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Front Cover

Squadron Leader D.H. Smith, DFC of No 453 SQN based at Ford in Britain during the D-Day Landings at Normandy 1944.

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Psychological Operations in Somalia

By Captain D.J. Wilson AA Psych.

Introduction

The ultimate objective of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) is to convince enemy, friendly and neutral personnel to take favourable actions toward Australia and its allies. It can maximise the destructive power of our forces as well as reduce the need to destroy. PSYOPS can save the lives of Australian soldiers, noncombatants and enemy forces (FM 33-1, 1987).

In the Australian Army, PSYOPS has been defined as "planned psychological activities directed towards enemy, friendly and neutral audiences (target audiences) in order to create attitudes and behaviour favourable to the achievement of national, political and military objectives" (MLW 1-2-10, 1987). While the US Army defines PSYOPS as "planned activities of propaganda and psychological actions in peace and war directed toward foreign enemy, friendly, and neutral audiences in order to influence attitudes and behaviours in a manner favourable to the achievement of national objectives — both political and military. It includes strategic, operational, and tactical psychological operations" (FM 33-1, 1987, p.1-2).

PSYOPS derives its chief effectiveness from being a part of a total operation. It is not a substitute for combat power. However, it may be employed when the use of combat forces is inappropriate such as during peacetime or against civilian population. When skillfully and closely integrated with military and political actions, "PSYOPS can act as a catalyst and can often mean the difference between mission success and failure" (Borchini, 1993).

United States Army PSYOPS units usually operate as support units and their primary role is to support other military units or government agencies in reaching national objectives. PSYOPS assets can also disseminate command information and products that explain the intent of military operations to target audiences (Jones, 1993). A commander, for example, may use PSYOPS to let his enemies know that it is honourable, as well as sensible, for individual soldiers or entire units to cease hostilities in the face of overwhelming combat force. PSYOPS is an asset that

grows in usefulness through increased understanding. With training, its effectiveness becomes limited only by the ingenuity of the using commander and his/her PSYOPS personnel [4 POG(A), 1992].

The following article's overall aim is to introduce US Army PSYOPS elements and highlight the US Army's capabilities demonstrated in Somalia. Firstly, the US Army's current PSYOPS structure, assets and general capabilities will be assessed. Secondly, an examination will be made of Operation Restore Hope and how PSYOPS was utilised by the 8th PSYOPS Battalion (Airborne) based in Mogadishu, Somalia. The final section will concentrate on the difficulties encountered by US Army PSYOPS in Somalia, possible improvements and future directions that may be valuable to the Australian Army in its consideration of PSYOPS deployments.

US Army PSYOPS

The general mission of the 4th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne) based in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, USA is "to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice and plan, develop, and conduct Psychological Operations in support of the Unified Commanders, Coalition forces, or other government agencies, as directed by the National Command Authorities" [4 POG(A), 1992, p.2]. The 4 POG(A) PSYOPS support the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war. PSYOPS consolidation operations are directed toward populations in friendly rear areas or in territories occupied by friendly military forces (FM 33-1, 1990).

The following illustrates some examples of favourable conditions for achieving PSYOPS objectives in strategic, operational, tactical, and consolidation operations (FM 33-1, 1990):

- High casualties and defeats suffered by the enemy.
- Precarious enemy military situations.
- Insufficient or inferior enemy supplies and equipment.
- Inexperienced or unqualified enemy officers.
- Unfavourable news about the enemy home front.
- Excessive time periods of combat for enemy troops.
- Ethnic or political dissident minorities (soldiers and civilians).

- Inexperienced or untrained troops.
- Sickness and lack of medical supplies.
- Lack of an effective enemy information program.
- Unit or significant individual defections.

The 4 POG(A) is the only active-duty (i.e. regular) PSYOPS Group in the US Army. It comprises a Group Headquarters, three regionally-orientated Battalions, a Tactical Support Battalion (TSB), and a PSYOPS Dissemination Battalion (PDB).

The 1st PSYOPS Battalion (Airborne) [1 POB(A)] covers Latin America and the Caribbean regions of the world. The 6 POB(A) has responsibility for European and African regions. The 8 POB(A) covers the Middle East, Asian and Pacific regions. The TSB supports conventional forces and Special Operations Forces (SOF) with audio-visual, loudspeaker, product development for operational and tactical PSYOPS [4 POG(A), 1992]. The PDB has audio-visual production, radio, television, and advanced printing capabilities.

