

“We Say All the Real Things. And We Believe Them:”  
The Establishment of the United States Information Agency, 1953

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

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## Abstract

As the world became at once more interconnected and more polarized during the twentieth century, the need for the major powers to effectively communicate their perspective to the rest of the world through propaganda grew stronger. However, although the United States was undeniably gaining prestige and influence by the late 1930s, the upstart global power struggled to implement a lasting and successful propaganda program. In the years immediately preceding the Second World War, when the United States was targeted by both Axis and Soviet propaganda, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt proved reluctant to implement a peacetime state-sponsored propaganda program. Roosevelt's successor Harry Truman, on the other hand, did not share this reluctance and throughout the first years of the Cold War sanctioned the establishment of several peacetime programs. However, because of Truman's lack of understanding of and personal commitment to the use of propaganda, U.S. efforts in this field were uncoordinated, expensive, and largely ineffective. As a result, the highly centralized Soviet propaganda

machine constantly tried to divide the United States and its allies and draw more countries into the communist camp.

It was not until Dwight Eisenhower, arguably the first true psychological warrior to become president, took office in 1953 that U.S. Cold War propagandists began to match the efforts of their Soviet counterparts. Eisenhower used his organizational talents and military experiences with psychological warfare to restructure U.S. foreign information services into highly coordinated, cost-effective, and efficient Cold War weapons. With the establishment of the United States Information Agency in October 1953, the United States gained more control of its image abroad, casting both U.S. domestic and foreign policies in as favourable a light as possible while simultaneously condemning communists as disingenuous, autocratic imperialists.

While U.S. officials struggled to implement effective psychological warfare programs, they were inevitably forced to confront difficult questions concerning the role of propaganda in a democratic society. Whereas a majority of Americans in the interwar period regarded propaganda as anathema, and a tool to which only fascists and communists resorted, by the time Eisenhower took office a growing number of officials had concluded that the stakes in the Cold War were simply too high to leave anything to chance. As a result, these officials argued, it was imperative that the U.S. government target not only international, but also domestic audiences with state-sponsored propaganda in order to ‘educate’ the public on U.S. Cold War objectives and the perils of communism.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>CENIS</b>	MIT Center for International Studies
<b>CENTO</b>	Central Treaty Organization
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>CIAA</b>	Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs
<b>COI</b>	Coordinator of Information
<b>COMINFORM</b>	Communist Information Bureau
<b>COMINTERN</b>	Communist International
<b>CPI</b>	Committee on Public Information
<b>DCI</b>	Director of Central Intelligence
<b>FIS</b>	Foreign Information Service
<b>IIA</b>	International Information Administration
<b>JCS</b>	Joint Chiefs of Staff
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NCFE</b>	National Committee for a Free Europe
<b>NSA</b>	National Security Act (1947)
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Council
<b>OCB</b>	Operations Coordinating Board
<b>OCD</b>	Office of Civil Defense
<b>OEX</b>	Office of Educational Exchange
<b>OFF</b>	Office of Facts and Figures
<b>OFI</b>	Office of Information
<b>OGR</b>	Office of Government Reports
<b>OIE</b>	Office of Information and Exchange
<b>OPC</b>	Office of Policy Coordination
<b>OSS</b>	Office of Strategic Services
<b>OWI</b>	Office of War Information
<b>PPS</b>	Policy Planning Staff (State Department)
<b>PSB</b>	Psychological Strategy Board
<b>PWB</b>	Psychological Warfare Branch
<b>PWD</b>	Psychological Warfare Division
<b>RFE</b>	Radio Free Europe
<b>RL</b>	Radio Liberty
<b>SANACC</b>	<i>ad hoc</i> subcommittee of the State—Army—Navy—Air Force Coordinating Committee
<b>SEATO</b>	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
<b>SHAEF</b>	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
<b>USIA</b>	United States Information Agency
<b>USIS</b>	United States Information Service
<b>VOA</b>	Voice of America

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## A Word on Terminology

The *Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines propaganda as “information that is often biased or misleading, used to promote a political cause or point of view.” Because of the prominence of the term ‘information’ in both this definition and contemporary discourse on the subject, the terms ‘information’ and ‘propaganda’ will be regarded as essentially synonymous throughout this study. This decision of semantics seems especially warranted given that policymakers were predisposed to assign appellations such as the Coordinator of Information, the Office of War Information, and the United States Information Agency to propaganda agencies.

The *Oxford* definition is useful because it alludes to the two primary types of propaganda: overt and covert. Overt propaganda is information created to educate the intended audience about certain ‘truths’ and, as such, is disseminated in an undisguised fashion so as to reach as many people as possible. The source of the information is freely acknowledged. Whether or not the information issued as overt propaganda is entirely based on fact, or if the biases or ideology it reflects mislead its audience, is irrelevant to its categorization as overt propaganda. For example, much of the propaganda disseminated to U.S. allies and neutral countries by the United States Information Agency (USIA) during the Eisenhower Administration was intended to demonstrate that all Americans, regardless of race, class, or gender, benefitted from and were afforded equal opportunity by U.S. free-market capitalism and democracy. This information distorted the reality that during the 1950’s the socioeconomic and political establishment in the United States afforded more chance for social mobility, opportunity, and equality before the law to white middle-class men than to any other group. Yet despite the USIA’s “subtle (or not so subtle) misrepresentation of the facts and the careful selection of facts to suit the needs of American

propagandists,” Osgood argues, “USIA officials generally believed they were telling the truth about the United States. They constructed a coherent picture of American life as one of progress and consensus that mirrored the assumptions underlying the white, middle-class political culture from which they came.”<sup>1</sup> In this light, then, much of the information produced by Nazi propagandists, regardless of our current understanding of Hitler’s regime, can likewise be regarded as overt propaganda as it too was intended to educate its audience about certain ‘facts’ which the Nazis held to be true.

Covert propaganda is information designed deliberately to mislead the enemy and is disseminated by underhanded methods. Unlike overt propaganda, the source of covert information is deliberately misrepresented. During the Second World War, both the Axis and Allied powers used covert tactics, though Nazi propagandists, under the direction of the artful if devious Josef Goebbels, successfully used covert propaganda earlier than the Allies. For example, from 1939 to 1940 Nazi propagandists conducted a campaign designed to prevent the re-election of President Roosevelt by attempting to portray him as a hawkish commander-in-chief to the U.S. public, half of which was adamant that the United States should abstain from the war. For their part, in 1943, the British used covert propaganda during Operation Mincemeat to successfully convince the Nazis that the upcoming Allied invasion of Southern Europe would begin in Greece. The Nazis took the bait, in the form of false documents planted on a cadaver, and responded by concentrating their forces in Greece. As a consequence, the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943 met with virtually no initial resistance.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> . Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 255.

<sup>2</sup> For the Nazi propaganda campaign, see Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1967), 129-133. For the British deception, see Ewan Montagu, *The Man Who Never Was*, (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1954). See also David Welch, “Powers of Persuasion”, *History Today* 49, issue 8 (August 1999): 24-26 for further explanation of propaganda.

The term psychological warfare is broader than propaganda. While several authors and experts have defined the phrase, it seems most appropriate to use the definition from *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, published in 1958 by the Operations Research Office for “personnel assigned to or interested in psychological warfare planning and operations,” as the definition provided in that text reflects how psychological warriors during the Eisenhower era would have understood the term. The casebook defines psychological warfare as “the *planned* use of propaganda and *other actions* designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of the enemy, neutral, and friendly foreign groups in such a way as to support the accomplishment of national aims and objectives.” The italics are in the original and highlight words or phrases the Operations Research Office felt deserving of further explanation.<sup>3</sup>

William Daugherty, the editor of *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, argues that to be considered psychological warfare, a specific undertaking must be the result of prior planning “and not the result of accidental occurrence.” Further, he asserts that psychological warfare includes deeds as well as words. “Acts can, and often appear to, play as important a role in opinion and attitude formation as propaganda,” Daugherty avers.<sup>4</sup> Osgood claims Eisenhower and other psychological warriors within his administration understood Daugherty’s definition and continually examined their own actions, including diplomacy itself, from the perspective of the overall objectives of their psychological war against the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> William E. Daugherty, “Introduction” to *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, ed. William E. Daugherty, published for the Operations Research Office, (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958), 2. The word “propaganda” is also italicized in the original, but this author has removed the italicization as Daugherty’s definition of the term aligns with that provided by the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English* and similarly distinguishes between black and white propaganda.

<sup>4</sup> Daugherty, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>5</sup> Osgood, “Form Before Substance,” 407.

## Introduction

Wednesday 28 October 1953 was no more extraordinary than any other day in the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower. On that mild autumn morning, one hundred and fifty two people, mainly members of the press, joined the president at 10:30 in the Executive Office Building at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW for a presidential press conference. For slightly less than half an hour, the audience heard the president speak about a range of issues—the arrival of the King and Queen of Greece later that afternoon, concern over the recent drop in farm prices, a proposal submitted to the Bureau of the Budget to raise the minimum wage from seventy cents to one dollar, and the rising cost of living. On the last point, Mrs. May Craig of the *New England Press* asked President Eisenhower if “Mrs. Eisenhower [has] told you anything about your high cost of living in the White House.” The president drew laughter from the crowd by answering that he had heard “plenty.” This press conference, Eisenhower’s eighteenth as president, was nothing if not routine.<sup>6</sup>

What made the news conference distinctive was the mimeograph, handed out to those in attendance moments before the press conference, which publicly announced the purposes and objectives of the newly created United States Information Agency (USIA). The directive, which was accompanied by a letter from the program’s first director, Theodore C. Streibert, announced that the purpose of the USIA was to “submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communication techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace.” By

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<sup>6</sup> “National Weather Summary,” *Washington Post* 28 October 1953, 26. Also, “The President’s News Conference of October 28, 1953,” in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January 20 to December 31, 1953*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 715-727. Hereafter cited as *Eisenhower Public Papers*.

countering negative images of the United States distributed globally, mainly by the Soviet Union, the USIA aimed to present the “important aspects of life and culture” of the United States to the peoples of the world.<sup>7</sup>

The establishment of the USIA was the latest episode in the nearly fifteen year period dating back to the beginning of the Second World War during which U.S. propaganda agencies underwent significant organizational changes. Equally important were the ways in which conceptualizations of propaganda and its practical uses among top U.S. government and military officials evolved. Eisenhower can arguably be labelled a true psychological warrior who brought with him to the White House a nuanced understanding of propaganda’s usefulness. In contrast, even after German forces stunned the world with their lightning-quick victories in Poland and Western Europe from 1939 to 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt seemed reluctant to implement a state-organized agency for the dissemination of official propaganda. He continued to approach the subject with marked caution well into 1941.

Initial attempts by Roosevelt’s aides to convince the president of the need for a propaganda agency failed to achieve meaningful results. Mordecai Lee is among the scholars who argue that Roosevelt’s reluctance stemmed from his abhorrence of the abuses of the Committee on Public Information (CPI), the government’s wartime propaganda agency during the First World War.<sup>8</sup> Roosevelt’s views echoed those of many Americans who regarded state-sponsored propaganda as an odious function of fascist, communist, and other authoritarian regimes and thus unbecoming of the U.S. government. Betty Houchin Winfield, on the other hand, suggests that Roosevelt, who, it must be said, commanded the press as well if not better

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<sup>7</sup>“Directive Approved by the President for the Guidance of the United States Information Agency, October 28, 1953,” in *Eisenhower Public Papers*, 728.

<sup>8</sup> Mordecai Lee, *The First Presidential Communications Agency: FDR’s Office of Government Reports*, (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 13.

than any of his predecessors, was hesitant because he did not want to surrender control of information to a new agency outside of the White House.<sup>9</sup>

By the time Roosevelt declared in December 1940 that the United States should be “the great arsenal for democracy,” his cabinet had already held discussions on the need to establish a government propaganda agency. Yet for several months Roosevelt stalled and ultimately avoided establishing an effective foreign information program. His half-hearted efforts to create such an agency, beginning with the establishment of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in May 1941, can be interpreted at least two ways. First, the president had to contend with a vigorous isolationist movement in both Congress and the general public and thus his efforts can be read as an attempt to satisfy the perceived need for propaganda from within his own cabinet while at the same time attempting to avoid opening himself to further charges from isolationists that he was leading the country to war.<sup>10</sup> The second viewpoint, and certainly the one held by many of his closest advisors, the most vocal being Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, is that Roosevelt lacked both a clear appreciation for propaganda and the aggressive leadership required to establish a credible agency. It is worth pointing out that these two interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Whatever the cause of his reluctance, what is clear is that propaganda agencies created after the United States officially entered the war in December 1941, namely the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), were never given a clear brief either for planning or executing operations from the Roosevelt Administration. However, the

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<sup>9</sup> Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 155-156. See also Richard Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1985) and Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990).

OWI and OSS generally found ways to effectively transcend the resultant ambiguity and translate their vague mandates into programs which helped achieve the broader wartime objectives.<sup>11</sup>

Immediately after the Japanese surrender which ended the Second World War, Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, abolished both the OWI and OSS. Neither the U.S. government nor the general public were willing to extend the mandate for state-sponsored propaganda in peacetime. A few programs, including the Voice of America radio network, survived Truman's cuts, though they operated under poorly-defined orders and with uncertainty regarding the future of government funding for their efforts.<sup>12</sup>

The escalation of post-war tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States resulted in renewed calls from Congress, the various branches of the armed forces, and leading bureaucrats for the creation of new foreign information programs to tell the U.S. "side of the story to Europe and the world."<sup>13</sup> Advocates of state-sponsored propaganda were initially pleased to observe that Truman showed none of the reluctance of his predecessor, but rather played a key role in one of the largest and fastest peacetime expansions of state security institutions in U.S. history. The 1947 National Security Act created several new executive cabinet departments and government agencies, none more significant to early Cold War covert psychological endeavours than the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Subsequent National

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<sup>11</sup> Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961*, (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 29-30.

<sup>13</sup> George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971*, ed. by William P. Hansen and Fred L. Israel, Volume I, (New York: Random House, 1972), 772.

Security Council directives conferred exclusive rights to the conduct of covert psychological warfare operations upon the CIA.<sup>14</sup>

The years between the Second World War and the end of Truman's presidency also witnessed a vast and rapid expansion of overt psychological warfare agencies. While Truman did not share Roosevelt's reluctance for implementing state-sponsored propaganda, he did share his predecessor's lack of leadership in defining either the objectives or policies of the newly created programs. As a result, instead of working in concert to advance U.S. national interests, the various agencies frequently found themselves competing for government funding and control of propaganda. By 1952 it had become apparent to several observers that the bureaucratic expansion had occurred far too quickly for the competing agencies to be brought under a unifying mandate. A study requested by Secretary of the Army Gordon Gray in 1950 turned up some sixty military and civilian agencies that were conducting psychological warfare operations, resulting in disparate, often competing, messages being disseminated throughout the world.<sup>15</sup>

Over the course of developments in psychological warfare from Roosevelt's presidency to that of Eisenhower, policymakers were at times confronted with questions concerning the role of propaganda in a democratic society. Most observers in the interwar period held the opinion that the CPI had been on the wrong side of the line between informing and manipulating the public, and consequently propaganda increasingly came to be seen as "inherently antidemocratic."<sup>16</sup> The Cold War reshaped many assumptions among both government officials and private citizens concerning the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy. In 1948, Congress passed, for the first time in U.S. history, legislation for the establishment of

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<sup>14</sup> Department of State, "NSC 4-A: Psychological Operations, December 9, 1947," in *FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), 644-645.

