

ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CULTIVATING PERCEPTIONS AND IMPACTING POWER EQUATIONS: CASE STUDY OF US PSYOPS

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To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

— Sun Tzu¹

INTRODUCTION

The history of war is as old as mankind itself. This begs the question: why is it so difficult for men to live in peace? The reason is attributed to 'selfish genes'. As evolutionary psychologists suggest, "It's natural for human groups to wage war because we're made up of selfish genes which demand to be replicated. So it's natural for us to try to get hold of resources which help us to survive, and to fight over them with other groups."² Primatologist Richard Wrangham opines, "There has been selection for a

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1. S. T. (2015). Sun Tzu Quotes. Retrieved January 7, 2016, from <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/s/suntzu133291.html>
2. Steve Taylor. "The Psychology of War: Why Do Human Beings Find It so Difficult to Live in Peace?" *Psychologytoday*, March 5, 2014. Accessed on January 7, 2016. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201403/the-psychology-war>.

Apart from strategy, tactics, weaponry and infantry, 'human psychology' plays a crucial and decisive role in the battleground. It is often said that the decisive win in the battle is more attributable to the 'morale' of the soldiers rather than only war resources, such as weaponry or strategy.

male psyche that, in certain circumstances, seeks opportunities to carry out low-cost attacks on unsuspecting neighbours."³ Therefore, wars become a part and parcel of human lives.

Therefore, apart from strategy, tactics, weaponry and infantry, 'human psychology' plays a crucial and decisive role in the battleground. It is often said that the decisive win in the battle is more attributable to the 'morale' of the soldiers rather than only war resources, such as weaponry or strategy. Clausewitz stresses the importance of 'morale' and 'will' for both the soldier and the

commander. The soldier's first requirement is moral and physical courage, for both the acceptance of responsibility and the suppression of fear.⁴

The idea was reinforced by Napoleon's statement that "in war, morale forces are to physical as three to one, relative material strength accounts for only one quarter."⁵ This notion was further reiterated in German Col Foerstch words, "The final word regarding victory and defeat rests not on arms and equipment, not on the way in which they are used, nor even on the principles of strategy and tactics, but on the morale of the troops."⁶ These statements highlight the importance of 'morale' and how significant it is in battles. In order to bring the enemy down, it is critical to bring his 'morale' down.

This paper examines the use of psychological warfare against the enemy during war-time to manage perceptions, to confuse him and, ultimately, to

3. "The Psychology of Killing and the Origins of War," 2011. Accessed on January 12, 2016. <http://smellslike science.com/the-psychology-of-killing-and-the-origins-of-war/>.
4. C. (n.d.). "Importance of Military Morale," retrieved January 7, 2016, from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/clauswtz/clwt0013.htm>
5. N. (1999). "Napoleon on War", retrieved on January 17, 2016, from http://www.napoleonguide.com/maxim_war.htm
6. Arthur Upham Pope, "The Importance of Morale", *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, 15 (4). (American Sociological Association, Sage Publications, Inc., 1941), pp.195–205. doi:10.2307/2262466.

bring down his 'morale' to attain supreme excellence 'in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting'. It examines how the United States of America (USA), a superpower, has adopted psychological warfare to manage perceptions and how the media has played a crucial role in this process. The paper touches upon the history of psychological warfare, analyses US psychological operations during wars, and highlights how the media was integrated into these operations.

The main sub-objectives of the paper are:

- To study the role of the media in cultivating perceptions and understand its theoretical references.
- To analyse the use of the media in psychological warfare.
- To evaluate events where the US used the media as an instrument of psychological warfare against the enemy and managed perceptions, along with power equations.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

British military analyst and historian J. F. C. Fuller is believed to have been the first to employ the term "psychological warfare" in 1920.⁷ The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines psychological warfare as "the use of propaganda against an enemy, supported by such military, economic, or political measures as may be required. Such propaganda is generally intended to demoralise the enemy, to break his will to fight or resist, and sometimes to render him favourably disposed to one's position."⁸ Maj Ed Rouse (Retd) defines

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7. "Psychological Warfare," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968, Encyclopedia.com. Accessed on January 21, 2016. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3045001007.html>

8. "Psychological Warfare" (2016), retrieved January 17, 2016, from the use of propaganda against an enemy, supported by such military, economic, or political measures as may be required.