The 4 POG(A) has a global responsibility for all US Forces. However, the Group's potential operations are greatly enhanced by three US Army Reserve PSYOPS Groups which add up to a total of nineteen PSYOPS Battalions or 22 Companies. The 2nd PSYOPS Group, (Airborne) is based in Parma, Ohio and it has a regional orientation toward Europe and the Atlantic. The 5th PSYOPS Group (Airborne) based in Washington, DC, focuses on Europe, Central and South America. The 7th PSYOPS Group (Airborne), based in San Francisco, California concentrates on the Pacific (Morrisey, 1993).

PSYOPS soldiers are trained as linguists and area specialists capable of understanding the political, cultural, ethnic, and geographic subtleties of their intended target audiences. All US Army Corps are represented in US PSYOPS to allow a unique combination of trained personnel to operate anywhere overseas. All PSYOPS personnel are required to be Airborne qualified to allow them to support any tactical scenario US Special Operations Forces are required to conduct (FM 33-1, 1990, Parker, 1992).

Operation Restore Hope

As previously described, the 8 POB(A) is part of the 4 POG(A) and covers the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific regions of the world. The 8 POB(A) was assigned the task of providing PSYOPS support to the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) that landed on the beaches in Somalia, late December 1992. The US

PSYOPS Battalion was based in the old US Embassy compound in Mogadishu, Somalia.

The following cultural summary will enable the reader to understand the complexities of the Somali people. Only by understanding some of these cultural aspects surrounding *Operation Restore Hope*, one can appreciate the potential difficulties a multifaceted UNITAF PSYOPS programme may pose on a PSYOPS battalion.

Practically all Somalis are Sunni Muslims. Often, clan leaders are religious leaders and take an active part in mediating civil disputes as well as administering religious affairs. Since independence in 1960, Somalia's government has emphasised a separation of church and state. However, in recent years, Somalia has seen a steady growth of political organisations operating under a religious cloak. (Defence Language Institute, 1993).

Somalis are organised into an extensive clan structure that has existed since the Middle Ages. Clan structures emphasise loyalty to and from their members. Constant fighting over political and ethnic differences has marked Somali society throughout its history (Defence Language Institute, 1993). On a political level, the Somali national character is marked by an extreme dislike of central authority and government in general. Most Somalis have a pastoral nomadic background and little need or respect for a formal government. It is impossible to exaggerate the fragility of the ethnic-based alliances under which this society continues to operate (US Army Int., 1992).

The nature of social structure is such that every clan, lineage, and individual is in a potentially adversarial or alliance relationship with other members of Somali society. No clan, lineage, or individual can ever be considered politically neutral (Defence Language Institute, 1993).

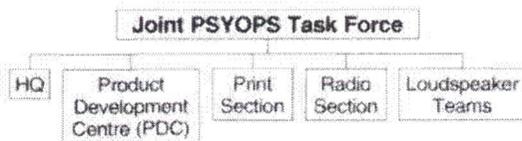
Key considerations for the United States Army's 8 POB(A) in Operation Restore Hope are that political neutrality is not part of the Somali world view (Borchini, 1993). Somalis have trouble accepting that the United Nations and private organisations working in Somalia do so under strict guidelines designed to ensure impartiality (Defence Language Institute, 1993). Broadly speaking, for Somalis, favouritism is perceived as an alliance constructed to exclude others, and armed factions might easily disrupt or stop aid if they believe that supplies have been channelled to their enemies (US Army Int., 1992).

The senior commanders in Somalia gave the 4 POG(A) the mission of providing an information dissemination capability for the Somali people. The information was given by a daily newspaper and radio program, both named "Rajo" (meaning "hope")

as well as leaflet drops and loudspeaker teams (Borchini, 1993).

The following gives details of how the 8 POB(A) conducted its Unified Task Force (UNITAF) PSYOPS mission during Operation Restore Hope. The information given was compiled while on deployment with the 8 POB(A) in 1993. Further information gathered on UNITAF PSYOPS was gained from several briefings conducted by the 8 POB(A) Commander to various command elements. These briefings detailed the structure of UNITAF PSYOPS and its capabilities during operations in Somalia (Borchini, 1993).