<sup>15</sup> C.D. Jackson, "Interview with Harris Huey, 26 July 1950," in *C.D. Jackson.: Papers, 1931-1967, [Box 17 (Psych Warfare Interview with CDJ)]*, *Eisenhower Library*, 19-21.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, *The First Presidential Communications Agency*, 75.

peacetime foreign information programs. Yet the Smith-Mundt Act, as it was called, strictly forbid government psychological warriors from targeting U.S. citizens.

While the act signalled a departure from the past, to many officials it did not go far enough. The Cold War, as they saw it, was first and foremost a struggle for the hearts and minds of men, women, and children around the world; policy planners also argued that failure on the part of the U.S. government to ‘educate’ the American people about the benefits of democracy and free-market capitalism over communism opened the door for Soviet psychological warriors to win U.S. private citizens over to their side. Thus, U.S. officials increasingly looked for ways to circumvent the prohibitions of the Smith-Mundt Act, and by the time Eisenhower established the USIA, domestic audiences were considered equally legitimate targets for U.S. psychological warfare as were people from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Efforts to educate the public, as one leading diplomatic put it, became the “point at which domestic and foreign policies meet.”<sup>17</sup>

Dwight Eisenhower shared Truman’s conviction that the high stakes in the Cold War precluded a U.S. retreat from a position of world leadership. However, both during his election campaign of 1952 and in the first months of his presidency, Eisenhower repeatedly expressed concerns over the costly expansion of the federal bureaucracy which took place during Truman’s administration. It seems, therefore, counterintuitive for a president as wary of government spending as Eisenhower to establish the USIA, a new foreign information program for which the annual cost would increase by over twenty per cent in its first two years to nearly \$90 million. Yet, the USIA reflected deeper assumptions behind the administration’s policies.

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<sup>17</sup> George F. Kennan, “Moscow Embassy Telegram #511: ‘The Long Telegram,’” in *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, ed. Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 63.

Eisenhower established the USIA because he strongly believed in the stated purposes of the program. As he observed in 1953, the United States had “assumed a position of leadership among the free nations of the world” and he took that responsibility seriously. In the zero-sum context of the Cold War, he argued, the United States could not afford any “slackness, confusion, blurred authority and clouded responsibility” in its implementation of foreign information programs. In this context, the USIA represented an earnest attempt to improve the efficiency of a program which Eisenhower considered essential to U.S. Cold War objectives. The new program was in fact implemented with the goal of streamlining and reducing the costs of pre-existing agencies and programs.<sup>18</sup> It also reflected Eisenhower’s celebrated commitment to organization, discipline, and responsibility, which he had repeatedly demonstrated throughout his military career.

Although several historians have noted Eisenhower’s affinity for psychological warfare, the general historiographical trend has been to minimize the importance of psychological warfare in the actual conduct of Eisenhower’s foreign policy. John Lewis Gaddis, Blanche Wiesen Cook, and H.W. Brands are among the historians who emphasize nuclear weapons, alliances, and negotiations over propaganda.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the record reveals that, at least in 1953, psychological warfare was not a mere “side show to the more important military, economic, and political components” of the Cold War. Instead, as Kenneth Osgood demonstrates in his groundbreaking monograph *Total Cold War*, Eisenhower “saw psychological warfare

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<sup>18</sup> “Special Message to Congress on the Organization of the Executive Branch for the Conduct of Foreign Affairs, June 1, 1953,” in *Eisenhower Public Papers*, 342.

<sup>19</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Reappraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Blanche Wiesen Cook, *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1981). H.W. Brands, *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower’s Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

considerations as inseparable from other elements of security strategy.”<sup>20</sup> For Eisenhower and other psychological warriors in his administration, propaganda was considered as much a weapon as nuclear arms.

The insertion of psychological warfare to a place of prominence in the historiography of Eisenhower’s foreign policy directly challenges a central tenet of Eisenhower revisionists who extol the “overriding aim of his foreign policy—reducing Cold War tensions and achieving détente with the Soviet Union.” Revisionists place the blame for Eisenhower’s failure to achieve détente upon staunch anti-communists within his own party, various U.S. allies, especially those in Western Europe, and Eisenhower’s own lack of success in gaining the full trust of the Soviet leadership.<sup>21</sup> A re-examination of Eisenhower’s foreign policy that acknowledges the role of psychological warfare suggests that Eisenhower specifically targeted U.S. allies, the American public, and neutral nations with psychological warfare with the intent to “discredit Soviet peace overtures, fortify Western resolve, [and] discourage neutralism.” In December 1953, for example, Eisenhower deliberately designed peace proposals to ensure that U.S. citizens and allies would find them credible while the Soviet Union would find cause to reject them. In this way, Eisenhower was able to *appear* to be the champion of peace while in fact he remained committed to winning the Cold War by all “methods short of war.”<sup>22</sup>

Due to the nature of this study, it is necessary to rely to a large extent on official government records to trace the institutional developments of propaganda and psychological

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<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Osgood, “Form Before Substance: Eisenhower’s Commitment to Psychological Warfare and Negotiations with the Enemy” *Diplomatic History* 24 no. 3 (Summer 2000):405. See also Osgood, *Total Cold War*.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 10. See also Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), and Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Osgood, “Form Before Substance,” 409. See also Department of State, “NSC 20/4: Note by the Executive Secretary on U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Volume I*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), 668. The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series will hereafter be cited as *FRUS*.

warfare agencies. These records include documents from the State Department as well as those included in the collections of the public papers of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower. Whenever possible, however, the analysis progresses beyond official documents and public statements by consulting personal and private records to ascertain the attitudes, ideology, priorities, and even fears of those individuals who were ultimately responsible for the establishment of government propaganda and psychological warfare agencies. As one might expect, the degree to which this is possible varies. For example, while Roosevelt seems to have kept his personal feelings on the subject to himself, leaving historians to offer conclusions based largely on his actions, Eisenhower and his staff, as Stephen Rabe describes, “were inveterate diarists, memoirists, notetakers, and recorders of conversation.”<sup>23</sup> The objective, then, is to expose not only how policymakers used, but also how they thought and felt about, psychological warfare.

This analysis builds upon existing literature which describes the unprecedented expansion of the size and scope of the U.S. federal government that occurred during the early years of the Cold War. Previous works, such as Michael Hogan’s *A Cross of Iron* and Melvyn Leffler’s *A Preponderance of Power*, have detailed the relationship between the growth of the state and foreign policy in this period.<sup>24</sup> However, this study begins before the Second World War to reflect the fact that there can scarcely be found a more profound period of change in the ways in which U.S. government officials viewed and employed state-sponsored propaganda than the fifteen year period from 1938 to 1953.

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<sup>23</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism: The Scholarly Debate” in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941*, ed. Michael J. Hogan, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 300.

<sup>24</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992).

The Cold War was as much about world opinion as it was about the number of soldiers or nuclear weapons of either of the two competing superpowers. Every instance of military intervention throughout the so-called Third World by either the United States or the Soviet Union was joined by the need to convince entire populations of the righteousness of their cause. Psychological warfare, and propaganda in particular, was the means by which the United States sought to convince the world that it stood for liberty, the Soviet Union aimed to portray itself as the champion of global justice, and both superpowers attempted to avoid being labelled as self-serving empires.<sup>25</sup> Prior to 1953, the United States was at risk of losing the battle for hearts and minds. Eisenhower's commitment to and understanding of psychological warfare led to a renewal of U.S. efforts, and the resultant ability of the U.S. government to more effectively manage its image both abroad and at home would change the face of the conflict.

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<sup>25</sup> I am borrowing from Westad, who, in his analysis of the Cold War, labels the United States the "Empire of Liberty," and the Soviet Union the "Empire of Justice." See Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

## Chapter 1: New Beginnings (1940-1945)

“We live in a propaganda age. Public opinion no longer is formulated by the slow processes of what Professor John Dewey calls shared experience. In our time public opinion is primarily a response to propaganda stimuli.”

*-Eduard C. Lindeman, President of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, 1940<sup>26</sup>*

“It now becomes our time to be the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beast to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels.”

*-Henry R. Luce, editor of Life, 17 February 1941<sup>27</sup>*

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<sup>26</sup> Lindeman qtd. in the introduction to Harold Lavine and James Wechsler, *War Propaganda and the United States*, Published for the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1940), vii.

<sup>27</sup> Henry R. Luce, “The American Century,” *Life* 17 February 1941, 65.

In the years immediately preceding the Second World War, virtually all of the great powers came to recognize the importance and potential of state-orchestrated propaganda. The increasing public access to information via the printed press, radio, cinema, and eventually television, created novel opportunities for state officials to influence public sentiment at home and world opinion abroad. As tensions increased and boiled over during the 1930s, Italy's Ministry for Popular Culture, the French General Commissariat for Information, Britain's Ministry of Information, the various Soviet reporting agencies, including *Pravda*, Japan's Information Bureau, and Nazi Germany's Reich Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda employed propaganda to advance the interests of their respective governments.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, by the end of the decade there remained only one country among the major powers that did not yet have an official state agency for propaganda: the United States.

Even after nearly a year of astoundingly efficient and one-sided victories of German forces over Polish and Western European armies, during the summer months of 1940 the United States, technically still a neutral power, proved remarkably hesitant to form such an agency. Richard Steele argues that this was due in part to the fact that, unlike the other great powers, the United States suffered from "an inability to conceive of war as an immediate possibility." This denial, coupled with a general apathy among industrialists and their workers toward the war in Europe, was increasingly problematic for the administration of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt

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<sup>28</sup> See Manuela A. Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad: Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940*, (London: Routledge, 2006), Robert J. Young, *Marketing Marianne: French Propaganda in America, 1900-1940*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004), Robert Cole, *Britain and the War of Words in Neutral Europe, 1939-1945: The Art of the Possible*, (Houndsmills: Macmillan Press, 1990), Mariel Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Inter-War Britain*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), Kevin J. McKenna, *All the Views Fit to Print: Changing Images of the U.S. in Pravda Political Cartoons, 1917-1991*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), Martin Ebon, *The Soviet Propaganda Machine*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987), Peter De Menelsohn, *Japan's Political Warfare*, (New York: Arno Press, 1972), Ernest K. Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialists Propaganda, 1925-1945*, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1965), and William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 245, 247-248.

as the production of munitions promised to Britain by Roosevelt's government consistently fell behind schedule. For this reason, among others which will be examined in the following pages, by the winter of 1940-1941 key officials within the Roosevelt Administration petitioned the reluctant president to create a government information agency.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of a state propaganda agency was not an entirely new one in the United States. Within a week of the April 1917 Congressional declaration of war that committed U.S. military forces to an Allied victory in the First World War, then-President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI) by executive order and appointed the Missouri newspaperman George Creel as its head. Creel's immediate task was to galvanize domestic support for the war effort. However, the CPI was also quickly charged with the dissemination of official U.S. propaganda abroad. Creel and his staff successfully used radio, cinema, newspapers, pamphlets, posters, and public speakers. The CPI extolled the virtues of American democracy to its audience while simultaneously painting the so-called German menace "as the very antithesis of the American tradition." While many Americans recognized and applauded the social progress in Germany in the decades leading up to the war, CPI propaganda chose instead to disparage the German proclivity for authoritarian government.<sup>30</sup>

By and large, the CPI succeeded in its objectives, especially in its pursuit of a strengthened and dedicated home front. Although both the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 technically made it illegal to express dissent for the U.S. war effort, Mock and Larson contend that "for most people no law was necessary. The Committee on Public Information had done its work so well that there was a burning eagerness to believe, to conform,

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Steele, "Preparing the Public for War: Efforts to Establish a National Propaganda Agency, 1940-41," *American Historical Review* 75, no. 6 (October 1970): 1640.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 61.

to feel the exaltation of joining in a great and selfless enterprise.”<sup>31</sup> Critics of the CPI, on the other hand, argued that the agency had overreached, with deleterious consequences to American culture. The by-product of the CPI’s sensationalist propaganda and its inclination to deliberately distort the truth was a frenzy of narrow-minded chauvinism and militarism which in turn fuelled repression. Throughout 1917 and 1918, for example, German immigrants became the target of contempt, suspicion, and violence at the hands of U.S. citizens who carried the CPI’s anti-German propaganda to extremes. “From the moment the United States had declared war on Germany,” recalled Theodore Ladenburger, a German Jew who had immigrated to the United States twenty-five years earlier, “I was made to feel the pinpricks of an invisible but so much more hurtful and pernicious ostracism as a traitor to my adopted country.”<sup>32</sup> A similar trend persisted even after the armistice of November 1918 as the CPI employed similar tactics to produce many of the tensions of the Red Scare in the spring of 1919. The strained atmosphere created in part by the CPI in the post-war United States was a major factor in the Congressional decision to discontinue funding and disband the propaganda agency in the summer of 1919.<sup>33</sup>

The experiment of the CPI left many Americans with a sour taste for propaganda. In the years following the war, an increasing number of Americans recognized the role propaganda had played in persuading them to support a war which many now believed they had had no business fighting. As Allan Winkler points out, for many Americans “Creel had oversold his product. Propaganda became a scapegoat in the post-war period of disillusion.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1939), 6.

<sup>32</sup> Ladenburger qtd. in Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I*, (De Kalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 227-228.

<sup>33</sup> Steele, “Preparing the Public for War,” 1642. See also Richard W. Steele, “The Great Debate: Roosevelt, the Media, and the Coming of War, 1940-1941,” *Journal of American History* 71, no. 1 (June 1984): 70 and Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1978), 3.

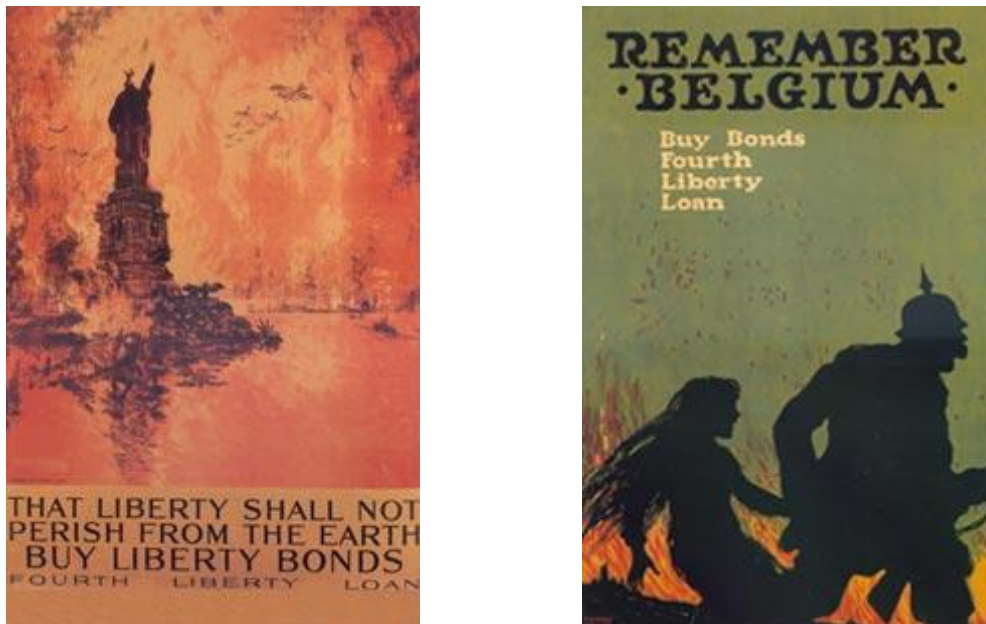


Figure 1. While CPI posters like the one on the left, created by Joseph Pennell, played on long-standing traditions and themes in American history to elicit support domestically, others like Ellsworth Young's depiction of the "Hun's Rape of Belgium" portrayed Germany as a barbaric state. Both tactics produced much pro-war hysteria during the two years of CPI propaganda.<sup>35</sup>

The post-mortem analysis of the CPI also raised critical questions about the ethics of propaganda in a democratic society. Through its creation and censorship of material published for mass consumption, the CPI had walked a decidedly fine line between informing and manipulating the American public. While individualism had always formed such an enduring and celebrated element of American culture, the CPI was blamed for describing the United States "in almost mythical terms, subordinating the individual to the country's broader need."<sup>36</sup> As Americans grappled with post-war disillusionment, propaganda was increasingly viewed as "inherently antidemocratic" and a dangerous "kind of highly powerful brainwashing technique

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Pennell, "That Liberty Shall Not Perish from the Earth," c. 1917, online collection *Poster Art of World War I*, PBS, *American Experience* and Ellsworth Young, "Remember Belgium," c. 1917, online collection *Poster Art of World War I*, PBS, *American Experience*. Both images can be accessed at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/gallery/posters.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 234.

that no one exposed to it could withstand.”<sup>37</sup> These feelings only grew stronger in the United States during the interwar period with the abuses and combination of propaganda and technology by the governments of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.<sup>38</sup> However, the growing spectre of fascism and the dire plight of Allied forces in Europe in the latter half of 1940 reopened the debate on the need for, and indeed desirability of, the creation of an official state-run propaganda agency in the United States.