Psychological Operations or PSYOPs as planned operations to convey select information and indicators to audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and, ultimately, the behaviour of organisations, groups, and individuals. Used in all aspects of war, they comprise weapons whose effectiveness is limited only by the ingenuity of the commander using them. And in these planned operations, the media plays a crucial role.⁹

ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CULTIVATING PERCEPTIONS

The never-ending quest of humans to know more has worked as a driving force for the media to grow and flourish. For better understanding different facets of the media, this section will, firstly elaborate on the roles of the media; secondly, understand the correlation between media and power; thirdly, evaluate the relationship between media and perceptions, and, fourthly, understand media as an agent of cultivating images from a theoretical frame of reference.

(i) Role of the Media in Society

The media plays an infinite role in our everyday life. It informs, entertains, motivates, acts as a gatekeeper or a watchdog which filters the information flowing in society, educates us, mobilises the masses, and does much more. While elaborating on the metaphors given to the media for various roles, Dennis McQuail in his book¹⁰ stated the following:

- *As a window on events and experience, which extends our vision, enabling us to see for ourselves what is going on, without interference from others.*
- *As a mirror of events in the society and the world, implying a faithful reflection (albeit with inversion and possible distortion of the image), although the angle and the direction of the mirror are decided by others, and we are less free to see what we want.*
- *As a filter, gatekeeper or portal, acting to select parts of experience for special attention and closing off other views and voices, whether deliberately or not.*
- *As a signpost, guide or interpreter, pointing the way and making sense of what is otherwise puzzling or fragmenting.*

9. Maj E Rouse, (n.d.), "Psychological Operations/Warfare", retrieved on January 9, 2016, from <http://www.psywarrior.com/psychist.html>

10. Denis McQuail, *Mcquail's Mass Communication Theory*, 6th edition (London: Sage Publication, 2009), pp.84-85.

- *As a forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas to an audience, often with the possibilities for response and feedback.*
- *As a disseminator who passes on and makes information not available to all.*
- *As an interlocutor or informed partner in conversation who responds to questions in a quasi-interactive way.*

Other relevant functions of the media include surveillance of sociopolitical developments, identifying relevant issues, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials to account for the way they exercise power, providing incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved in the political process, and resisting the efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence.¹¹ Bringing the entire gamut of roles of the media, Dennis McQuail described the following set of basic ideas about the purpose of the media:¹² information; correlation; continuity; entertainment; mobilisation.

(ii) Correlation Between the Media and Power

The various functions of the media elaborated above ascertain the view of American musician Jim Morrison "Whoever controls the media, controls the mind."¹³ The same fact was reiterated by the US minister and human rights activist, the late Malcolm X, "The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."¹⁴

The dramatic evolution in media technologies with the arrival of radio, television, video, new media, video games, multi-media games and the

11. Agner Fog, "The Supposed and the Real Role of Mass Media in Modern Democracy," Agner.org. Accessed on January 19, 2015. <http://www.agner.org/cultsel/mediacrisis.pdf>.

12. V Aggarwal, Vir Bala and V S Gupta, *Handbook Of Journalism And Mass Communication*, 1st ed., (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2001), pp. 23.

13. Jim Morrison Quotes at BrainyQuote.com "Jim Morrison Quotes At Brainyquote.Com", 2016, *Brainyquote*. Accessed on January 12, 2016. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jimmorriso167304.html>.

14. Malcolm X Quotes, "Malcolm X Quotes At Brainyquote.Com", 2016, *Brainyquote*. Accessed on January 12, 2016. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quote>

Internet has touched everyone's life. Mass media technologies play an important role in crafting our personalities, our thoughts, and our information database. With these overwhelming significant influences, the media has also brought with it the element of power, of 'influencing' people's opinion and perceptions.

An entire gamut of theories has been constructed by social scientists to understand the different effects of the media.¹⁵ There is an emerging, and healthy, public debate about the definitions and implications of media power. From Mexico, where young people took to the streets to protest the partisan coverage of the two main television networks in 2012¹⁶, to the United Kingdom, where the Leveson Inquiry¹⁷ had daily, during 2011-12, revealed the intimate details of the collusive relationships among top politicians, media executives, and police, the behaviour of media corporations and executives has increasingly come under scrutiny.¹⁸ In the Indian context, in the recent past, we witnessed an instance of the media's power to 'influence' the masses during the Indian anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare in 2012.