- UNITAF Somalia PSYOPS Mission: To support UNITAF tactical and operational objectives through the use of loudspeaker broadcasts, leaflet drops, posters, newspapers and radio broadcasts (Borchini, 1993).
- UNITAF Somalia PSYOPS Task Organisation: (Borchini, 1993)



- UNITAF Somalia Broad PSYOPS Themes: (Borchini, 1993)
 - To explain UNITAF rules of engagement.
 - To highlight that UNITAF does not support or favour any faction.
 - To affirm the roles and capabilities of the 23 nations in UNITAF.
 - To highlight the seamless transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II.
 - To encourage displaced persons to return to their homes, plant their fields and harvest new crops for future prosperity.
 - To highlight redevelopment and re-establishment of Somali infrastructure.
 - To highlight the agreements made by faction leaders.
 - To focus on the disarmament process and to keep everyone up to date with the progress shown in each region of the country.

"Rajo"

The JPOTF provided news on military activities, public service announcements and messages of peace in Somalia. The Battalion produced the daily Somali language paper (except Fridays) and distributed

between 15,000 to 25,000 papers daily throughout their period of operations (Borchini, 1993). Unfortunately, most locally produced Somali newspapers were aligned with one or another clan vying for power in the war-torn nation. "Rajo" aimed to provide news from a non-clan, impartial perspective (Stevenson, 1993).

The radio program which reviewed the "Rajo" newspaper was broadcasted four times per day. Each produced session was prerecorded and thoroughly checked by the Somali interpreters prior to any broadcast going to air. This process ensured the translated Somali message did not hold any clan biases and at all times remained objective. Each pre-recorded broadcast lasted 45 minutes and was repeated twice on AM and twice on Short Wave radio (Borchini, 1993).

Leaflet Drops

Three days before US Marines landed in Somalia, leaflets were being dropped to inform the warring Somali factions that troops were prepared to use force to protect relief operations in the country (see Fig. 1). All leaflet drops were coordinated at the highest levels to ensure the projected PSYOPS message was unified and could be backed up by military action (Borchini, 1993).

The dissemination of these leaflets was accomplished through a variety of methods. The main dissemination technique in Somalia was the use of static line deployment of boxed and bagged leaflets from altitudes of 1000 to 500 feet. There are several mathematical calculations which determine the dispersion of different size leaflets according to the weight of the paper printed over the designated area. To ensure further dissemination accuracy, most missions made several passes over each target area, when hostilities in the region were favourable. Over 7 million leaflets were disseminated by JPOTF from 9 December 1992 to 10 April 1993 (Borchini, 1993).

Tactical Loudspeaker Teams

The loudspeaker teams (LST) were from the 9th PSYOPS Battalion (Airborne) [4 POB(A)] and were primarily equipped for tactical operations. For Operation Restore Hope, they fell under the command of the JPOTF Commander and were tasked

Figure 1



Adoonka Ciidanka (United Nations) Waxay xagan uyimaaden in ayidin Caawiyaan dadka idin Caawinaya Somalia dad.

Waxaan u isticmaalicarnaa Hubcayaga Si aanu u caawino dadka idin Caawinaya iyo ciidankayaga. Uma aan sugidoono waxgalitaan cuntada ama ciidanka waxay

gabanayaan. Waxaan xagon u Joog naa in aanu idin Caawino.



United Nations forces are here to assist in the international relief effort for the Somali people. We are prepared to use force to protect the relief operation and our soldiers. We will not allow interference with food distribution or with our soldiers'

activities.

We are here to help you.



according to the overall PSYOPS objectives set down by UNITAF (Borchini, 1993). These teams landed with the first US Marines and played pre-recorded PSYOPS messages (English version shown), as they proceeded into Mogadishu.

"American Forces are landing to help the United Nations distribute relief supplies to the Somali people. Please stay in your homes. We mean no harm. We are here to help you." (Borchini, 1993)

In Baidoa, the 450-watt loudspeakers were utilised in supporting Australian forces in several missions under Operation Solace. Firstly, with the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams operating with 1 RAR. During this mission, a loudspeaker was mounted on the front of the leading Range Rover and a local Somali linguist asked people where they have seen explosives or arms in the surrounding areas as they drove in Baidoa. While this was occurring, the last vehicle would randomly distribute "mine awareness" leaflets by hand which showed exactly what the typical explosive ordnance looked like (see Fig. 2) (Borchini, 1993). A second mission, was where a loudspeaker was "manpacked" by a US Army soldier

while local leaders and Australian Forces organised Somali volunteers to clean up the streets of Baidoa. This PSYOPS support provided assistance with crowd control, coordinating workers efforts and disseminating safe water messages to onlookers.