Of particular concern to top U.S. officials was the growing influence of Italy and, to a greater extent, Germany in Latin America. Despite improvements in U.S.-Latin American relations stemming from Roosevelt’s “good-neighbor” approach to the region, Italian and German propaganda efforts went essentially unchecked by U.S. countermeasures until 1938. The Nazi propaganda machine was particularly effective at reiterating the five main points that it used to undermine the United States and gain increasing favour for the Reich from certain Latin American republics.<sup>39</sup> These arguments included claims that Central America was already under the complete subjugation of the United States and that Roosevelt desired a similar arrangement with South America; that involvement in a European war by any of the Latin American republics would spell doom for South America; and that the “cowardly and corrupt” governments of Central America had sold their countries to U.S. capitalists. The most compelling and enduring

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<sup>37</sup> Mordercai Lee, *The First Presidential Communications Agency*, 75.

<sup>38</sup> The American journalist and historian William Shirer witnessed firsthand the effects of the masterful Nazi propaganda disseminated throughout the Reich under the aegis of Josef Goebbels. “A steady diet over the years of falsifications and distortions made a certain impression on one’s mind and often misled it,” he later recalled. “No one who has not lived for years in a totalitarian land can possibly conceive how difficult it is to escape the dread consequences of a regime’s calculated and incessant propaganda.” As a foreign correspondent for the Universal News Service and later as a radio reporter for CBS, Shirer met several “seemingly educated and intelligent” Germans who, after years of exposure to propaganda, possessed minds “which had become warped and for whom the facts of life had become what Hitler and Goebbels, with their cynical disregard for truth, said they were.” See Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 247-248.

<sup>39</sup> The Nazis made particular progress in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, where nearly all of the 8,000 members of the Nazi Party in Latin America lived. See, for example, Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign Against the Germans of Latin America in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

argument that Nazi propagandists advanced for at least the abstention of Latin America from the war in Europe if not a Latin American-German alliance was rooted in economics. Nazi fifth-columnists in South America successfully convinced many key states in the region that while North America would not absorb all South American exports, “the new Europe is the natural and best market for South America.”<sup>40</sup>

In an effort to respond to these attacks and strengthen regional ties through cultural exchanges between the United States and other countries in the Western Hemisphere, in the summer of 1938 the State Department created the Division of Cultural Relations. The new agency sponsored the distribution of American films, the construction of American schools abroad, and other cultural exchange programs. Unfortunately for the State Department, many of its resources and efforts would be spent reacting to fascist propaganda, a consequence of the United States becoming “the last major power to enter formally the field of cultural diplomacy.”<sup>41</sup>

U.S. State Department officials were given a firsthand display of Axis propaganda success at the Eighth Pan-American Conference of December 1938 in Lima, Peru. John White, who covered the conference for the *New York Times*, reported that it was obvious that the Peruvian government’s “sympathies are intensely fascist.” During the first day of the conference, White described, “Lima appeared to be the site of a great Nazi rally. There were literally thousands of swastika flags all over the city. There were only three American flags on the main street, and one of them was at the American Consulate.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1967), 120.

<sup>41</sup> Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 216.

<sup>42</sup> “Peru: Lima Aftermath,” *Time* 9 January 1939, 23.

In 1939, Nelson Rockefeller travelled around Latin America in an effort to personally determine the impact of Nazi propaganda on U.S. business interests in the region, particularly those of Standard Oil. Rockefeller was alarmed to find that, despite the efforts of the Division of Cultural Relations, Nazi influence appeared to be growing. Upon his return to Washington, Rockefeller convinced Roosevelt to create the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) with Rockefeller as its director.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the Division of Cultural Relations, which was devoted primarily to artistic and academic exchanges, the CIAA can be regarded as a proper propaganda agency. Staffed by private employees, the CIAA disseminated American films, news, and radio broadcasts that cast the United States in as favourable a light as possible. The CIAA also censored material to promote only that which was deemed to receive favourable responses from Latin American audiences. This included not only issuing versions of U.S.-produced material in Spanish and Portuguese, but in some instances even amending American films to include pro-Latin American twists.<sup>44</sup> State sponsorship of these and other propaganda activities of the CIAA “inaugurated a new tradition in U.S. foreign policy.” That support increased dramatically in the first years of CIAA operations as the agency’s budget swelled from \$3.5 million at its inception to nearly \$40 million in 1943.<sup>45</sup>

As U.S. officials increased their efforts to capture the hearts and minds of Latin American republics, Nazi propagandists began directly targeting U.S. citizens. In late 1939 Reich Minister for People’s Enlightenment and Propaganda Josef Goebbels launched what Frye labels “the most

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<sup>43</sup> The agency was initially created in August 1940 as the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics. Executive Order 8840, issued by Roosevelt on 30 July 1941, created the CIAA. See “Executive Order 8840 Establishing the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.” Accessed online at *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16152#axzz1reldxgTa>

<sup>44</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 207.

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 29.

intensive of all Nazi propaganda efforts in the United States.”<sup>46</sup> The aim of this campaign, according to Goebbels, “was to prevent Roosevelt’s re-election, to make sure a re-elected Roosevelt cannot, as Wilson did in his time, agitate for the entry of the United States into the war.”<sup>47</sup> Throughout 1940 Nazi propagandists released doctored correspondence from the late 1930s between U.S. diplomats and their counterparts in Poland, France, Britain, and other European countries urging them to adopt a strong posture against Germany and pledging immediate U.S. assistance in the event of war against the Axis powers. As a consequence, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull continually had to issue assurances to the Allies and the American public that the documents had been manufactured in a blatant Nazi attempt to undermine Roosevelt. Nevertheless Nazi propaganda still gained much attention in the U.S. media and especially among isolationists, including Congressman Jacob Thorkelson of Montana, who successfully petitioned for the admission into the *Congressional Record* of a staged interview with Hitler published in the *New York Journal-American*.<sup>48</sup>

Goebbels’ propaganda may not have prevented Roosevelt’s re-election in November 1940, but it was making life increasingly difficult for U.S. officials, particularly those in the State Department, leading many in Roosevelt’s administration to press the president more directly for the creation of an official information agency with a more global mandate than that of Rockefeller’s CIAA. Foremost among these was Harold Ickes who was, at least until 1940, one of Roosevelt’s most dedicated advisors. Ickes, who was appointed Secretary of the Interior in 1933, had a reputation for honesty, courage, and a “fierce determination to fight for what was right.” The curmudgeonly Ickes was also, however, described as “crusty” and “pugnacious” and

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<sup>46</sup> Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere*, 129.

<sup>47</sup> Josef Goebbels qtd. in *The Secret Conferences of Dr. Goebbels: The Nazi Propaganda War, 1939-1940*, edited by Willi A. Boelcke, translated from the German by Ewald Osers, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1970), 27.

<sup>48</sup> Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere*, 132-133, 136.

had, as Cordell Hull described, “an unfortunate approach to problems which not infrequently antagonized others.” Still, because of his unrelenting determination, many of Ickes’ contemporaries remembered him as one of the best secretaries of the interior in U.S. history.<sup>49</sup> In the months before the United States officially entered the war in December 1941, Ickes, who was one of the first high-ranking executive officials to publicly condemn the Nazis and the advocates of isolationism, at times made diplomacy unduly awkward for the State Department by publicly referring to Hitler as “Esau, the Hairy Ape.”<sup>50</sup>

By the end of 1940 Ickes had become disillusioned with Roosevelt for what he perceived to be the president’s “lack of aggressive leadership,” which Ickes felt only encouraged the appeasement movement in the United States.<sup>51</sup> Ickes wrote in his diary that he was frustrated by Roosevelt’s failure to take the “country into our confidence with a view to educating it as to what the immediate future may hold for us.” Ickes also recalled a meeting he had with the Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, on 2 August 1940, at which the latter told Ickes of a group of publicists, writers, and radio broadcasters who had declared to him their intention of embarking on a campaign to educate the public about the impending threat of war. When MacLeish asked

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<sup>49</sup> Graham White and John Maze, *Harold Ickes of the New Deal: His Private Life and Public Career*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 1-4. White and Maze call Ickes’ *Secret Diary*, discovered after his death and published in 1955, “the most vivid and intimate account of the inner history of the Roosevelt administration. It allows us to observe...the messy processes of official decisionmaking; the rancorous controversies that disturbed the affairs of state.” See Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Volume III: The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955). For Hull’s appraisal of Ickes, see, Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Volume I*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), 209.

<sup>50</sup> White and Maze, *Harold Ickes of the New Deal*, 4.

<sup>51</sup> Ickes had little doubt that it was only a matter of time before the United States entered the war and he thus became increasingly sceptical of Roosevelt’s suitability as a wartime commander-in-chief. By the spring of 1941 he evidently had so little faith in the president’s wartime decision-making abilities that he told John McCloy, the assistant secretary of war, that had he been aware of Roosevelt’s indecisiveness in 1940 he would not have supported Roosevelt’s bid for a third term. White and Maze suggest that some of Ickes’ misgivings and resentment may have stemmed from Roosevelt’s decision not to include Ickes in his “War Cabinet.” In July 1940 Ickes had indeed been passed over for the post of Secretary of War, which he very much coveted, in favour of Henry Stimson. When Ickes finally confronted the president about his disappointment more than a year later, Roosevelt hinted to Ickes that he had not received an appointment to the War Cabinet because of his noted interminable indiscretion. See White and Maze, *Harold Ickes of the New Deal*, 197, 206, 215, 218.

Ickes if the group should wait for Roosevelt “to organize an agency for propaganda,” Ickes responded that, on the contrary, they should “start immediately without waiting for anybody, that we had already lost too much valuable time.”<sup>52</sup>

It is impossible to tell from Ickes’ diary specifically to what individuals MacLeish was referring, but by the latter half of 1940 there were indeed many interventionist organizations and individuals who used the media to disseminate their propaganda. As a Gallup poll from September 1940 suggests, Americans were virtually equally divided on the issue of intervention in the war in Europe.<sup>53</sup> Thus, both interventionists and isolationists undertook propaganda campaigns with the hope that they could gain enough public support for their cause to force the hand of the federal government and ultimately dictate the course of U.S. foreign policy. Throughout 1940 and 1941, groups like the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, the Century Group, and the Council for Democracy advocated for varying degrees of U.S. involvement in the war, while the America First Committee, by far the largest and most influential force for non-intervention in the United States, countered with arguments that even “‘aid short of war’ weakens national defense at home and threatens to involve America in war abroad.”<sup>54</sup>

With a national debate brewing between interventionists and isolationists, and with the continued bedevilment of Nazi propaganda, Ickes claims that it was he who, in November 1940, “suggested that we ought to set up some machinery for propaganda.” Ickes proposal was reportedly favourably received by President Roosevelt who suggested that Ickes head a special

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<sup>52</sup> Ickes, *Secret Diary*, “Sunday, August 4, 1940,” 289.

<sup>53</sup> On 23 September Gallup asked “which of these two things do you think is the most important for the United States to try to do—to keep out of war ourselves, or to help England win, even at the risk of getting into the war?” 48% of respondents answered “keep out” while 52% answered “help England.” See Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*, 243.

<sup>54</sup> On the various interventionist groups, see, for example, Mark Lincoln Chadwin, *The Hawks of World War II*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), and “New Group Maps Democracy Drive,” *New York Times* 10 October 1940, 22. For the America First Committee, see Wayne S. Cole, *America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940-1941*, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953).

committee, consisting of the chief of the Federal Security Agency, Paul McNutt, John McCloy who, in 1941, was appointed assistant secretary of war, and presidential advisor Louis Brownlow, to determine the structure and objectives of a state-sponsored information agency.<sup>55</sup> On 29 November the Ickes Committee submitted its proposal to Roosevelt.

It is difficult to ascertain Roosevelt's exact level of commitment for, or even belief in the desirability of, the creation of an official propaganda agency during the earliest months of 1941. Lee suggests that, because of the abuses of the CPI that Roosevelt had witnessed in his capacity as assistant secretary of the navy during the First World War, he was decidedly opposed to the creation of a single agency to oversee the dissemination of government propaganda.<sup>56</sup> Other scholars contend that any misgivings the president had about implementing government propaganda were erased in the aftermath of two fact-finding missions conducted by Roosevelt's trusted friend and advisor William Donovan. In July and August of 1940, Donovan, at the behest of the head of the British secret service in the Americas, William S. Stephenson, and with the approval of Roosevelt, travelled to England to witness firsthand the effects of Nazi propaganda on the British public. According to editorial remarks in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, after Donovan's trip, during which he had met with King George VI, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the British Chiefs of Staff, and other top officials, "it was apparent that the United States and other democracies had to sharpen their own weapons and devise new ones, in order to roll back the wave of Nazi propaganda and carry the war of words and morale to the Axis."<sup>57</sup> A second trip by Donovan from New Year's Eve 1940 to 18

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<sup>55</sup> Ickes, "9 November 1940," *Secret Diary*, 368.

<sup>56</sup> Lee, *The First Presidential Communications Agency*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> See editorial comments in Franklin D. Roosevelt, "White House Statement Announcing the President's Appointment of William J. Donovan as Coordinator of Information, July 11, 1941," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Volume X, 1941, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), 265. Hereafter cited as *Roosevelt Public Papers*. See also Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan*, (New York: Times Books, 1982), 149.