The power of the media is so ingrained in our lives that we often take it for granted or we don't even realise it. In particular, the issue of concentrated media power, the grip of large media businesses over public discourse (for example, the few powerful media conglomerates like 21st Century Fox, Walt Disney Company, Times Warner, owning media houses, and tailoring the content as per their requirement and then serving it to the masses), is starting to preoccupy not just politicians, civil servants, and activists, but ordinary

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15. It is an additional information These are my own notes, therefore, no publication detail added. "This quest to know the effects have been given the mass media discipline 'Agenda-Setting Theory, by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw, 'Cultivation Theory' by George Gerbner, 'Social Learning Theory' by Albert Bandura, psychologist and physicist, "Play Theory" by William Stephenson, 'Uses And Gratifications Theory' by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 'Media Systems Dependency Theory' by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur, etc."
 16. See more: Catherine E. Shoichet, "Online and on the Streets, Mexico Youth Protests Grow as Election Looms," *CNN*, June 28, 2012. Accessed on May 12, 2016. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/27/world/americas/mexico-student-protest-movement/>.
 17. See more: "About the Inquiry", <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/about/>
 18. Des Freedman, "Paradigms of Media Power," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 8 (2015): 271-89. Accessed on January 22, 2016.

citizens concerned about the ability of communication conglomerates to stifle and distort wider democratic processes¹⁹, an altogether different debate.

This power is not restricted to the influence of the media on its audience, but also involves the role of the media within the broader framework of the social, cultural, political, or economic power structures of society.²⁰ Another trait, as noted by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky is, "The dissemination of news may occasionally be so selective and biased that you may accuse the media of manipulation and propaganda, for example, in connection with war."²¹

Media power is generally symbolic and persuasive, in the sense that the media primarily has the potential to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers, but not directly their actions. Except in cases of physical, coercive force, the control of action, which is usually the ultimate aim of the exercise of power, is generally indirect, whereas the control of intentions, plans, knowledge, beliefs, or opinions, that is, mental representations that monitor overt activities, is presupposed.²² Media moguls have the power to exploit their position in society by ensuring that news coverage within their media outlets is aligned with their own personal and financial interests. This allows for commercialisation where biased opinions masquerade as news which, in turn, has the capability to influence public attitudes²³

This invisible dependency of the masses on the media for the continuous flow of information is another example of how the media exercises power. Sources of information can be manipulated with vested interest and intent. And in this process, the media, especially news media, can play a crucial role and also exploit its power by manipulating the flow of information to get the desired result. A good example of this is the CNN effect.

19. Ibid.

20. Teun A. Van Dijk, "Power and the News Media," *Political Communication in Action*: 9-36. Accessed on January 23, 2016. [http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Power and the news media.pdf](http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Power%20and%20the%20news%20media.pdf).

21. Agner Fog, "Mass Media and Democracy Crisis : A Search for Causality Across Paradigms." www.criticalrealism.com/, 2016. Accessed on May 12, 2016. http://www.criticalrealism.com/archive/iacr_conference_2001/afog_mmdc.pdf.

22. Van Dijk, n.20.

23. Alana Mitchelson, "The Relationship Between News and Power," [Inkedhistoryofnow.wordpress.com](http://inkedhistoryofnow.wordpress.com), April 8, 2013. Accessed on January 22, 2016. <https://inkedhistoryofnow.wordpress.com/2013/04/08/the-relationship-between-news-and-power/>.

One of the major factors which continuously dominates the masses' perceptions is the mass media. And these perceptions, which later shape our opinions, are very astutely crafted by the media, which is controlled by the media owners, corporate influences, sociopolitical forces, cultural biases and other societal pressures.

The CNN effect is a theory that explicates the effect that 24-hour news networks such as CNN, have on the overall political and commercial environment. As media channels run continuous reporting of a specific happening or theme, the attention of the audience is continuously focussed for potentially elongated periods of time. Consequently, the CNN effect can instigate individuals and organisations to respond more forcefully towards the specific happening or theme being scrutinised.²⁴ We may speak of the CNN effect, firstly, as a policy agenda-setting agent; secondly, as an impediment to the achievement of desired

policy goals; and, thirdly, as an accelerant to policy decision-making. And in this process, one of the roles played by the media is that of an accelerator. One of the potential effects of global, real-time media is the shortening of response time for decision-making.²⁵

(iii) Relationship Between Media and Perception

Derived from the Latin word *perceptionem*, perception originated in the late 14th century, and means "the act or faculty of perceiving, or apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind; cognition; understanding."²⁶ Perception can be defined as our recognition and interpretation of sensory information. It also incorporates how humans react to communication or information. Perception is essential for humans to survive in a given environment, irrespective of whether it is true or false.

24. "CNN Effect," Investopedia. Accessed on January 21, 2016. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cnneffect.asp>.