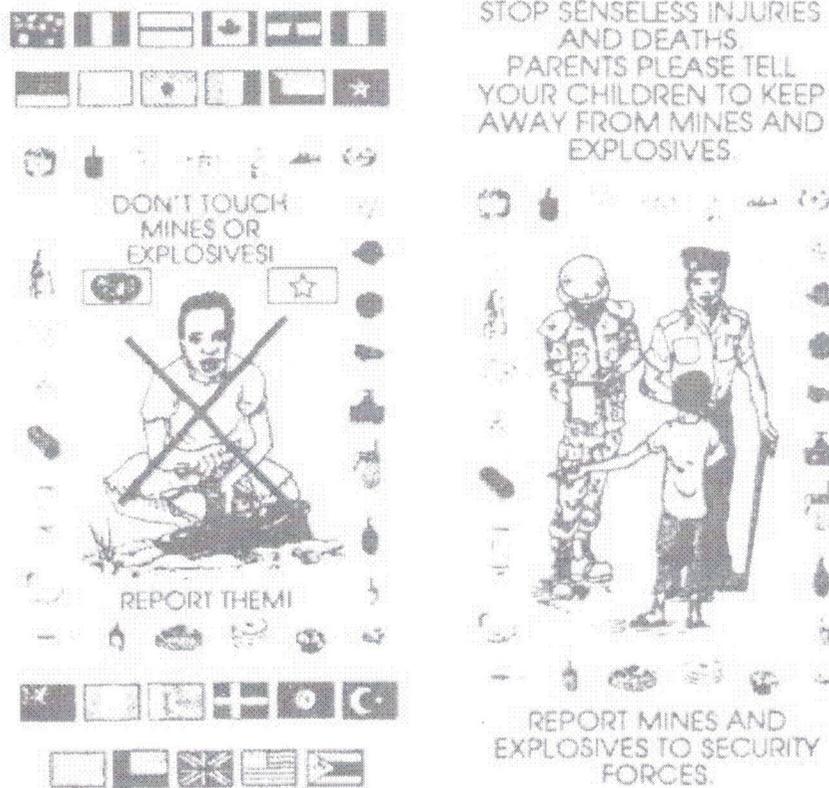
The safe water message (English version shown) was repeated at a later date in April 1993, throughout Baidoa while assisting Australian Counter Intelligence missions in the area (Borchini, 1993).

"Attention, people of Baidoa. To prevent disease, do not drink the water from the ravine or the surrounding surface water. Only drink water from the wells and clean all water containers before using the wells. To prevent disease, boil water for 5-10 minutes before using." (Borchini, 1993)

The above information was repeated in the Mogadishu and Baidoa dialect by a Somali interpreter. There was approximately a 10-15 second pause between the repetitions of the message while the vehicle travelled at a fast walking pace through the streets of Baidoa (Borchini, 1993).

The "safe water" message was further used in support of a sensitive task carried out by relief agencies

Figure 2



in the main well area of Baidoa. There was approximately 11500 bodies buried on the edges of the main ravine from the mass starvation suffered during the civil war. The primary task was to prevent these bodies from contaminating the local water system, with the onset of the rainy season in April (Borchini, 1993).

Due to sensitive nature of exhuming Somali bodies, Australian forces wanted only to announce a portion (the Safe Water message) of a designed leaflet (see Fig. 3) to keep UNITAF military forces detached from the task. The designed leaflet was eventually distributed by SACO throughout Baidoa by hand and vehicle. The attempt by SACO to exhume the Somali bodies was achieved over many days without incident. This action was further followed up by an article in the "Rajo" newspaper and radio in April 1993 (Borchini, 1993).

The last PSYOPS mission was developed to counter PSYOPS by Somali warlords about UNITAF and relief agencies desecrating grave sites throughout Somalia. The use of newspaper, radio, loudspeaker and leaflets clearly illustrates to the reader, how many of the UNITAF PSYOPS missions were conducted by the JPOTF.