March 1941, which took him through war zones in Gibraltar, Cairo, Athens, Belgrade, Baghdad, and other centres of vital strategic importance, reinforced the perception that propaganda was a critical weapon in the war against fascism. Donovan was particularly concerned with the utter collapse of U.S. State Department operations in Europe which left the *New York Times* as the leading source for information from the continent. “Intelligence operations,” Donovan reported to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox upon his return to the United States, “is one of the most vital means of national defense.”<sup>58</sup> Brown argues that Roosevelt was receptive to Donovan’s insistence that strategy without intelligence was destined to fail and similarly, that intelligence without a mind given to its strategic application was useless. This understanding on Roosevelt’s part has been credited as the primary driving factor in the president’s ultimate decision several months later to implement a propaganda agency.<sup>59</sup>

However, Roosevelt was also criticized by some of his top aides for his naïveté and support for half measures concerning propaganda. An example of the former is Roosevelt’s suggestion in February 1941 that George Creel be placed in charge of a newly-created agency. Recalling the severe interwar backlash by many Americans against Creel’s CPI, Ickes told the president that “Creel had a good many enemies in the country” and “that there was no reason why the President should take on any of Creel’s enemies.”<sup>60</sup> Later that same month, the *New York Times* reported that Roosevelt toyed with the idea of transforming the Office of Government Reports (OGR), at the time a temporary agency responsible for both keeping the president apprised of public opinion and keeping the public informed of government activity, into a permanent agency for government propaganda. It is likely, however, that such a measure

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<sup>58</sup> Donovan qtd. in Brown, *The Last Hero*, 161.

<sup>59</sup> Brown, *The Last Hero*, 160, 164.

<sup>60</sup> Ickes, “8 February 1941,” *Secret Diary*, 426.

would have drawn sharp opposition from Republicans who already criticized the OGR as an instrument of Democratic domestic propaganda.<sup>61</sup>

Ickes, McCloy, Undersecretary of the Navy James Forrestal, U.S. Solicitor General (and soon-to-be Attorney General) Francis Biddle, and other leading proponents of an information agency opposed the integration of a new agency into the OGR on the grounds that Lowell Mellett, head of the OGR, lacked any real understanding of the importance of propaganda to the war. The OGR chief refused to accept the opinion of Ickes and the others that “one of the most potent forces in a war is the building and maintaining of morale,” and instead held the view that “no one could tell Americans what to do or how to think.” Therefore, according to Mellett, attempts to bolster domestic morale through propaganda would be senseless. Ickes in particular was furious with Mellett’s assessment, writing in his diary that Mellett was “certain in his own mind that we do not need either to build up morale in our own people or to do anything in the way of counterpropaganda either at home or in the Americas. It was all I could do to keep my temper and be reasonably courteous.”<sup>62</sup>

In early March Roosevelt informed his cabinet that any discussions of a propaganda agency would have to be postponed until he could secure passage in Congress of his Lend-Lease proposals. Public opinion polls suggested barely half of Americans supported the president’s proposed bill and with prominent figures like Charles Lindbergh addressing Congress directly in opposition to the bill, Roosevelt felt that he and his staff could not afford any distractions.<sup>63</sup> On

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<sup>61</sup> “Propaganda Aim Seen in New Bill,” *New York Times* 23 February 1941, 23. Mordecai Lee points out that attempts to label the OGR as a propaganda agency were misguided as most of the information disseminated by the agency was done at the request of public individuals and not on the government’s initiative. See Lee, *The First Presidential Communications Agency*, 83.

<sup>62</sup> Ickes, *Secret Diary*, 445. Mellett qtd. in same.

<sup>63</sup> On 10 February Gallup asked respondents “do you think Congress should pass the President’s Lend-Lease Bill?” 54% answered “yes,” 22% answered “no,” but a further 15% responded with a “qualified” yes. 9% of respondents had “no opinion.” Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*, 263. See also “Colonel Lindbergh Tells House Committee He Hopes Neither Side Will Win the War,” *Life* 3 February 1941, 18.

12 March Ickes had become so frustrated by the lack of progress in the establishment of an information agency that he wrote the president, asking that he be excused from any responsibility for doing so. “For a long time I had been trying to get something started along these lines,” Ickes wrote the following day in his diary. “I hadn’t succeeded. I wasn’t making any more progress than a squirrel in a cage.” Roosevelt encouraged Ickes to continue to meet with Mellett, but in April Ickes flatly told the president during a cabinet meeting that “I haven’t any intention of talking to Lowell Mellett.” Subsequent efforts by Mellett, whom Ickes described as “abysmally ignorant on the subject matter,” to meet were rebuffed by Ickes’ instructions to his secretary that should Mellett make any attempts to arrange a meeting he was to be told that Ickes “was not to be reached.”<sup>64</sup>

Steele’s claim that “the efforts of Ickes and other supporters of the morale agency were finally rewarded in May [1941] when the White House announced the creation of an Office of Civil Defense” (OCD) elides Ickes’ attitude, which in fact was one of pronounced disappointment with the organizational framework of the new agency.<sup>65</sup> While some observers regarded the creation of the OCD as a step in the right direction for the U.S. government in its struggle against Axis propaganda, critics immediately argued that the dual mandate of the OCD’s first director, New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, “to facilitate constructive civilian participation in the defense program, and to sustain national morale” was completely unmanageable for one individual. Ernest K. Lindley of the *Washington Post* described the directorship as “probably the unwieldiest assignment in the whole defense administration.” The assignment, Lindley explained, embraced “everything from protecting civilians from bomb raids that may never come, to seeing that babies get proper food, and includes the amorphous

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<sup>64</sup> Ickes, “13 March 194” *Secret Diary* 483 and “April 1941” *Secret Diary*, 519.

<sup>65</sup> Steele, “Preparing the Public for War,” 1648.

assignment of ‘civilian morale.’”<sup>66</sup> La Guardia was to be responsible for preparing and educating the entire civilian population of the United States through defence drills and infrastructure development for the possibility of air and naval attacks. The ‘national morale,’ or propaganda, component of his mandate, on the other hand, lacked any clear definition or policy.

“This is just what I hoped would not happen,” Ickes wrote five days after Roosevelt announced the creation of the OCD. He continued:

Here are two very big jobs, each one of which will take all the time and resources that any man possesses. Yet Fiorello La Guardia is to run these two jobs, continue as mayor of New York, campaign for re-election, and at the same time operate as chairman of the Joint United States-Canadian Defense Board. It is absurd on the face of it.

Ickes believed that no one in the United States was better qualified to coordinate civilian defence, but stated the obvious fact that “Fiorello is not God and he has to eat and sleep like other human beings.”<sup>67</sup>

Indeed the job soon proved to be more than any one person could handle. Analyzing defence and evacuation plans for cities across the entire country, advising the president on the types of materials and other resources required for defence, coordinating between various fire and air raid agencies, and other exhausting tasks, combined with incessant commuting between Washington and New York and La Guardia’s proclivity for micromanagement, took their toll on the director. During the summer of 1941 it was rare for La Guardia not to be seen with revealing black circles around his eyes. Few doubted his commitment to civilian defence, however. On the contrary, La Guardia was soon criticized for his overzealousness by a public that could scarcely imagine an attack on U.S. cities. During the summer of 1941, according to Kessner, presidential

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<sup>66</sup> Ernest K. Lindley, “La Guardia and the Civil Defense Program,” *Washington Post* 25 May 1941, B5.

<sup>67</sup> Ickes, “Sunday, 25 May 1941,” 518.

advisor Bernard Baruch “confided to Harold Ickes that La Guardia was getting in the president’s hair.”<sup>68</sup>

For all of his dedication to civilian defence, La Guardia gave virtually no attention to, nor did he seem to display much interest in, propaganda.<sup>69</sup> The failure of the Roosevelt Administration to implement any sort of effective information agency became glaringly apparent in June 1941, when Ickes was forced to act on his own initiative to take on Goebbels’ masterful propaganda machine. The incident in question stemmed from the publication in both *Life* and the *New York Times* of an interview that had taken place between American diplomat-turned-reporter John Cudahy and Adolf Hitler at the Führer’s Berghof at Berchtesgaden on 23 May. The interview had been arranged by Josef Goebbels who saw it as an excellent opportunity to strike at the growing interventionist movement in the United States. Cudahy, who had served as U.S. ambassador to Poland, Ireland, and Belgium before retiring from the Foreign Service in November 1940 to become a correspondent for *Life*, had previously interviewed Goebbels in April 1941. During the interview, published in *Life* in May, Goebbels had “deprecated as chimerical the notion of German troops landing on American soil.” The Reich Minister for People’s Enlightenment and Propaganda was evidently so impressed by Cudahy’s seeming willingness to ‘objectively’ report the Nazi government’s position that after the interview he informed his staff that he would “try to get the Führer and Cudahy together.” For Goebbels, there was “no doubt that opposition to Roosevelt” during the spring of 1941 was “growing in America from hour to hour” and he was adamant that an interview between Cudahy and Hitler

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1989), 493-495.

<sup>69</sup> Steele, “Preparing the Public for War,” 1648.

would “add that two per cent in order to increase the percentage of non-interventionists from 49 to 51.”<sup>70</sup>

During his interview at the Berghof, Cudahy told Hitler that “the primary cause of opposition to Germany in the United States was based upon the sentiment that the security of the Western Hemisphere was threatened by German aggression.” Cudahy reported that the Führer “laughed at that and refused to take me seriously. He said that the idea of a Western Hemisphere invasion was about as fantastic as an invasion of the moon,” and had been implanted in the psyche of Americans by warmongering capitalists who believed war would be profitable for business. Hitler went on to assuage concerns that a German victory in Europe would be characterized by mass-enslavement by claiming that “his formula for the future of Europe was ‘peace, prosperity, and happiness’ for everyone.”<sup>71</sup>

Ickes was incensed by this propaganda blitz. As previously mentioned, the pugnacious secretary of the interior was loath to hide his contempt for Hitler, whom he described in his autobiography as a “rangy (or is ‘mangy’ the word?) beast,” and as such felt compelled to respond immediately to the Cudahy interview, without waiting for the president’s approval.<sup>72</sup> It is worthwhile to note at this juncture that Ickes had actually become Cudahy’s nephew-in-law

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<sup>70</sup> John Cudahy, “Goebbels on Invasion of America,” *Life* 5 May 1941, 32 and Boelcke, *The Secret Conferences of Dr. Goebbels*, 152-153. Goebbels’ assessment of support for Roosevelt in the United States was a characteristic misrepresentation of facts. In March the president was able to sign his Lend-Lease Bill after the House of Representatives and Senate voted, respectively, 260 to 165 and 59 to 30, in favour of the bill. Further, Gallup poll data from the spring of 1941 suggests that Roosevelt’s presidential approval rating actually *increased* during this period. Gallup asked respondents “in general, do you approve or disapprove of Franklin Roosevelt as President?” and “in general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Franklin Roosevelt is handling his job as President today?” In January, 71% of respondents answered in the affirmative and that number steadily increased to 72% in March, 73% in April, and an astounding 76% in June. For comparison, only two of the last eight presidents, dating back to Richard M. Nixon, have achieved such a high job approval rating: George H.W. Bush, who managed such a high rating only once outside of the months immediately surrounding the Gulf War, and his son George W. Bush, whose 76%-or-better ratings were confined between the first days after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 to 29 May 2002. See Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*, 262, 269, 274, 286 and “Presidential Popularity Over Time,” *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara* at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php>.

<sup>71</sup> For the complete interview, see John Cudahy, “Hitler on Americas,” *Life* 9 June 1941, 34-36. Excerpts were printed in “Hitler Ridicules U.S. Fears, Holds Nazi Attack Wild Idea,” *New York Times* 6 June 1941, 1-2.

<sup>72</sup> Harold L. Ickes, *The Autobiography of a Curmudgeon*, (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1943), 222.

upon the former's marriage to the Cudahy's niece, Jane Dahlman, in Dublin in 1938 when Cudahy was still U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. Despite this connection, in an article printed in the *New York Times* five days after publication of the Berghof interview, Ickes called Cudahy "simple-minded" for denying that Hitler was both a "mind-prisoner" and a "master propagandist." Although Ickes referred to Cudahy as "merely a megaphone through which Hitler is graciously permitted to shout his obscenities into the ears of Americans," Ickes stopped short of implying that his uncle-in-law was a Nazi sympathizer. Instead, Ickes charged, "Simple Simon" was merely naïve. However, such naïveté as that possessed by "our innocent abroad," Ickes warned, "would be touching if it were not dangerous."<sup>73</sup> That Ickes felt so obligated to personally formulate a response to Hitler in light of the complete lack of an effective official propaganda agency highlights the authentic, immediate, and persistent threat that Nazi propaganda continued to pose to the Roosevelt Administration.

On the surface, it appeared that, by July 1941, Roosevelt was prepared to initiate an effective U.S. propaganda program. On 11 July the president appointed William Donovan Coordinator of Information (COI) to address the shortcomings of the OCD's 'national morale' mandate. The COI was tasked with "carrying on unorthodox warfare outside of the Western Hemisphere" and "integrating and analyzing for the President the essential military, economic, political, and technological intelligence which was crossing his desk from many sources."<sup>74</sup> However, Ickes' diary reveals that in fact Roosevelt remained reluctant to employ propaganda in

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<sup>73</sup> Ickes also used the article to attack the interview Cudahy had conducted with Goebbels in April. During that interview, Goebbels, like Hitler, dismissed the notion of a German attack of the Western Hemisphere. He told Cudahy that the German General Staff "had made an estimate of the situation from every military angle" and had concluded that an invasion of North America was "impossible." Ickes exposed the fallacy of Goebbels' and Hitler's claims by asking why, if the Nazis meant no harm to the United States, they had ordered such a study from the General Staff in the first place. Harold L. Ickes, "Ickes Says Cudahy is Nazi 'Megaphone,'" *New York Times* 11 June 1941, 5. See also Cudahy, "Goebbels on Invasion of America," 32.

<sup>74</sup>Roosevelt, "White House Statement Announcing the President's Appointment of William J. Donovan as Coordinator of Information," 265.

any overt capacity. In the same month that Roosevelt created the COI, Senator Burton Wheeler, an ardent isolationist who had began making speeches on behalf of the America First Committee immediately after the congressional passage of the Lend-Lease Bill in March, used his franking privilege to issue one million pieces of mail “urging the addressees to protest to the President about sending any soldiers abroad.” Roosevelt was allegedly eager to respond to Wheeler, but insisted to Frank Knox that “it must be done quietly.”<sup>75</sup> Such reticence on the president’s part left Ickes bewildered and dismayed. He wondered, privately, why Roosevelt

has set his face so against anything in the way of straightforward propaganda. All other countries use propaganda and it can be a very formidable weapon as witness the success that has followed Germany’s use of this weapon. The President has indicated on more than one occasion that he would like to see Wheeler answered, but he not only does nothing about it himself, he is reluctant to have anyone else do anything about it.<sup>76</sup>

Although it is unclear precisely why, whether due to perceived threats from Axis propaganda or from pressure from within his cabinet, Roosevelt issued two presidential orders in October 1941 to more clearly define the division of propaganda among the pre-existing agencies. The first of these orders charged Rockefeller’s CIAA with the exclusive responsibility for broadcasting to Latin America while declaring that the dissemination of U.S. propaganda to Europe and the Far East would be the province of the COI. Donovan’s efforts in this endeavour were to be facilitated by the Foreign Information Service (FIS), led by Robert Sherwood. The second directive instructed the OCD to boost domestic morale by, among other methods, coordinating between military and industry officials. Roosevelt also issued Executive Order 8922, establishing the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF) within the OCD “to facilitate a

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<sup>75</sup> Burton K. Wheeler and Paul F. Healy, *Yankee from the West: The Candid, Turbulent Life Story of the Yankee-born U.S. Senator from Montana*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1962), 29-31 and Roosevelt qtd. in Ickes, “Sunday 17 July 1941,” *Secret Diary*, 589.