25. Steven Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," *Press, Politics, Public Policy*, R, no. 18 1997. Accessed on January 21, 2016. http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/r18_livingston.pdf.

26. "Perception", Dictionary.com, Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. Accessed on January 12, 2016, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/perception>

One of the major factors which continuously dominates the masses' perceptions is the mass media. And these perceptions, which later shape our opinions, are very astutely crafted by the media, which is controlled by the media owners, corporate influences, sociopolitical forces, cultural biases and other societal pressures. This is further augmented with the construction of the messages, timings, repetitions and the selection of the content.

The media has a profound effect on the masses; it restructures, manipulates and influences the way the masses perceive the world. The instruments of the mass media like radio, television, newspapers, social media, printed / e-books, magazines, movies, etc., affect the minds of the masses, thus, affecting the opinions, perceptions and decision-making of the masses. At this point, the media acts as an agent of change behind the cultural or social or political movement happening in a society at any given context in time.

The way the media projects the images of a particular race, place, culture, identity, is the way the masses derive their perceptions and form opinions. The US media coverage of the Middle East needs a mention here. Very often, the US public has very little understanding of the Middle East; therefore, the continuous barrage of disasters, coups, uprisings, conflicts and terrorist activities, reported routinely by the US media, fosters a gross misimpression of the Middle Eastern peoples and cultures. The Middle Eastern countries—delineated here as the Arab countries plus Afghanistan, Cyprus, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and Turkey—are often lumped together as if they comprised a single entity, devoid of any separate national identity, cultural heritage, religious ideology, political philosophy, or global sensitivity.²⁷ This example further reinforces the argument that the media manages our perceptions.

We spend our lives unconsciously building ways of seeing the world and understanding it. When we turn to the media for input, information, images and education, we receive content, which is also framed in a particular way.

27. Yahya R. Kamalipour, "Introduction," in *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*, XX (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997).

We spend our lives unconsciously building ways of seeing the world and understanding it. When we turn to the media for input, information, images and education, we receive content, which is also framed in a particular way.²⁸

This brings us to another crucial term, which is perception management. Perception management as defined by the US Department of Defence (DoD) as, “Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels, to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviours and official actions favourable to the originator’s objectives. In various ways, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations.”²⁹ And in constructing perceptions, disseminating ‘selective information’ to influence the minds in order to achieve the desired objectives, the media as the fountainhead of all information distribution, plays an indispensable role. Thus, ‘cultivating’ images in the minds of the masses, which is the next subject of discussion, from the theoretical framework.

(vi) Understanding the Media as Agent of Cultivating Images

The cultivation theory investigates the continuing effects of the mass media in general, with special reference to television. It explains how ‘television shapes concepts of social reality.’ The cultivation theory (sometimes referred to as the cultivation hypothesis or cultivation analysis) was an approach developed by Professor George Gerbner, of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. The cultivation theory, in its most basic form, suggests that television is responsible for shaping, or ‘cultivating’ viewers’ conceptions of social reality. The combined effect of massive television exposure by viewers over time subtly shapes the

28. Besser Howard, “Nefarious Uses and Democratic Possibilities: Propaganda in the U.S. Mass Media,” New York University. Accessed on January 22, 2016. http://besser.tsoa.nyu.edu/impact/f01/Focus/Mass-media/209/Final_Paper/paper.htm.

29. “Perception Management,” Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, November 8, 2010. Accessed on January 22, 2016. http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf.

perception of social reality for individuals and, ultimately, for our culture as a whole.³⁰

George Gerber constructed this theory in the late 1960s, in the backdrop of the electronic revolution occurring during that era, with the growth in television viewership. Through this theory, he tried to explain the relation between TV viewing and its impact on the viewer's life. The theory also tries to identify the transformation in attitude of viewers, with the change of content in the long term. It posits that a viewer's attitude can be manipulated, according to the content exhibited on television.

Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivates attitudes and values, which are already present in a culture: the media maintains and propagates these values amongst the members of a culture, thus, binding it together. He has argued that television tends to cultivate middle-of-the-road political perspectives. Gerbner called this effect 'mainstreaming'.³¹ As Gerbner writes in the forward note of the book titled *Television and its Views: Cultivation Theory and Research*, "Stories socialise us into roles of gender, age, class, vocation and life-style, and offer models of conformity or targets for rebellion. They weave the seamless web of the cultural environment that cultivates most of what we think, what we do, and how we conduct our affairs. The story-telling process was once more hand-crafted, home-made, community inspired. Now it is mostly mass-produced and profit driven. It is the end result of a complex manufacturing and marketing process."³²

Despite the fact that this theory is more than five decades old now, it still holds relevance till date, as its core hypothesis, on which it was developed, can be still proved with different mass media. One can still witness how, like the Gerber television impact, other media instruments like social media and films, can 'blur, blend, truth or reality.' Since Gerbner's death in 2005, research, using the cultivation theory, has steadily moved in the direction

30. "Cultivation Theory," University of Twente. January 22, 2016. Accessed January 22, 2016. [https://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Theory Clusters/Mass Media/Cultivation_Theory/](https://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20Clusters/Mass%20Media/Cultivation_Theory/). More information about this article is not available on the website. The name is "Twente" only.

31. Ibid.

32. George Gerbner, "Foreword Note," *Television and Its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research*, edited by For, lx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

of attribution effects to large amounts of exposure to a specific form of media content. This content can be delivered by a variety of different media, including the new media. One way of looking at the new media is that to some extent it gives each one of us the power to shape the message system that cultivates our understanding of the social world.³³

As we move another step in understanding the cultivation theory, another concept which deserves mention, is the **mean world syndrome**. The mean world syndrome is a phenomenon where the violence-related content of the mass media convinces viewers that the world is more dangerous than it actually is, and prompts a desire for more protection than is warranted by any actual threat. The mean world syndrome is one of the main conclusions of the cultivation theory.³⁴

In the backdrop of these explanations about various dimensions of the media and scrutinising it from the lens of power, perception, impact and effect, the next section of the paper will take up case studies of the US' psychological warfare, with the objective of understanding the role of the media in meeting the objectives of the US' psychological warfare and how it affected the power equation of the US in the world order.

CASE STUDY: ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE US' PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

In this section, the paper will, firstly, throw light on the brief history of Psychological Operations (PSYOPs). Secondly, it will discuss the key elements or components of PSYOPs. Thirdly, it will briefly touch upon mass media tools employed in PSYOPs. And, lastly, within the limited scope of the paper, it will discuss two PSYOPs conducted by the US during wars.

Brief History of Psychological Operations

Psychological operations are as old as mankind itself. Their application

33. J. Stanley, Baran and Dennis Davis, "Media and Culture Theories: Meaning-Making in the Social World," in *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future*, 347. 6th ed (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2011).

34. Shamme, "Is the Mean World Really So Mean In Real ??" *Iiteeeestudents*, January 11, 2012. Accessed on January 22, 2016. <https://iiteeeestudents.wordpress.com/tag/mean-world-syndrome/>.

goes back to the dawn of recorded history. One of the earliest examples of psychological warfare, as it is known today, is recorded in the writings of Herodotus, a Greek historian, who described the war between the Greeks and Persians. The Christian Bible recounts the successful use of pitchers, lamps and noise by Gideon in the battle against the Midianites, about 1245 B.C., to create panic among his enemy by suggesting he had superior numerical strength when the opposite was true.³⁵

One of the earliest and simplest examples of PSYOPs trickery occurred over 3,000 years ago in the Trojan War. Over 2,000 years ago, the use of deception and psychological manipulation as a tool of combat was detailed in Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*: "All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable of attacking, feign incapacity; when active in moving troops, feign inactivity."³⁶

Other exemplary examples of PSYOPs documented in the history of mankind, which deserve mention here are the Athenians' use of psychological warfare against the Melians in the Peloponnesian War, the Romans' disinformation and blackmail campaigns that ultimately forced the Carthaginians to surrender in the Punic War and the use of frightening rumours and exaggeration used by the Mongolian warrior and ruler Genghis Khan.³⁷ Another often recounted tale of psychological warfare from the ancient world revolved around Alexander the Great. He is said to have had an oversized suit of armour cast and left behind when his forces withdrew, so that when the enemy found it, they would believe him and his men to be giants, dissuading them from pursuit.³⁸

Manipulation of the adversary through psychological operations and special warfare continued throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Age of Absolutism. Ready-made recipes for conducting psychological warfare and special operations (PSYOPs) can be found in the

35. "Preface," in *Psychological Operations*, II. Vol. 5 (California: Department of the Army, 1962).

36. James Corbett, "Psyops 101: An Introduction to Psychological Operations," Creative Commons, October 23, 2012. Accessed on January 23, 2016. <https://www.corbettreport.com/psyops-101-an-introduction-to-psychological-operations/>.