As shown, PSYOPS was simply applied to enhance the effectiveness of missions by using only loudspeaker/leaflet capabilities with 1 RAR in Baidoa. However, the overall PSYOPS approach by the JPOTF of further informing the Somali people of activity within Baidoa by newspaper and radio, also helped prevent further conflicts in operational areas (Borchini, 1993).

This section has examined how the 4 POG(A), particularly the 8 POB(A) acting in the capacity of the JPOTF conducted some "real world" missions in Somalia. It demonstrates exactly how the US Army PSYOPS structure, objectives, and assets are utilised in times of conflict. Although the PSYOPS shown by the 8 POB(A) in Operation Restore Hope were undoubtedly impressive, a more critical look at the proceedings in the next section of this is essential for future PSYOPS planning.

Lessons for Australia From US PSYOPS Experiences in Somalia

Ignorance concerning PSYOPS, even in the US Army, is still a significant stumbling block in planning operations. Analysing the problems encountered in Operation Restore Hope and particularly in support of Operation Solace, is vital for future Australian

PSYOPS. Taking into account time pressures, personnel and operational constraints imposed on the 8 POB(A), some unforeseen problems did arise.

The main area of concern that will be covered is the low priority that was given by the 8 POB(A) to pre-testing and post-testing of PSYOPS products on target audiences. Pre-testing is where a representative sample of a target audience is assessed under appropriate behavioural research methods. During pre-testing of a potential PSYOPS product (ie. a leaflet, loudspeaker or radio messages), people from a sample group that represents the target audience are randomly chosen to give feedback on the PSYOPS product. Post-testing involves finding appropriate measures that indicate the impact of the PSYOPS product on an intended target audience (Shipman, 1985).

Evidence of pre-testing by the 8 POB(A) was only shown by UNITAF PSYOPS personnel on a random basis with educated Somali journalists, interpreters and workers within the old US Embassy compound in Mogadishu. Similarly, only some verbal feedback was gained on the impact of leaflets, handbills, posters and loudspeaker announcements (Borchini, 1993).

Although most UNITAF commanders were very positive towards PSYOPS support, they did express a concern that they could not see the actual impact of PSYOPS in their operations. There was limited objective measuring of whether these products had a negative, neutral, or the intended psychological impact on the Somali people. What behaviours were actually being changed in the target audiences, and were there any unintended consequences from the developed UNITAF PSYOPS products?

It is recognised that in time of war and low intensity conflicts, forces will not always have the opportunity or the resources to objectively measure the impact of PSYOPS on behaviour. However, without objective research conducted on PSYOPS, the 8 POB(A) had to continually try to sell the worth of PSYOPS to each UNITAF commander. This is because at the time they could not back up their actions with solid research results from previous operations in Somalia.

If the underlying goal of PSYOPS is to change friendly, neutral or enemy behaviour towards a commander's intent (FM 33-1, 1990), it is perfectly logical that we must aim to measure those changes. This will enable us to see whether we are changing the target audiences behaviour in the desired direction. This means that we need correct research methodologies developed to ensure PSYOPS is appropriate and properly accountable (Shipman, 1985).

The profession of Psychology aims to understand the complexities of human behaviour. AAPsych Corps is well placed to contribute to Australian PSYOPS

and developing efficient monitoring practices for the future. Due to the nature of psychology, the pre-testing of newly developed PSYOPS products, their themes, symbols and impact on target audiences can only be enhanced by closely identifying how PSYOPS works in an operational setting.

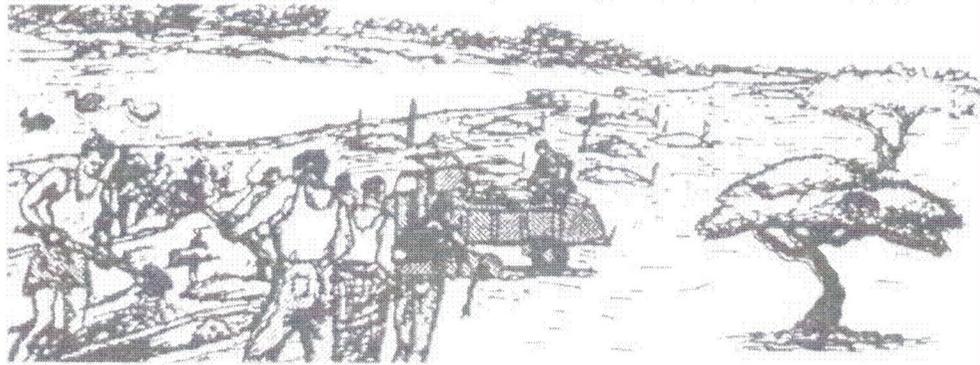
More importantly, possible improvement on the PSYOPS conducted in Somalia can be seen in more thorough data analysis and interpretation of missions. In an operational setting, this gives the commander timely feedback from his supporting PSYOPS element allowing him to incorporate the results in ongoing operational planning. For example, some basic research principles may have shed light on PSYOPS support in Operation Solace. The EOD teams conducting missions throughout Baidoa collected many

