should be structured such that PSYOPS planning is integrated into the routine planning from the strategic to the tactical levels. It must be composed of a mixture of high readiness and augmentation units each with a mix of full and part time soldiers and civilians drawn from a variety of disciplines. It must have the ability to force generate sustainment troops and most importantly, it must have a well developed MOE capability.

Through its Land Force the CF has made a credible first step in the development of a PSYOPS capability. Although it has drifted from its original plan which saw a *de facto* CoE located in Montreal both the Land Component and the strategic central staff

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Taliban position was also used to trigger a Taliban response which in turn exposed their local logistic and C2 networks.



have pledged their continuing support for an enduring PSYOPS capability with the allocation of additional resources for the coming years. Despite this, the current capability is focused on one mission and supporting troops and training establishments are stretched to their limit. The additional resources which have been assigned to PSYOPS have been allocated to small detachments across the country rather than reinforcing a CoE, a sustainable rapid reaction capability and the critical HQ functions of planning and MOE development. Without concentration in these areas the CF PSYOPS capability will remain at the mercy of support from key leaders in the CF and the Land Force rather than becoming a capability that can stand on its own.

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