37. János Radványi, "Introduction to Psychological Operations," in *Psychological Operations and Political Warfare in Long-term Strategic Planning*, 1-7 (New York: ABC-CLIO, 1990).

38. Corbett, n.36.

The main intent behind psychological operations is to influence the behaviour of the target audience. They are aimed against the enemy, their supporters and supporters in the making. As one of the key components of Information Operations (IOs), PSYOPs play a crucial role in influencing, disrupting, and corrupting the enemy's decisions.

writings of Niccolo Machiavelli and his contemporaries.³⁹ One can find extensive usage of psychological operations in most of the wars, from the Italo-Abyssinian War from 1895–96, Spanish Civil War from 1936–39, World Wars I and II, Korean War from 1950–53, Vietnam War from 1955–75, Cold War, Gulf War codename Operation Desert Shield from 1990–91, to the War on Terrorism from 2001- till date, etc.

In the present scenario, psychological operations are extensively employed across the entire spectrum of warfare or conflict, with or without any accompanying military action, from special operations, to high-intensity and Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC). This includes variations of LIC such as counter-terrorism, peace-keeping, Civil-Military Operations (CMO), Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), Information Warfare (IW), Unconventional Warfare (UW), etc. Planning for PSYOPs is the same, regardless of the type of warfare in which it is used. It is used in conjunction with all instruments of national power.⁴⁰ PSYOPs no longer find expression only in times of war. They are now used before, during, and after wars, becoming a permanent weapon or tool in foreign affairs. Their impact can be tremendous at any time.⁴¹

Key Elements and Scope of Psychological Warfare

- **Intent:** The main intent behind psychological operations is to influence the behaviour of the target audience. They are aimed against the enemy, their supporters and supporters in the making. As one of the key components of Information Operations (IOs), PSYOPs play a crucial role in influencing, disrupting, and corrupting the enemy's decisions. The central element

39. Radványi, n.37

40. "Psychological Operations," Newworldwar.org. 2011. Accessed on January 23, 2016. <http://www.newworldwar.org/psyop.htm>.

41. "Preface," *Psychological Operations*, ii. Vol. 5 (California: Department of the Army, 1962).

of PSYOPs is the psychological dimension of the human being. According to the Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO):

The psychological dimension of conflict is as important as the physical. Conflict is a struggle of wills, that takes place in people's minds as well as on the battlefield. The attitudes and behaviour of people (friend, foe and the undecided or uncommitted) may be central to determining the outcome of conflict and the nature of the post-conflict environment. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the motivation of various target audiences — leaders, military forces, populations — in order to shape their perceptions, affect their will and to persuade them to accept the outcome desired by NATO.

Propaganda is an organised dissemination of information, allegations, etc, to assist or damage the cause of a government, movement.

- **Emotional Dimension:** PSYOPs exploit the ‘emotional’ dimension of humans. By manipulating the flow of information, they cultivate images, agendas, thus, resulting in managing and manipulating perceptions and influencing the opinion of the target audience, thereby, manipulating and corrupting the decision-making of the target audience. British military analyst and historian J. F. C. Fuller had suggested that traditional means of warfare may in time be “replaced by a purely psychological warfare, wherein weapons are not even used or battlefields sought ...but [rather] ... the corruption of the human reason, the dimming of the human intellect, and the disintegration of the moral and spiritual life of one nation by the influence of the will of another is accomplished.”⁴²
- **Propaganda:** This is one of the crucial components of psychological warfare. Although a tricky term to define, as the word comes with the baggage of negative connotation: in simple terms, propaganda is an organised dissemination of information, allegations, etc, to assist or

42. “Psychological Warfare,” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. 1968. *Encyclopedia.com*. Accessed January 21, 2016. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3045001007.html>

damage the cause of a government, movement, etc.⁴³ Jowett and O'Donnell define propaganda as, "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist." And as German politician and Reich Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany, Paul Joseph Goebbels noted, "Propaganda becomes ineffective the moment we are aware of it."

- **Understanding the Target Audience and Need of Experts:** Another important component of psychological warfare is understanding the target audience's mindset, culture, semiotics, behaviour, etc. Also, in order to construct an effective psychological operation, there is a dire need to engage qualified clinical psychologists who are expert in understanding the conscious and unconscious dimension of human behaviour and who can understand the cultural and psychological dimensions of the target audience. Modern developments in public opinion polling, audience sampling, panel interviewing, intelligence analysis, and the new techniques for assessing cultural traits of foreign groups enable the making of more accurate predictions of group and mass behaviour.⁴⁴
- **Scope:** It is difficult to precisely determine the scope of psychological warfare. One aspect can be seen from the lens of military operations, to disseminate information targeting a specific audience, to achieve the desired result. However, this scope is narrow as PSYOPs transcend the military margins and can be adopted by a nation-state in order to influence other nations, their populations and governments, through employment of political and diplomatic engagements, economic apparatuses and the military. Acts of terrorism and gruesome violent acts in order to instill fear in the minds of the target audience also fall in the scope of PSYOPs.