<sup>76</sup> Ickes, “Sunday 17 July 1941,” *Secret Diary*, 589.

widespread and accurate understanding of the status and progress of the national defense effort and of the defense policies and activities of the Government,” which included descriptions to the public of the regional and national socioeconomic benefits of military expansion.<sup>77</sup>

The COI and FIS began broadcasting to Europe in October. Almost immediately, however, the joint efforts of the two agencies were plagued by an irreconcilable ideological gulf between Donovan and Sherwood that centred mainly on who should be responsible for the dissemination of U.S. propaganda, and the content of said material. Many of the officials who aided Donovan, Sherwood, and Rockefeller in running their programs came from private media backgrounds. For example, Donovan’s strategy board included former Berlin correspondent to the *New York Herald* Joseph Barnes, whom Donovan appointed head of the News and Editorial Section of the COI, former chief of the *Chicago Daily News* bureau in Berlin, Wallace Deuel, who became special assistant on German affairs, and former *Chicago Tribune* correspondent Edmond Taylor. Further, because the U.S. government was not yet equipped for international broadcasts, Donovan and Sherwood relied on transmitters privately operated by CBS, NBC, General Electric, and other corporations.<sup>78</sup>

Sherwood was content with this arrangement, believing that propaganda should remain the task of private citizens. On the other hand, Donovan, who had served with great distinction as an officer in the U.S. Army during the First World War, believed that propaganda activities should be coordinated by the military in order to increase efficiency. As for content, while

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<sup>77</sup> Archibald MacLeish was appointed director of the OFF. Although MacLeish was technically responsible for answering the public’s questions about the war, after the United States officially entered the war in December 1941 MacLeish found his efforts hampered by increasing control of information by the White House and the War and Navy departments. Much of what MacLeish knew about the war was what he had learned from the media. See Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 155. See also Roosevelt, “White House Statement Announcing the President’s Appointment of William J. Donovan as Coordinator of Information,” 265, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The President Establishes the Office of Facts and Figures, Executive Order No. 8922. October 24, 1941,” in *Roosevelt Public Papers, Volume X*, 426.

<sup>78</sup> James B. Reston, “U.S. Broadcasts News to Europe,” *New York Times* 6 October 1941, 6.

Sherwood held that efforts should be focused solely on the transparent dissemination of ideological, moralistic “truth,” Donovan viewed subversive and covert espionage as far more effective.<sup>79</sup>

Infighting between Donovan and Sherwood did not stop even after the United States officially entered the war in December 1941. The incessant wrangling that occurred in the COI as a result of ideological differences prompted Roosevelt to restructure the U.S. information program and replace the COI with two new agencies. On 13 June 1942, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9182, which created the Office of War Information (OWI). The objective of the OWI, which consolidated the foreign information activities of the COI and the OFF, was to report to both the United States and the rest of the world on “the status and progress of the war effort and of the war policies, activities, and aims of the government.” The Roosevelt Administration hoped that the consolidation of wartime propaganda would eliminate redundancies and competition for “funds, staffs, and spheres of influence.”<sup>80</sup> CBS newsman Elmer Davis was appointed director of the OWI while Sherwood was later assigned to the leadership of the agency’s overseas branch.

On the same day Roosevelt created the OWI, he also established the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which encompassed the remaining offices of the COI. Donovan was appointed director and was re-commissioned to the rank of colonel which he had achieved during the First World War. Given the opinions Donovan held as director of COI, the mandate of the OSS must have pleased him a great deal. While the OSS was to focus primarily on intelligence gathering, it was also given licence to conduct espionage and spread black propaganda behind enemy lines.

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<sup>79</sup> Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors*, 90-94.

<sup>80</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The President Establishes the Office of War Information, Executive Order No. 9182, June 13, 1942,” in *Roosevelt Public Papers, Volume XI*, 275, 279.

That the OSS was to work closely with the U.S. military and under the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also appealed to Donovan.<sup>81</sup>



Figure 2. Two different approaches to OWI propaganda. The poster on the left, created by artist David Stone Martin in 1942, is an example of efforts to blend “contemporary art with the promotion of war aims.” The second poster by Al Parker employs superficial strategies typical of commercial advertisement to promote personal sacrifice.<sup>82</sup>

By the close of 1942 U.S. propaganda had expanded to China and in 1943 the OWI began broadcasting to the Middle East. The agency used leaflets, posters and Voice of America radio broadcasts to disseminate its “factually based yet appropriately slanted news.”<sup>83</sup> Hollywood also became an important partner of the OWI as policymakers recognized the propaganda opportunities of an estimated 80 million Americans attending the cinema each week to view *The Moon is Down*, *Hangmen Also Die*, and other films about the war. Hollywood’s role in helping

<sup>81</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Military Order Establishing the Office of Strategic Services, June 13, 1942,” in *Roosevelt Public Papers, Volume XI*, 283-284.

<sup>82</sup> From the “War Aims Through Art: The U.S. Office of War Information” collection at the *Kenneth E. Behring Center of the Smithsonian Museum of American History*. Available online at: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/victory/victory5.htm>

<sup>83</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 29-30.

to exhort Americans to join the war effort was perceived as so critical that when Clark Gable enlisted in the U.S. Army in August 1942, Kyle Crichton, a writer for *Collier's Magazine*, argued that "Clark Gable shouldn't be allowed to be a soldier. War is too serious for us to be playing sentimental games. He has a duty and Hollywood has a duty and they should be made to stick to it."<sup>84</sup>

The OSS, meanwhile, continued to spread lies created to confuse or undermine the enemy. The agency's success in intelligence-gathering and covert operations justifies the labelling of OSS undertakings as psychological warfare, and not simply propaganda or information activities. Yet disagreements and disputes between the agencies over jurisdiction and content persisted. The conflicts, Laurie avers, centred in large part "on the question of whether Roosevelt's domestic and foreign policies were expressive of true and long-held American traditions...[or] were expressive merely of the views of narrow, liberal extremists."<sup>85</sup> It is interesting to note that many OSS officials were wealthy, Ivy-League educated, and ideologically conservative individuals drawn primarily from the business, legal, and financial professions. Though generally opposed to the New Deal, they nevertheless tended to support Roosevelt's foreign policy and arrived at the OSS armed with strong convictions of the individual's right to political, economic, and personal liberty. OWI officials, however, tended to hold a much more Wilsonian, internationalist worldview of global peace and prosperity through economic and political cooperation. Not only did they generally support the New Deal, many OWI officials in fact hoped that it would be implemented on a global scale after the war.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Kyle Crichton qtd. in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, (London: Cassell, Orion Publishing Group, 2006), 858.

<sup>85</sup> Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors*, 3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

With such immense ideological discrepancies between the OSS and OWI, it is little wonder that U.S. propaganda during the Second World War failed to deliver a single common portrait of the United States or vision for the postwar world. However, in August 1942 Roosevelt instructed his federal departments and agencies, including the OWI and OSS, to cease public disagreements over America's conduct of the war. Such infighting, the president warned, "is of course pounced upon, exploited, and intensified by opponents of our war effort. Our enemies use this raw material of discord provided for them by men who ought to be making trouble for the enemy and not for one another."<sup>87</sup> As for discrepancies between the wartime messages of the OWI and the OSS, these could largely be explained by the Roosevelt Administration's establishment of propaganda agencies without ever formulating an official policy outlining the actual substance of propaganda during the Second World War.

The end of the war led to a swift dismantling of wartime propaganda agencies. In August 1945, Roosevelt's successor, President Harry Truman, abolished the OWI and, one month later, divided the mandate of the OSS between the State and War Departments. Yet many top officials, including Truman, concluded that an overseas program remained essential to U.S. postwar global objectives, and thus the government began anew to define the role of psychological warfare and the institutional structure by which it would be fulfilled.

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<sup>87</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The President Addresses a Letter to Each Federal Department and Agency on Public Disagreements Between Federal Officials, August 21, 1942," in *Roosevelt Public Papers, Volume XI*, 331.

## Chapter 2: New Beginnings Redux (1945-1952)

“The United States should strengthen, maintain and intensify for as long as necessary, a vigorous coordinated foreign information program directed primarily toward the USSR and its armies, Soviet satellites, countries where there is a serious communist threat, and countries not sufficiently aware of real Soviet objectives.”

-“*Draft Report by the National Security Council: Measures Required to Achieve U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR, March 30, 1949*”<sup>88</sup>

“Although the Soviet orbit peoples are undoubtedly more susceptible to subversion by propaganda than those in the free world, both the technical means of reaching them and their ability to respond to propaganda will be increasingly limited unless radically new techniques are developed.”

-Gordon Gray, “*A Program for the Development of New Cold War Instruments*,” 21 October 1952<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Department of State, “Draft Report by the National Security Council: Measures Required to Achieve U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR, March 30, 1949,” in *FRUS, Volume I*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), 275.

<sup>89</sup> Gordon Gray, “A Program for the Development of New Cold War Instruments,” in *Gordon Gray: Papers, 1946-1976, [Box 2 (PSB Personal 1951-1952)]*, Eisenhower Library, 5.

When President Roosevelt created the OWI and the OSS in June 1942, it was generally understood that both agencies were temporary wartime measures. This assumption proved true when, within days of Japan's surrender aboard the *USS Missouri* on 2 September 1945, Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, issued executive orders which abolished both agencies. Truman recognized, however, that "the nature of present-day foreign relations makes it essential for the United States to maintain informational activities abroad as an integral part of the conduct of our foreign affairs," and thus the foreign information activities of both the OWI and the CIAA were transferred to the State Department, while the tasks assigned to the OSS were divided between the State Department and the U.S. Army.<sup>90</sup>

As both the United States and Soviet Union sought to expand their spheres of influence in the immediate post-war period, and tensions increased between the two superpowers, many top officials within the U.S. government concluded that their country was in a new, 'cold' war against the communists, in which the primary field of battle was the hearts and minds of governments and civilians around the world. By 1947, the United States sought to meet this new challenge by increasing its diplomatic, economic, and psychological warfare capabilities. And although the United States had demobilized a large portion of its military in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, 1950 marked the dawn of a new era of massive U.S. military expansion. For the remainder of his presidency, Truman and Congress cooperated in the establishment of an unprecedented and permanent peacetime national security state. During the rapid growth of the national security state, officials struggled to create and maintain a psychological warfare program that could effectively confront the highly sophisticated and well-funded Soviet propaganda machine.

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<sup>90</sup> The CIAA continued to conduct public health, agriculture, and other government-sponsored initiatives in Latin America. "President Abolishes OWI; Byrnes Takes Foreign End," *New York Times* 1 September 1945, 1.

Already by 1947, it had become clear to Truman and many officials in his government that the Soviet Union was determined to establish communist satellite regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. U.S. secretaries of state, war, and the navy, along with Attorney General Francis Biddle and Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Lieutenant General Hoyt Vandenburg all believed that Soviet post-war expansion into the Balkans and Eastern Europe had occurred because no nation had been able or willing to prevent it. They warned the president that any further concessions would be interpreted by the Soviet leadership as weakness and would only encourage Moscow to increase its incursions. The United States, they admonished, must be prepared to hold the line at Western Europe, Japan, China, and the Middle East.<sup>91</sup>

In response, Truman tended toward a policy of containing Soviet territorial expansion and influence and preventing further spread of communism throughout the world. Containment had many faces as U.S. officials combined military, economic, and diplomatic strategies to reduce the appeal of communism, particularly in regions deemed vital to American interests, namely Western Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The greatest military advantage enjoyed by the United States in the years immediately after the Second World War was its monopoly on nuclear weapons. Despite the acknowledged superiority of Soviet conventional military forces, Truman initially showed little interest in trying to compete with the Red Army in this realm. In fact, to garner the support of American voters, most of whom were anxious for the return of U.S. soldiers from the battlefields of Europe and Asia, as well as conservatives who disapproved of the high cost of a massive U.S. military, Truman drastically reduced the size of America's conventional forces between 1946 and 1949. Truman himself, who remained a committed New

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<sup>91</sup> Clark M. Clifford, "American Relations with the Soviet Union: A Report to the President by the Special Counsel to the President, September 24, 1946," in *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, ed. Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 65-66.

Dealer, preferred to channel government dollars to social programs and was satisfied with reliance on nuclear deterrence as the overarching U.S. military strategy.<sup>92</sup>

At the same time, however, his administration undertook aggressive economic and diplomatic policies. Following several episodes of diplomatic tension between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1946 and 1947, the United States withdrew the economic assistance it had extended to the Soviet Union since the Second World War.<sup>93</sup> In March 1947, in response to the mistaken U.S. perception that the Soviet Union was instigating and directing an attempted communist takeover in Greece, Truman announced before Congress that the United States would “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”<sup>94</sup> This Truman Doctrine was the official pledge of commitment to containment by the president, and subsequently formed the foundation of his foreign policy. It was also, in effect, a proclamation that the United States would not retreat to its traditional position of relative isolation as it had after the First World War. “The epoch of isolation and occasional intervention is ended,” reported the *New York Times*. “Our aim must be to establish conditions under which the United Nations and our principles have a chance to survive.”<sup>95</sup> In his *Memoirs*, Truman wrote that after the Second World War, “it was clear that without American participation there was no power capable of meeting Russia as an equal.” U.S. isolationism, in effect, “could only result in handing to the Russians vast areas of the globe now denied to them.”<sup>96</sup>

The newly-adopted role of the United States as lone leader of the free world was expensive. In response to Truman’s appeals, Congress in 1947 appropriated \$400 million to

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<sup>92</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 61.

<sup>93</sup> See Ronald E. Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 67-74.

<sup>94</sup> “Truman Doctrine, 1947,” in *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Essays and Documents, Volume II: Since 1914*, Second Edition, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984), 309-310.

<sup>95</sup> “Mr. Truman Goes to Congress,” *New York Times* 12 March 1947, 24.

<sup>96</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1956). 102.

Greece and Turkey. From 1948 to 1951, the United States initiated an aggressive economic recovery program in Western Europe. The Marshall Plan, as the program was called, was based on the premise that the most effective strategy for preventing the spread of communism in Western Europe, much of which remained in ruins three years after the Second World War, was to reduce its appeal by subsidizing recovery based on free-market capitalism. By providing Western Europeans with the means to rebuild their own economies and purchase manufactured goods and agricultural commodities from the United States, the Marshall Plan aimed to restore the balance of power in Europe that had been shattered by over four decades of political turmoil and war, and to promote and restore diverse societies that would be able to withstand Soviet expansion.<sup>97</sup> The United States also bore the majority of the cost of the reconstruction of Japan with similar goals in mind.<sup>98</sup> While these undertakings eventually opened markets to the U.S. economy, they required massive initial investment, with the European program alone costing \$13 billion.

With such immense overseas commitments, Washington's stakes in the Cold War were indeed high, and policy makers quickly realized that the United States required a great deal of coordination between its military and civilian agencies to oversee and protect its interests. Truman argued that even in peacetime, the country could not lower its guard against enemies either abroad or at home. The federal government needed to expand, he claimed, to include a

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<sup>97</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 55.