explosives each day. A simple assessment of whether more explosives were collected when US loudspeaker support was given may have revealed that there was a relationship between PSYOPS support and more explosives being found in Baidoa. This simple analysis would give the commander timely feedback on whether PSYOPS support was truly enhancing EOD operations within his HRS.

AAPsych Corps units hold personnel with the necessary expertise to monitor such behavioural changes in people from PSYOPS intervention. Units like 1 Psych and 1 Psych Research in PSYOPS planning gives the Australian Army the opportunity to conduct more accountable, flexible and efficient PSYOPS than many other countries engaged in this type of operation.

Figure 3

Moving the bodies of these deceased Somalis while respecting Somali religious traditions is a necessity to help make the water safe.



Over the past several years, the civil war and factional fighting combined with banditry and looting caused many Somalis to die from starvation all over Somalia. In the SHIKH ASHAROW ravine area, many of those who died were buried near the banks of the ravine.

This has the potential to pose a very hazardous health risk to those who use the ravine's water for drinking and washing. Under the strict guidelines set by Somali elders, the buried will be moved with proper religious respect and traditions to another location. The Somali people themselves will work on this task and hopefully be able to remove all of the bodies before the rainy season washes them into the water system. This operation will prevent disease from spreading and will be supported by relief agencies. Until the bodies have been removed from the banks near the ravine, and the water is safer to drink, do not drink water from the ravine or other surface water, only drink water from wells; clean all water containers before using wells. To prevent disease,

boil water for 5 - 10 minutes before using.



Future Directions

In future conflicts, Australian forces may not be as fortunate as the US were in the Gulf War and Somalia. If the Australian Army wishes to improve its PSYOPS capability it must start training now for operational deployment. If Australian forces need to call upon effective PSYOPS support in future, the appropriate infrastructure must be put in place and the necessary planning conducted. Australia should be competitive in maintaining a PSYOPS initiative in the Asian/Pacific region.

The application of PSYOPS, as demonstrated by the US Army, is a fighting skill which can only be improved with practice and appropriate behavioural measurement. PSYOPS ought to be included in the early stages of ADF planning, rather than as an after thought in counter-intelligence operations. Until PSYOPS is seen more as a logical, cost effective tool which can enhance many facets of a nation's defence, the quality of PSYOPS in support of future conflicts involving Australian forces is in serious doubt.

The aim of PSYOPS is to change enemy behaviour in line with the commander's intent. This task can only be achieved by being able to analyse current intelligence and having the necessary personnel to produce effective PSYOPS material. It must be noted that poorly prepared PSYOPS can be more harmful to a nation's objectives, than no PSYOPS at all.

The US UNITAF PSYOPS battalion's primary equipment requirements cost under \$US150,000 to set up (excluding Tactical Loudspeaker capabilities) (Borchini, 1993). Although this does not include stationery supplies and equipment maintenance, this is well within the reach of most defence forces.

It should also be clear that Psychological Operations do not win wars alone and without the force to back the PSYOPS message, success will always remain questionable. This is the reason why all PSYOPS planning should begin, be coordinated and controlled at the highest levels of the ADF.

In an era when our Army is getting smaller, it is time to start thinking about fighting smarter. There is no smarter way to fight than through the aggressive application of PSYOPS. In peacetime, conflict or war, PSYOPS provides the commander with an edge that may save countless lives (FM 33-1, 1990). As emphasised throughout this paper, PSYOPS should be viewed like any other weapons system in a commander's arsenal which is a non lethal force multiplier [4 POG(A), 1992]. If "Psychological Operations" is truly a force multiplier, can Australia afford not to enhance its defensive efforts with one of the most cost-effective weapon systems in modern warfare?

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