Mass Media Tools in Psychological Operations

PSYOPs, in the broadest sense, mean the use of propaganda and other

43. Propaganda, Dictionary.com. *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. (HarperCollins Publishers), <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/propaganda>. Accessed on January 24, 2016.

44. n.42.

political, economic, military and ideological actions to influence human actions and behaviour, favourable to the originating agency for a specific purpose, in both peace and war. With this broad concept, they include the simplest advertising and publicity techniques, including public relations.⁴⁵ If we investigate one of the key elements from the news media point of view, it is “to understand how news management or ‘spin’ shapes information, emphasising positive features and downplaying negative ones, casting institutions in a favorable light.”⁴⁶

In PSYOPs, the whole array of media tools is used, be it print, electronic, and now with the emergence of new media technology, especially social media: we can see the optimisation of the mass media to new heights. From leaflets, to scripted radio broadcasts, television messages and now the social media messages aimed to get the desired result, all are continuously being used for PSYOPs. Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden’s audio and video recordings, the exploitation of social media platforms by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), via websites, YouTube and blogs are taking PSYOPs to the next level.

PSYOPs Conducted By the US: Korean War and Operation Desert Storm

Psychological techniques to augment politics have been used by the US throughout its history. The Declaration of Independence was, and continues to be, a brilliant and effective propaganda instrument, justifying revolution.⁴⁷ To counter the negative attitude towards the term PSYOP as a ‘deceptive and nasty’ affair, in 2010, the US Department of Defence rechristened military psychological operations as “Military Information Support Operations (MISOs),” in order to give a positive connotation and a new name to the old business. Although in the history of the US, warfare has many examples of PSYOPs, due to the limited scope of this paper, only two events, the Korean War and the First Gulf War will be analysed.

45. n. 35.

46. Garth S. Jowett, and Victoria O’ Donnell, *What Is Propaganda, and How Does It Differ From Persuasion?* (Sage Publications). Accessed on January 24, 2016. http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/11847_Chapter1.pdf.

47. n. 35.

(a) Korean War (June 25, 1950 – July 27, 1953): The conflict between North and South Korea took an ugly turn on June 25, 1950, with the beginning of the Korean War when soldiers from the North Korean People's Army breached the 38th Parallel and invaded South Korea. The world order of that era was bipolar and with the Cold War in the backdrop, the world was divided into two power blocs: one dominated by the former USSR and the other by the USA. North Korea was backed by the Soviets, and the Western countries backed South Korea. And in July, the USA joined the war in support of South Korea, thus, making this war the "first military action of the Cold War."

The relevance of the Korean War for America can be gauged by the statement of then US President Harry Truman (1884-1972), stating, "If we let Korea down, the Soviet[s] will keep right on going and swallow up one [place] after another." The fight on the Korean peninsula was a symbol of the global struggle between East and West, between good and evil.⁴⁸ During this phase, the US Army created, as a special staff section, the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW) and a centre and school in North Carolina for the codification of the doctrine, and the training of military personnel, in what came to be called, in short, "psywar." With the establishment of the OCPW and a psywar centre and school, interest in psychological warfare spread throughout the US armed forces.⁴⁹

The war took the US by surprise and was considered as one of the greatest intelligence lapses in US military history. As part of PSYOPs, both sides widely used propaganda during the Korean conflict. Aircraft and artillery delivered United Nations leaflets. B-29 bombers dropped strategic propaganda leaflets deep behind the enemy's rear lines. Frontline tactical propaganda material was dropped by light bombers and spotter aircraft, or fired from 105mm howitzers. More than 20 million leaflets a week were prepared and disseminated by the United Nations forces at the height of the conflict.⁵⁰ This was followed by the use of loudspeakers and radio to fuel

48. "Korean War." <http://www.history.com/topics/korean-war>. Accessed on January 25, 2016. <http://www.history.com/topics/korean-war>.

49. n.42.