<sup>98</sup> Throughout 1947, the State Department examined the potential strategic benefits of U.S. foreign economic assistance. Fifteen countries and one region, Latin America, were ranked according to the combination of their perceived importance to U.S. national security and their need for economic assistance. Great Britain ranked first. Greece and Turkey, however, ranked first and second, respectively, in terms of the urgency of their need only. As a result of this analysis, the State Department Policy Planning Staff concluded in May 1947 that Western Europe was "the area for which long-term planning might most advantageously begin." Department of State, "United States Assistance to Other Countries from the Standpoint of National Security, April 29, 1947," in *FRUS, 1947, Volume I*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office), 1973, 749. See also Department of State, "Policy with Respect to American Aid to Western Europe: Views of the Policy Planning Staff," in *FRUS, 1947, Volume III*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office), 1973, 224.

more efficient military bureaucracy, effective surveillance agencies, and improved coordination between the White House and the various organizations responsible for national defence. In 1947 Congress passed the National Security Act, which created the office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Council (NSC). As Hogan observes, the act laid the foundations for the vast post-war expansion of the various institutions that would effectively define the national security state.<sup>99</sup>

In the post-war years, U.S. foreign policy always had a strong ideological component. The various military, economic, and diplomatic policies, in combination with the establishment of new agencies within the U.S. government to plan, coordinate, and implement them, were interpreted from the outset in both the United States and the Soviet Union as creating new divisions and exacerbating pre-existing tensions between the West and the Soviet bloc. U.S. policy makers hoped that their efforts would at least place enough pressure on the Soviet Union to force it to abandon any plans for expansion or would even, some hoped, hasten the collapse of the Soviet system. However, the real challenge for the United States was to implement the new programs and strategies without provoking the Soviet Union into war.<sup>100</sup>

It was to this end that certain officials began the arduous bureaucratic process of reviving U.S. psychological warfare agencies. As both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to achieve the upper hand in the Cold War through non-military means, both sides perceived the battlefield of world opinion as the key to victory. Thus psychological warfare became, as one scholar notes, “a synonym for ‘cold war.’ It reflected the belief of many politicians and foreign

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<sup>99</sup>Hogan, *Cross of Iron*, 66.

<sup>100</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 8. The immediate response from Moscow to the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan came in September 1947 with the establishment of the Communist Information Bureau, or Cominform. The Cominform replaced the Communist International (Comintern) which was disbanded during the Second World War. The key aims of the Cominform were to unify communist parties worldwide in their opposition to the Marshall Plan and other U.S. policies, and to discourage communist party participation in Western-friendly coalition governments. See Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1953*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 66-67.

policy analysts that the Cold War was a political, ideological, psychological, and cultural contest as well as a military and economic one.”<sup>101</sup> U.S. officials began to explore both the overt and covert means by which they would achieve their Cold War objectives. These distinct theatres of psychological warfare developed along separate institutional tracks, much as they had during the Second World War.

Among military and civilian agencies, the obvious choice to conduct covert operations was the newly-created CIA. While policy planning staff members generally concurred with this assessment, they also entertained the possibility of the CIA conducting such operations in cooperation with the Army, Navy, and Air Force. In December 1947, the Deputy DCI, Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, wrote to Prescott Childs, Chief of the Interagency Coordinating and Planning Staff, to express his alarm at such a proposal. The CIA, Wright stated, “is and must be the sole agency to conduct *organized foreign clandestine* operations.” Bringing in outside agencies, Wright feared, would lead to confused and inefficient efforts and would also drastically compromise the secrecy of the operations. Wright was willing to cede decisions as to the type of operations required to another agency, but firmly held that the CIA “must alone be the Agency to determine *how* the material is disseminated.”<sup>102</sup>

NSC 4-A, issued within days of Wright’s memorandum to Childs, directed the CIA to act alone to “initiate and conduct...covert psychological operations designed to counteract Soviet and Soviet-inspired activities which constitute a threat to world peace.” The CIA was to consult,

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<sup>101</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 35.

<sup>102</sup> All emphases are Wright’s. See Edwin K Wright, “Memorandum from the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Wright) to the Chief of the Interagency Coordinating and Planning Staff, Central Intelligence Agency (Childs), December 2, 1947,” in *FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), 639.

however, with both the NSC and senior U.S. diplomats in regions affected by covert operations prior to conducting specific activities.<sup>103</sup>

CIA operatives immediately set to work, successfully influencing federal elections in France and Italy in 1948, preventing Communist Party victories in both countries.<sup>104</sup> In June 1948 the CIA was provided with a clearer and more robust mandate than that described in NSC 4-A in the form of NSC 10/2. This document, which replaced NSC 4-A, led to the creation of the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), an agency attached to the CIA and charged specifically with planning and executing covert operations. The OPC enjoyed tremendous expansion during its first few years as its staff increased from 302 in 1949 to 2,812 by 1952, with an additional 3,142 operatives under contract. The OPC budget likewise increased dramatically from \$4.7 million to \$82 million over the same three year period.<sup>105</sup> NSC 10/2 placed two significant qualifications on CIA covert operations. The first was that such operations were required to be planned and conducted in such a fashion that U.S. government “responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them.” The second qualification was that, in addition to the NSC and senior U.S. diplomats, the Departments of State and Defense were to be consulted to ensure covert activities were in accordance with official U.S. foreign policy objectives.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Department of State, “NSC 4-A: Psychological Operations, December 9, 1947,” 644-645.

<sup>104</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 38.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. The OPC was created in September 1948. Frank G. Wisner, who had served with the OSS during the Second World War and, beginning in 1947, was employed by the State Department, became the first director of the OPC after Allen Dulles declined the post. See Kenneth Osgood, “Hearts and Minds: The Unconventional Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, issue 2 (Spring 2002): 90.

<sup>106</sup> National Security Council, “NSC 10/2: National Security Council Directive on Office of Special Projects, June 18, 1948,” in *Containment*, ed. Etzold and Gaddis, 126-127. NSC 10/2 also required the CIA to consult the JCS prior to conducting covert operations during wartime. Both NSC 4-A and NSC 10/2 mark watershed moments in U.S. history as they are the first directives issued by the U.S. government during peacetime for the conduct of covert operations. NSC 10/2 was the foundation for U.S. covert operations until President Eisenhower approved NSC 5412/2, which required that the president also be consulted on covert operations, in December 1955.

Throughout the remainder of Truman's presidency, the CIA conducted covert activities around the world, with an emphasis on countries behind the Iron Curtain. Beginning near the border between West Germany and Czechoslovakia in August 1951, the United States began using balloons to deliver leaflets designed to encourage defection. Between October 1951 and November 1956, over 300 million leaflets, posters, books, and other items of printed material were dropped into Soviet-controlled countries.<sup>107</sup> The CIA also engaged in covert paramilitary operations by training émigrés from countries behind the Iron Curtain in sabotage techniques and then dropping them into those countries from unmarked U.S. warplanes. These operations were, however, largely ineffective and frequently disastrous. The most common result was discovery, capture, and lengthy imprisonment in the Soviet labour prison system. Operatives were, on occasion, summarily executed upon capture.<sup>108</sup>

The primary form of overt psychological operations was propaganda, which had two broad aims: to project a positive image of the United States and its national objectives and values, elucidated in the Truman Doctrine, of “free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression;” and to counter the negative effects of Soviet propaganda on the United States and other countries.<sup>109</sup> Among the foremost proponents of the usefulness of propaganda to achieving the first objective was the U.S. diplomat and expert on the Soviet Union George Kennan, who, as Deputy for Foreign Affairs and later Director of the Policy Planning Staff (PPS), became highly influential in the crafting of U.S. Cold War policy and one of the principle

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<sup>107</sup> The material contained such messages as “tyranny cannot control the winds, cannot enslave your hearts. Freedom will rise again.” See Richard H. Cummings, *Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950-1989*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2009), 15.

<sup>108</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 90. See also Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War behind the Iron Curtain*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).

<sup>109</sup> “Truman Doctrine,” 308.

authors of containment strategy. In his famous “Long Telegram” sent to Washington from Moscow in February 1946, Kennan had stated the need to “formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of the sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in the past.” Kennan argued that as the world, especially Western Europe, attempted to rebuild after the Second World War, people were faced with two competing models upon which to base their societies and institutions: the American and the Soviet. The rebuilding nations were “seeking guidance” and if the United States did not sufficiently demonstrate the superiority of its way of life, the Soviet system would prevail.<sup>110</sup>

The need for official U.S. propaganda became more pressing, Kennan argued, after the United States began supplying massive capital to the reconstruction of Western Europe and other key regions. These measures, as previously noted, had tangible Cold War implications. By November 1947, Kennan believed that the strategy had in fact succeeded in halting “the communist advance in Western Europe.” And yet, he lamented, “we have done almost nothing to exploit psychologically the initial advantage we have gained” over the Soviet Union by the Marshall Plan and other aid. “If our effort in Europe is to be successful,” Kennan continued, “we must improve radically our machinery and practice in matters of informational policy in Europe and elsewhere.”<sup>111</sup> An *ad hoc* subcommittee of representatives from the State Department and the three branches of the armed forces concurred: “the extent of this aid and other U.S. contributions to world peace is unknown to large segments of the world’s population. Inadequate employment of psychological measures is impairing the effectiveness of these undertakings.” The subcommittee shared Kennan’s conclusion that the United States needed to

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<sup>110</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 63.

<sup>111</sup> George Kennan, “PPS/13: Résumé of World Situation, November 6, 1947,” in *FRUS, 1947, Volume I*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1973), 773.

immediately develop and implement “coordinated measures designed to influence attitudes in foreign countries in a way favorable to U.S. objectives.”<sup>112</sup>

Such views similarly gained increasing prominence on Capitol Hill. In the fall of 1947 two Congressmen, Representative Karl E. Mundt of North Dakota and Senator H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey, established a committee to inspect the European offices of the Voice of America and other U.S. propaganda programs left over from the Second World War. The Voice of America (VOA), which had been established as a wartime propaganda weapon in 1942, was one of the few programs to survive the abolition of the OWI, and by 1947 it was under the direction of the State Department. Despite being the primary instrument of official U.S. propaganda, the VOA was broadcast through fourteen privately operated transmitters. The scope of VOA broadcasts was narrow in 1947 and was restricted to countries that purchased surplus military equipment from the United States. At the time of the inspection commissioned by Smith and Mundt, the future of the VOA was far from certain, but it was generally understood that the program would be cancelled after the United States sold its remaining postwar surplus.<sup>113</sup>

During their six week tour of some twenty European countries, the federal legislators were stunned by just how woefully unprepared the United States was for a propaganda war against the Soviet Union. “We are shooting with popguns and water pistols while those who are

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<sup>112</sup> Department of State, “SANACC 304/11: Report by an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the State—Army—Navy—Air Force Coordinating Committee, November 7, 1947,” in *FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), 636. Secretary of State George Marshall reviewed SANACC 304/11, which also dealt with covert operations, on 14 November and made two recommendations. The first was that the military establishment should not participate in covert operations except in time of war. The second recommendation was that the term “psychological warfare” be replaced with “foreign information activities” in official correspondence as he deemed the former to be an inappropriate phrase for peacetime. See Department of State, “Memorandum of Discussion at the 2d Meeting of the National Security Council, November 14, 1947,” in *FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), 638.

<sup>113</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 29-30.

against us are using all the heavy artillery they can muster,” Mundt reported.<sup>114</sup> The Soviet Union indeed spared no expense in its commitment to exposing the weaknesses and contradictions of democracy within the United States, and discrediting U.S. foreign policy initiatives, particularly in Western Europe. The U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, Walter Bedell Smith, warned Secretary of State George Marshall that Soviet propagandists repeatedly cited U.S. labour disputes and episodes of lynching as evidence that the “whole foundation of American life [was] giving away.” The failure of the United States to effectively demonstrate to the world “what we as [a] great democratic people are doing to solve these problems,” Marshall argued, allowed Soviet psychological warriors to spread the message that “only Marxism” could solve the problems of the United States.<sup>115</sup> The Soviet Union also actively sought to undermine the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan through strikes and other tactics designed to nullify the “beneficial effect of economic aid and thus discredit democratic elements who accept such aid.” State Department officials began to fear that Soviet propaganda could stall the economic recovery of Western Europe long enough to allow communism to spread throughout the region and possibly even effect an economic crisis in the United States.<sup>116</sup>

In examining the success of Soviet propaganda relative to that of the United States, Senator Smith noted the alarming discrepancy between U.S. funding for foreign information programs and that of other countries. Britain, for example, though its economy remained in far worse shape than the U.S. economy, spent \$45 million per year, compared with only \$12 million by the United States. Smith warned of the consequences of continued U.S. parsimony and

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<sup>114</sup> Mundt qtd. in “Congressmen Pay Call Upon Franco,” *New York Times* 9 October 1947, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Walter Bedell Smith, “The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Smith) to the Secretary of State,” in *FRUS, 1947, Volume IV*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1973), 537-538.

<sup>116</sup> Department of State, “The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Durbrow) to the Secretary of State,” in *FRUS, 1947, Volume IV*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1973), 562-563.

apathy by asserting that Moscow's "policy is to divide and then absorb. Communism feeds on famine, cold and despair and the end is human slavery."<sup>117</sup>

The findings of the investigative committee prompted Smith and Mundt to introduce new legislation into Congress calling for a vast expansion of U.S. propaganda efforts. Intense debate ensued as critics questioned both the need for such measures and the government expenditures required to fulfill them. However, several prominent and influential Americans, including George Marshall, General Dwight Eisenhower, Walter Bedell Smith, and Averell Harriman, voiced their support for the proposals during congressional debates. After it was rewritten twice and acquired more than one hundred amendments, the House of Representatives approved the proposal in December, and the Senate followed suit the following month. Truman signed the Smith-Mundt Act into law on 27 January 1948.<sup>118</sup>

The Smith-Mundt Act, which enabled "the Government of the United States to promote a better understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries," marked a seminal moment in U.S. history. The act established, for the first time in the country's history, a peacetime "information service to disseminate abroad information about the United States, its people, and policies." In so doing, it ensured the continued and improved operation of the VOA. In the first twelve months of the new act, the budget of the VOA doubled and its broadcast reached into several more countries.<sup>119</sup> As an additional result of the act, two new propaganda offices were established under the Department of State: the Office of Educational Exchange (OEX) and the Office of Information (OFI), which were later organized collectively under the Office of Information and Exchange (OIE). The central focus of the OIE was, as

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<sup>117</sup> Smith qtd. in "Europe's Collapse Called Complete," *New York Times* 1 November 1947, 7. See also Fitzhugh Green, *American Propaganda Abroad*, (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988), 24.

<sup>118</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 360.

<sup>119</sup> "Smith-Mundt Bill," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 13, no. 4 (March 1948): 18. See also Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 11.

Kennan advocated, demonstrating the prosperity and happiness of those living under the American model of freedom, capitalism, and democracy.<sup>120</sup>

The OIE also sought to accomplish the second aim of U.S. Cold War propaganda, which was to counter the propaganda of the Soviet Union by persuading the world, including the hundreds of millions of people living under Soviet rule, that the Western model of democracy and free-market capitalism was superior to the competing communist model which, they believed, led to economic, social, and political ruin and ruthless authoritarianism. Thus the OIE was expected to disseminate propaganda intended both to provide a positive image of the United States and a negative one of the Soviet Union. For example, reports of Soviet repression and anti-democratic political practices in Eastern Europe were repeatedly juxtaposed with instances of purported U.S. humanitarian operations, such as the Berlin Airlift of 1948-1949.<sup>121</sup>

The establishment of these new propaganda agencies is revealing in three aspects. The first is in the apparent public acceptance of overt government-sponsored psychological warfare. A Gallup poll in December 1948 suggested that a majority of U.S. citizens supported the use of propaganda “in telling our side of the story to Europe and the world.” This trend marked a departure from the ambivalence and even hostility among the general public toward peacetime government information agencies in the interwar period. The acceptance of such measures indicates that the public perceived the Soviet Union of the late 1940s as posing a more immediate threat to the security of the United States than any of the Axis powers before the attack on Pearl Harbor, and speaks to the positive impression that the successes of the OWI and

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<sup>120</sup> Green, *American Propaganda Abroad*, 25.