50. Herbert A. Friedman, "The American Psyop Organization During the Korean War," *Psywarrior*. Accessed on January 25, 2016. <http://www.psywarrior.com/KoreaPSYOPHist.html>.

the propaganda against North Korea to counter Chinese and Russian radio broadcasts. Artillery leaflet shells were also used to accurately disseminate the propaganda leaflets. Some 15 million propaganda leaflets were dumped on enemy frontline troops each week by the psywar units.⁵¹

(b) Operation Desert Storm (January 17, 1991 – February 28, 1991): Operation Desert Storm, also known as the first Gulf War, was the first major crisis for the US after the end of the Cold War. The war was in reaction to Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait and was countered by the US and allied forces. The magnitude of Iraq's invasion under the command of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein took the US by surprise. The war witnessed a new level of military technology engagement in the frontline. It was the first telecast war and witnessed the extensive use of the media at a different level. Operation Desert Storm represented the first time the US sought to shape, control, and configure the region from the air, and 25 years later, as the air campaign against the ISIL has demonstrated, the US is still trying to determine the destiny of the Middle East from miles above its soil.⁵²

During the 1990s, theatre commanders increasingly incorporated psychological resources in their campaign planning. Air Force Instruction 10-702, published in 1994, stated "Commanders must include a designated PSYOP planner at the beginning of the campaign planning process to effectively accomplish this mission."⁵³ Post war, according to the final report to Congress by the Department of Defence, "Conduct of the Persian Gulf War (3:87)", the PYSOP effort was focussed on breaking the Iraqi will to resist, and on increasing the fears of the Iraqi soldiers. The unexpected degree of success enjoyed by the coalition can be directly attributed to the manner in which PSYOPs complemented the overall conduct of operations against

51. Ibid.

52. Ibrahim Al-Marashi, "The Enduring Legacy of Operation Desert Storm," *Al Jazeera*, January 17, 2016. Accessed on January 25, 2016. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/01/operation-desert-storm-25-years-iraq-saddam-hussein-kuwait-160117064302534.html>.

53. Daniel L. Haulman, "USAF PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS, 1990-2003," Air Force Historical Research Agency, May 23, 2003. Accessed on January 25, 2016. <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-070912-044.pdf>.

the enemy in the Kuwait theatre of operations.⁵⁴ The Gulf War brought a whole new meaning to the use of multimedia in PSYOPs. Over a seven-week period, 29 million leaflets were disseminated, reaching approximately 98 percent of the 300,000 troops.⁵⁵

As traditional “users of propaganda against the enemy,” PSYOP units generated initiatives during the Persian Gulf War which employed standard, dedicated communications assets (principally broadcasting and printing equipment) in support of combat operations. PSYOP materials were disseminated to their distinctive audiences through three basic methodologies. The first, and most effective, method was aerial leaflet dissemination. Scripted field level radio transmissions and a combination of both ground and air loudspeaker broadcasts provided the two additional techniques used throughout the conflict.⁵⁶ The responsibility for preparing the leaflets during the war was on the shoulders of the US Army’s 4th Psychological Operations Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, USA. Continuing with its time-tested and efficient tactics of ‘dropping of leaflets’ during the war, around 29 million leaflets were disseminated, reaching approximately 98 percent of the 300,000 troops.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

The ‘psychology’ component plays a crucial and decisive role in battles. Psychological operations comprise one of the most glaring examples in this regard. The roots of PSYOPs can be traced back to the first traces of mankind. With the changing technologies, communication skills and evolution in psychology, PSYOPs have always played a crucial part in attaining the power seat and getting the dominating position in the dynamic world order, as the United States has proved. In this process, the ‘mass media’ acts like the backbone for ‘communicating’ to the ‘target audience’

54. “An Analysis of Gulf War Psyops and their Applicability to Future Operations,” Globalsecurity.org. 1993. Accessed on January 25, 2016. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1993/WPA.htm>.

55. “The Gulf War.” *Psywarrior*. Accessed January 24, 2016. <http://www.psywarrior.com/gulfwar.html>.

56. n.54.

57. n.55.

to get the desired result. From inscriptions on rocks, to leaflets, posters, radio and TV broadcasts, videos, audiotapes to social media 'Tweets', the media's capability to make PSYOPs more challenging and effective cannot be denied. In the words of Brig Gen S.B. Griffith, II, USMC, "The mind of the enemy and the will of his leaders is a target of far more importance than the bodies of his troops." And "capture their minds and their hearts and souls will follow".⁵⁸

58 "Military Quotes (G): Mohandas K. Gandhi - Herman Göring", 2016, Military-Quotes.Com. Accessed on May 20, 2016. <http://www.military-quotes.com/database/g.htm>.