<sup>121</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 11.

OSS had made in easing the anxieties that had resulted from the public's experience with the CPI during the First World War.<sup>122</sup>

Second, psychological warfare agencies played a critical role in the creation of the permanent security state that was initiated under Truman and has persisted to the present day. A PPS memorandum from May 1948 condemned the 'handicap' of the "popular attachment to the concept of a basic difference between peace and war, [the] tendency to view war as a sort of sporting contest outside of all political context." The memorandum warned that the United States "cannot afford to leave unmobilized our resources for covert political warfare. We cannot afford in the future...to scramble into impromptu covert operations."<sup>123</sup> While this memorandum deals specifically with covert operations, in the context of the early Cold War it could have referred to overt psychological warfare, or the perceived necessary military measures. Psychological warfare agencies formed an integral part of the unprecedented peacetime expansion of a military-industrial-political complex in the United States.

Finally, the implementation of peacetime psychological warfare challenges the notion that, under the Truman Administration, the United States adopted and maintained a defensive posture, manifest in the official policy of containment, toward the Soviet Union. While Kennan called for "a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies," he also prescribed "the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points."<sup>124</sup> The military policy of the United States, which continued to enjoy a monopoly on atomic weapons, tended to be containment of Soviet

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<sup>122</sup> On 8 December 1948 Gallup asked: "It has been suggested that the United States should spend as much money in telling our side of the story to Europe and the world as Russia spends in telling her side. Do you agree or disagree with this?" 58% of respondents agreed, 27% disagreed, and 15% had no opinion. Further, when, in March 1948 Gallup asked if "the United States is being too soft or too tough (firm) in its policy toward Russia," 73% responded "too soft." See Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*, 721, 772.

<sup>123</sup> Department of State, "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum, May 4, 1948," in *FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), 669.

<sup>124</sup> George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, issue 4 (July 1947): 575-576.

expansion, yet the long-term objective of U.S. foreign policy by the late-1940s was still to effect the withdrawal and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus the policy of the United States codified in NSC 20/4 in November 1948, was to use all “methods short of war,” including both overt and covert psychological warfare, to achieve rollback.<sup>125</sup>

Two events in 1949—the Soviet detonation of a nuclear bomb in August and the victory of Mao Zedong’s communist forces in China the following month—forced the United States to re-evaluate its Cold War strategy and preparedness. The first Soviet nuclear test on 29 August negated the U.S. monopoly on atomic weapons and severely undercut Truman’s military strategy. It also, however, had drastic implications to U.S. psychological war efforts. In a report submitted two weeks prior to the Soviet nuclear detonation, the PPS considered the psychological impact of the U.S. monopoly on other nations: “a belief that we are now the sole possessor of atomic bombs and that the U.S.S.R. has none probably tends to increase their desire to collaborate with us and also their sense of safety in doing so.” The opposite side of this argument, the report continued, was that “knowledge that the U.S.S.R. did in fact possess the bomb also might tend to incline third countries toward a position of neutrality,” an outcome deemed utterly unacceptable in the zero-sum context of the Cold War.<sup>126</sup>

Mao’s victory in China, on the other hand, led to very serious questions concerning the efficacy of the overall strategy of containment, as critics lambasted Truman for the ‘loss’ of China to communism. In light of the events of 1949 and responses to those events within the United States, the NSC undertook a re-evaluation of U.S. resources and strategy. The resulting study, NSC 68, concluded that the United States was not adequately prepared to deal with the new challenges of the Cold War. The study, issued in April 1950, made several

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<sup>125</sup> Department of State, “NSC 20/4,” 668. See also Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 8.

<sup>126</sup> Department of State, “PPS/58: Political Implications of Detonation of Atomic Bomb by the USSR,” in *FRUS, 1949, Volume I*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), 515.

recommendations, the most well-known and arguably the most consequential being proposals for vast expansions of both U.S. conventional military forces and the scope of its defensive perimeter to include a greater emphasis on Asia. The inclusion of Asia was due to the ‘loss’ of China.

The Korean War, which began in June of 1950, provided the definitive impetus for the implementation of the prescriptions of NSC 68. The Korean War validated in the minds of many U.S. policy makers the claim of NSC 68 that peripheral areas like Korea had become as vital to both the military balance of power and global perceptions of U.S. credibility as Western Europe or other key regions were.<sup>127</sup> The impact of the Korean War cannot be overstated. While it is significant in and of itself as one of the major military conflicts of the twentieth century, of equally profound importance is that it served as the justification for the initiation of the permanent national security state that has characterized the United States for more than half a century.

While scholars and other observers have rightly focused much attention on the expansion of both conventional military forces and the scope of U.S. interests around the globe, less emphasis has been given to the recommendations of NSC 68 for the “development of programs designed to build and maintain confidence among other peoples in our strength and resolution, and to wage overt psychological warfare calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet

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<sup>127</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 107. The war began in June 1950 when communist forces from North Korea, backed by communist China, invaded South Korea. Truman was anxious to respond for two reasons. The first was a concern over global perceptions of U.S. abilities to respond in support of its ally, the South Korean government of Syngman Rhee. The second, based on the presumption of monolithic communism and cooperation between the Soviet Union and China, was an erroneous suspicion that the Soviet Union was directly supporting communist troops. The United States, with the support of the United Nations, soon intervened militarily and sought to repel the communist forces.

allegiance and to frustrate the Kremlin design in other ways.”<sup>128</sup> The OPC, in other words, needed to expand the scope and strength of its propaganda. Thus, already before the war began in Korea, the NSC called for a more aggressive targeting of Soviet satellite states by U.S. propaganda to foment unrest and replace governments in the Soviet bloc with regimes friendlier to the West.<sup>129</sup>

In April 1950, the same month in which he initially received NSC 68, Truman proclaimed to a gathering of the American Society of Newspaper Editors that the United States “should greatly extend and strengthen our efforts to make the truth known to people in all the world.” The Cold War, the president stated, was “a struggle, above all else, for the minds of men.” He identified “propaganda” as “one of the most powerful weapons the Communists have in this struggle. Deceit, distortion, and lies are systemically used by them as a matter of deliberate policy.”<sup>130</sup> Truman found Soviet portrayals of the United States as a warmongering imperialist power particularly odious. Truman’s public affirmations that the United States was wholly committed to peace and his descriptions of Soviet peace talk as “only a cloak for imperialism,” reflected the president’s desire to counter communist propaganda attacks on U.S. credibility and to increase U.S. prestige around the world.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Like NSC 20/4, NSC 68 uses the phrase “by means short of war” when proposing the U.S. strategy for effecting the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ernest R. May, ed. “NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, April 14, 1950, in *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1993), 74. This source should be considered required reading for any student of NSC 68. It contains the document itself, a range of perspectives from scholars such as Paul Y. Raymond, William Appleman Williams, and John Lewis Gaddis, and insightful reflections by contemporaneous U.S. officials, including Kennan, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and Paul Nitze who, as Director of the PPS, was the principal author of NSC 68.

<sup>129</sup> Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 58. NSC 68 also called for a continuation of existing propaganda efforts to deliver a “practical affirmation, abroad as well as at home, of our essential values.” May, ed., “NSC 68,” 29.

<sup>130</sup> Harry S. Truman, “Address on Foreign Policy at a Luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 20, 1950,” in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1950*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1965), 261, 263. This series will hereafter be cited as *Truman Public Papers*.

<sup>131</sup> Truman, “Address on Foreign Policy at a Luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors,” 262.

To combat the Soviets, Truman called for the launching of what he called a U.S. “campaign of truth,” which he envisioned as a joint effort between private groups and government “not separate and distinct from other elements of our foreign policy,” but rather as a complementary aspect “as important as armed strength or economic aid.” Truman’s characterization of Soviet foreign information efforts as “propaganda” as compared to his depictions of U.S. programs as “the truth—plain, simple, unvarnished truth,” reveals much about the ideological assumptions that underlay the Cold War policies of many U.S. officials.<sup>132</sup>

Although Truman publicly regarded the Campaign of Truth as “vital to our National Security,” his speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors marks one of the very few times Truman expressed any sort of conviction, privately or publicly, for the need for psychological warfare. As Osgood notes, “Truman himself evinced little interest in or understanding of psychological warfare, preferring to leave such matters to the bureaucracy.” In Truman we see none of the reluctance or seeming discomfort with psychological warfare, however, that Roosevelt had prior to 1941. Rather, he was surrounded by proponents of psychological warfare such as Kennan, Nitze, and Allen Dulles and seemed content to endorse any final recommendations on the subject after the measures had been debated within the bureaucracy.<sup>133</sup>

Kennan, Allen Dulles, and OPC chief Frank Wisner were among the more vocal proponents of psychological warfare who played key roles in the establishment of Radio Free Europe (RFE) in the summer of 1950. RFE, which one scholar claims was “arguably the most influential politically oriented international radio station in history,” broadcast to countries

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<sup>132</sup> Truman, “Address on Foreign Policy at a Luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors,” 261-264.

<sup>133</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 45.

behind the Iron Curtain, with the exception of the Soviet Union at first.<sup>134</sup> The stated objective of RFE was “to prevent, or at least hinder, the spiritual, economic and military integration of the nations of Eastern Europe into the Soviet bloc.”<sup>135</sup> To this end, speeches by prominent Eastern European émigrés were recorded in RFE studios in New York before being flown to broadcasting stations in Western Europe. The hope behind employing émigrés as opposed to U.S. broadcasters was that the effect on Eastern European audiences would “be that of hearing from a member of the family rather than from a neighbor.” A top RFE official concurred: “native, ‘spontaneous’ activities will always have greater credibility.” The same official remarked that “the last five years have pretty conclusively proven that U.S. propaganda...when it is something imposed from the U.S., has little credibility and even less acceptance.” However, U.S. officials took the lead role in preparing “specific education material for parents” behind the Iron Curtain “so they can counteract at home the Communist teachings which their youngsters are receiving in school.”<sup>136</sup>

RFE was ostensibly a private venture funded by charitable contributions from the American public. Since “any government subsidy would destroy [the] basic appeal” of RFE, the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), the purported private organization which managed the station, collected funds through a supposed private foundation, the Crusade for

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<sup>134</sup> Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), ix. The Campaign of Truth also found an increasing number of supporters in Congress, even among Republicans. In August 1950, for example, Senator Ralph Flanders and twenty-seven other senators signed a letter calling for “total engagement of our psychological and spiritual forces” and urging Congress to appropriate the necessary funds for Truman’s campaign. Flanders et al qtd. in Harry S. Truman, “Letter to Senator Flanders on the Appropriation for the Campaign of Truth, August 30, 1950,” in *Truman Public Papers*, 602.

<sup>135</sup> Frank Altschul, “Policy Guidance Memorandum No. 1, September 21, 1950,” in Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 315.

<sup>136</sup> The result of having émigrés record in New York and then flying the tapes to Western Europe was generally a thirty-six hour lag between recording and broadcasting. See “Exiles Will Pierce the Iron Curtain in New Radio Broadcast Tomorrow,” *New York Times* 3 July 1950, 1 and Jack Gould, “Radio Free Europe,” *New York Times* 9 July 1950, X9. See also C.D. Jackson, “Letter to Charles M. Spofford, Deputy United States Representative, North Atlantic Council, February 6, 1951,” in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-1952 [Box 61 (Jackson, C.D.)]*, *Eisenhower Library*, 4-5.

Freedom. C.D. Jackson, the president of the NCFE, immediately recognized the potential of the new venture. “This is literally the first time that an American organization in peacetime psychological warfare has possessed the three basic ingredients for success—(a) money no object; (b) no holds barred; (c) no questions asked,” he wrote in February 1951.<sup>137</sup> Decades later, RFE, the NCFE, and the Crusade for Freedom would all be exposed as front organizations for the CIA.<sup>138</sup>

In response to calls from the NSC for further expansion of U.S. propaganda operations and charges that previous efforts had been ineffective, the State Department pointed to the untenable institutional foundation of U.S. psychological warfare agencies. The problem, according to the State Department, was that the OIE, the agency which conducted operations, was under the jurisdiction of State, while the OPC, the agency responsible for planning the actual content of propaganda, was part of the CIA. To be effective, State contended, propaganda needed to reinforce the policies, words, and actions of the State Department; however, poor communication between the State Department and the CIA led to a lack of consensus between the U.S. propaganda apparatus and the official foreign policy establishment. As the Korean War continued to escalate during the summer of 1950, the need for the United States to disseminate

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<sup>137</sup> C.D. Jackson, “Letter to Charles M. Spofford,” 3.

<sup>138</sup> Investigations in the 1970s revealed that the CIA had, on countless occasions, channeled public funding through private foundations which in turn released the funds to RFE and, later, Radio Liberty (RL), which began broadcasting directly to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1953. In the two decades between the establishment of RFE/RL and the discovery that the CIA was channeling money to the ‘private’ institutions, RFE/RL received some \$500 million in U.S. taxpayer dollars. In addition to providing funds to RFE/RL, this fundraising campaign served another significant purpose. Because the CIA was legally barred from carrying out propaganda activities in the United States, the Crusade for Freedom acted as a front through which the CIA could drum up anti-communism and support for U.S. Cold War efforts within the United States. See Ralph A. Uttaro, “The Voices of America in International Radio Propaganda” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 45, no.1 (Winter 1982): 106. See also Osgood “Hearts and Minds,” 93. This is not to suggest that the government did not create important partnerships with the private sector in its psychological warfare campaign during this time. Project TROY, for example, brought twenty-one distinguished academics together in October 1950 to study how such partnerships could be used to improve U.S. psychological warfare efforts. One significant result of TROY was the establishment of the MIT Center for International Studies (CENIS) “which brought academic expertise and research to bear on matters of public policy.” See Allan A. Needell, “‘Truth is Our Weapon’: Project TROY, Political Warfare, and Government-Academic Relations in the National Security State, *Diplomatic History* 17, issue 3 (July 1993): 416-417.

its version of events around the world became even more pressing. Thus, in August 1950 State proposed to Truman the establishment of a National Psychological Strategy Board, under the sole jurisdiction of the State Department, to replace the OPC. This suggestion sparked pushback from both the CIA and the Department of Defense, which perceived the recommendation as a bid for tighter control by the State Department.<sup>139</sup> In April 1951, Truman marked a compromise between the competing departments and agencies by creating the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) to replace to OPC. The PSB was an interdepartmental agency comprised of the undersecretary of state, the deputy secretary of defense, and the director of the CIA. To improve its accountability and to ensure that planned propaganda aligned with the Cold War objectives of the president, the PSB was to report directly to the NSC.<sup>140</sup> The following year, an additional institutional adjustment was made to further integrate “the United States international information and educational exchange programs with the conduct of foreign relations generally.” In January 1952 the International Information Administration (IIA) was established to replace the OIE, though the new agency remained under the sole jurisdiction of the State Department.<sup>141</sup>

The expansion of military capabilities and the various other state institutions in support of U.S. Cold War objectives came at a high cost. Truman’s early devotion to the New Deal had led him to try for a time to limit military expenditures. In 1947, his budget projection was \$38.5 billion.<sup>142</sup> However, the expanded role of the United States in the post-war world, first manifest in aid to Turkey and Greece, the Marshall Plan, and, beginning in 1949, military contributions to NATO, forced the U.S. government to raise expenditures. In 1950 the Korean War and NSC 68

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<sup>139</sup> Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 60.

<sup>140</sup> Department of State, “Directive by the President to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense (Marshall), and the Director of Central Intelligence (Smith), April 4, 1951,” in *FRUS, 1951*, Volume I (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), 58-60.

<sup>141</sup> Department of State, “Establishment of the United States International Information Administration (IIA), January 16, 1952” in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume II, Part II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 1591-1592.

<sup>142</sup> Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 76.

finally led Truman to abandon any hope of balancing the budget while concurrently expanding U.S. global military commitments and maintaining various welfare provisions, including the G.I. Bill.

A key figure in discussions of the economics of NSC 68 was Leon Keyserling, who was appointed chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors in 1950. Keyserling, a proponent of increased military spending who worked closely with the NSC officials responsible for NSC 68, argued that in order to bring the economy to maximum capacity, as the Soviet economy was running at the time, the U.S. government would need to engage in short-term deficit spending. The result, Keyserling predicted, would be an increase in GNP from \$255 billion in 1950 to as much as \$300 billion within five years. Truman was convinced by the rationale of Keyserling's assertions and believed that such a program would simultaneously boost civilian purchasing power while funding an expansion of military capabilities through the resulting increase in federal tax revenues.<sup>143</sup>

Truman's acceptance of peacetime military deficit spending signalled a radical departure from the long-held tradition of the United States spending within its means to prepare for potential security threats. Such careful consideration of its means was one of the defining characteristics of U.S. democracy and the unwritten contract between its citizens and the federal government. With NSC 68 and the deficit spending required to meet its recommendations, the Truman Administration in effect signalled that it regarded the threat of world communism as absolute and thus the ends of combating this spectre justified a far more substantial set of means than had been considered appropriate at any previous time of official peace in U.S. history. As

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<sup>143</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 91.

one scholar contends, “anything was fair game.” The Cold War “rendered all interests vital, all means affordable, all methods justifiable.”<sup>144</sup>

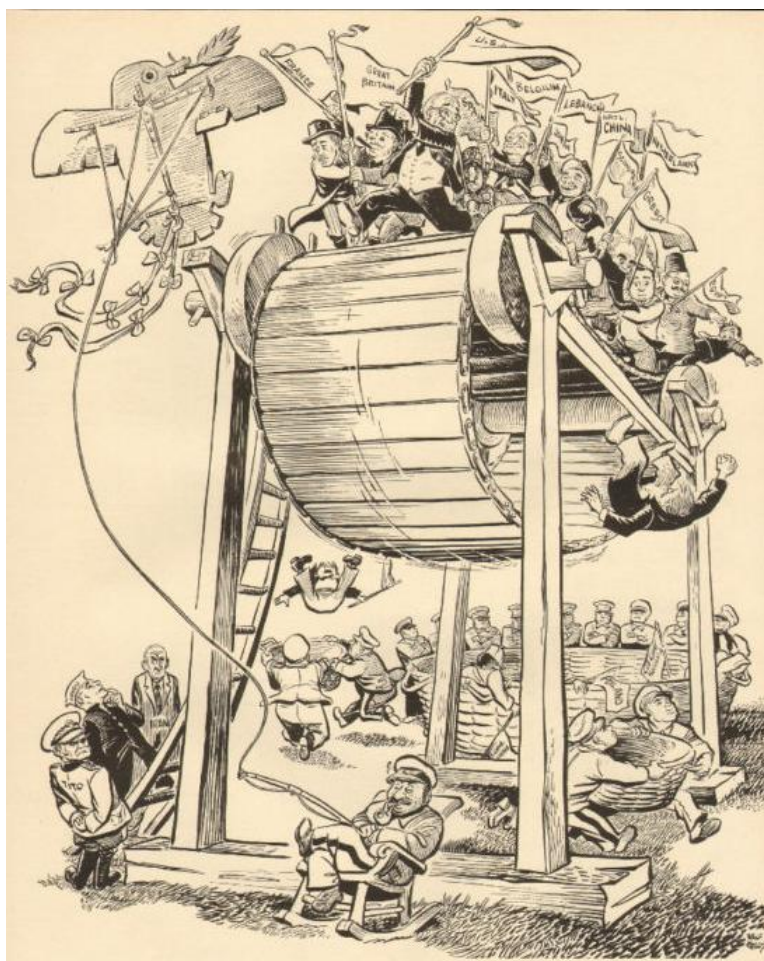


Figure 3. This cartoon by Walt Kelly appeared in the 19 May 1952 issue of *Life*. It depicts several countries following the United States, personified by Harry Truman, in its earnest pursuit of peace while Stalin lures them with false promises. While some countries are able to keep pace with the United States, others, like Poland, Czechoslovakia, and China, fall into the communist baskets. Neutral countries such as India, Yugoslavia, and Iran look on.<sup>145</sup>

In April 1950, two months prior to the start of the Korean War, Truman asked Congress for \$13.5 billion in military expenditures, which included appropriations specifically for psychological warfare. This sum included a modest increase of \$500 million from the previous year and was accompanied by predictions from the president that military expenditures would

<sup>144</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, “NSC 68 and the Problem of Ends and Means” *International Security* 4, no. 4 (Spring 1980): 167.

<sup>145</sup> Walt Kelly, “Our Treadmill Foreign Policy: A Cartoonist View,” *Life* 19 May 1952, 147.

likely decrease the following year. Almost immediately after the war began, Truman returned to Congress to request an increase in military expenditures. The president made several such requests in the following months, and after NSC 68 was officially adopted in September 1950, Congress finally authorized \$48.2 billion for defence expenditures for the 1951 fiscal year, more than three and a half times the amount of Truman's initial request.<sup>146</sup> The 1951 budget arguably defined the shift of the U.S. economy and society to a permanent war footing. This conversion had both immediate and long-term consequences to domestic social welfare programs as military spending, including psychological warfare, continues to command the lion's share of federal government spending.<sup>147</sup>

The first year of the Korean War witnessed a massive expansion of U.S. conventional forces, with the total number of Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel more than doubling over the first twelve months of the war. Defence appropriations grew again for the 1952 fiscal year to \$56.9 billion, more than four times the amount Truman had initially requested in April 1950.<sup>148</sup>

Such spending was not only costly financially, but in the run-up to the 1952 presidential election it also exacted a political price. Truman's policies drew sharp criticism from both sides of the political spectrum. Liberals especially feared the impact on the New Deal, specifically that social spending would be sacrificed in order to pay for the huge expansion and maintenance of a national security state. For this reason, many liberals argued in favour of a more isolationist agenda which focused on domestic improvement. This policy was a Cold War strategy in itself, as proponents argued that U.S. efforts to lead by the example of a peaceful and prosperous nation

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<sup>146</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 110-111.

<sup>147</sup> Military budgets have yet to return to the relatively low levels of the late 1940s. Among the first domestic social welfare programs to fall by the wayside of the appropriation agenda was Truman's national health plan. See Benjamin O. Fordham, *Building the Cold War Consensus: The Political Economy of U.S. National Security Policy, 1949-1951*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1998), and Ismael Hossein-zadeh, *The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 203.

<sup>148</sup> Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 68.

would do more to undermine the Soviet Union than any demonstration of military might. Conservatives, for their part, warned that massive military spending threatened one of the deepest held ideals of the United States: the importance of and need for a balanced budget. As such, they opposed any policy that required deficit spending.<sup>149</sup>

Observers similarly criticized the expensive, cumbersome, inefficient, and largely ineffective foreign information programs created under Truman. They noted, for example, the vast disparity between the final budget estimates submitted by the Truman Administration for the IIA of \$114.5 million, which covered only the cost of overt U.S. psychological warfare programs, and the \$60 million and \$80 million that the House of Representatives and Senate, respectively, were prepared to spend.<sup>150</sup> By the end of 1952 the State Department, the CIA, the National Committee for a Free Europe, the Committee for a Free Asia, the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of the Russia, the Department of the Army, and the U.S. Air Force were all conducting U.S. propaganda operations. C.D. Jackson, one of the foremost experts on psychological operations in the United States, remarked in December that “these organizations are highly competitive—in fact to the point of sabotage.” The end result of Truman’s repeated deferral to the federal bureaucracy, whose branches competed amongst themselves for funding and control of psychological warfare, was that the United States had “neither policy nor plan for conducting the cold war. Therefore,” Jackson concluded, “each organization is desperately casting about to stake out some kind of claim.”<sup>151</sup> The PSB proved incapable of effectively coordinating the various civilian and military services conducting psychological warfare

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<sup>149</sup> Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 69-70.

<sup>150</sup> Robert L. Johnson, “Memorandum for the President, July 29, 1953,” in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President of the United States, 1952-1961 (Ann Whitman File), Administration Series (Box 21, Jackson, C.D.), Eisenhower Library*, 8-9.

<sup>151</sup> C.D. Jackson, “Memorandum to General Eisenhower, December 17, 1952,” in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President of the United States, 1952-1961 (Ann Whitman File), Administration Series (Box 29, Psychological Warfare [1952-1953]), Eisenhower Library*, 2.

operations. Officials within these agencies resisted attempts by the PSB to assert control over their efforts. The PSB would not survive 1953: Washington bureaucrats, and not the Soviet Union, effectively killed the agency that was intended to unite and strengthen U.S. psychological warriors.

It had become clear to those who were familiar and had experience with psychological warfare that the United States still faced the serious risk of losing the war against the communists for the hearts and minds of men, women, and children around the world. U.S. foreign information programs, they argued, desperately needed to become more efficient in terms of both cost and of the dissemination of a few carefully selected themes. To achieve these goals, strong and clear leadership was needed from individuals who understood and appreciated the complexities of psychological warfare.

### Chapter 3: “Skillful and Constant Use of the Power of Truth”

“The means we shall employ to spread [the] truth are often called ‘psychological.’ Don’t be afraid of that term just because it’s a five dollar, five syllable word. ‘Psychological warfare’ is the struggle for the minds and wills of men.”

-Dwight D. Eisenhower, *San Francisco*, 8 October 1952<sup>152</sup>

“As a people, we share fundamental beliefs and values with millions of other men and women we are attempting to win to our side. These include belief in God, belief in individual freedom, belief in the right to ownership of property and a decent standard of living...”

-James C. Hagerty  
*Press Secretary to President Eisenhower*, 8 July 1953<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “San Francisco, 8 October 1952,” in *Campaign Statements of Dwight D. Eisenhower: A Reference Index*, n.d., *Eisenhower Library*.

<sup>153</sup> James C. Hagerty, “Press Release, July 8, 1953,” in *C.D. Jackson: Papers, 1931-1967 [Jackson Committee (3)]*, *Eisenhower Library*.

Among the most prominent conservative critics of Truman's economic and foreign policies during 1952 was Dwight D. Eisenhower, the former five-star general and Supreme Commander of NATO, who had only recently returned from active service to become, for the second time in four years, president of Columbia University. Eisenhower's criticism of Truman's deficit spending was based on three main points: it gave credence to arguments in favour of isolation, it threatened the American way of life, and it was unnecessary.

Eisenhower shared many of Truman's views regarding an increase in U.S. overseas commitments in the Cold War context. In his roles both as Chief of Staff of the Army and Supreme Commander of NATO, Eisenhower had supported Truman's arguments for containment in the sense that he opposed a retreat to the relative isolation of the interwar period. By 1952, however, isolationists in the United States publicly opposed Truman's deficit spending. The front-runner for the Republican nomination for the November presidential election, Senator Robert Taft, for example, favoured a policy of "selective containment" and North American security to Truman's more expensive global mandate which emphasized collective security.<sup>154</sup>

It was Taft's isolationist views which ultimately led Eisenhower to seek the Republican nomination. As Supreme Commander of NATO, Eisenhower proved an indefatigable and devoted advocate of the organization's principle of collective security, telling William Donovan in January 1952 that he would only leave his post "if called to a higher duty."<sup>155</sup> The cause of defending U.S. global interests and the prominence of Taft's isolationist policies allowed Eisenhower to present himself as both serving his country and honouring his conscience, and thus, in July 1952, Eisenhower sought and won the Republican nomination. As the Republican

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<sup>154</sup> Clarence E. Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft: Ideas, Tradition, and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 158-163.

<sup>155</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Letter to William Donovan, 3 January 1952," in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-1952 [Box 35]*, *Eisenhower Library*.

candidate for president, Eisenhower continually steered criticisms of military spending away from arguments for abandoning U.S. overseas commitments and towards proposals for increased efficiency in the struggle against communism.

The second of Eisenhower's criticisms was based on a genuine fear that an expanded role of the military in the politics and economy of the United States would lead to the displacement of the relatively free and open American society by a garrison state.<sup>156</sup> Even during his presidency, Eisenhower continually returned to this theme. On 16 April 1953, Eisenhower delivered a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors describing the danger of "a burden of arms draining the wealth and the labor of all peoples." The president warned that "every gun made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."<sup>157</sup> In September, Eisenhower told the NSC that the United States needed to formulate policies to respond to the Soviet threat that did not place an undue burden on the U.S. economy and restrict the freedom of the American people. During this meeting, Eisenhower argued that the United States was "engaged in the defense of a way of life, and the great danger was that in defending this way of life we would find ourselves resorting to methods that endangered this way of life."<sup>158</sup> The president echoed the warning made by George Kennan more than seven years earlier in his 'Long Telegram' that "the greatest problem that can befall us in coping with this problem of

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<sup>156</sup> In October 1951, for example, Eisenhower told Charles Wilson, the president of General Motors, "that permanent maintenance of a crushing weight of military power would eventually produce dictatorship." Eisenhower qtd. in Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 513.

<sup>157</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Toward a Golden Age of Peace," in *Peace with Justice: Selected Addresses of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 37.

<sup>158</sup> Department of State, "Memorandum of Discussion at the 163d Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, September 24, 1953," *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume II, part I, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 469.

Soviet communism, is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.”<sup>159</sup>

Eisenhower’s third criticism of Truman’s spending was that, from a military perspective, the huge cost of expanding and maintaining U.S. conventional forces was unnecessary. Eisenhower and other conservatives argued that, as both Napoleon and Hitler had learned, Western powers could not match Russia in terms of the number of troops they could put on the ground. The United States, they concluded, should abandon its commitment to conventional forces in both Asia and Western Europe and instead embark on a new strategy of developing a system of military superiority based on air and nuclear preponderance. Proponents of this strategy recognized the immense initial spending that it required, but contended that after a short period of rapid development of U.S. nuclear and air capabilities, a sufficient level of deterrence would be reached as to justify a considerable reduction of conventional military expenditures.<sup>160</sup>

During his campaign for president, Eisenhower was similarly critical of U.S. psychological warfare efforts under Truman. “The present administration,” he told an audience in San Francisco in October, “has never yet been able to grasp the full import of a psychological effort put forth on a national scale.” Eisenhower vowed to remedy the situation through increased efficiency and coordination of efforts by bringing “the dozens of agencies and bureaus into concerted action under an over-all scheme of strategy.” If elected, Eisenhower told voters in Philadelphia two weeks later, he would shape the U.S. “psychological warfare program into a weapon capable of cracking the Communist front.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 63.

<sup>160</sup> Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 326.

<sup>161</sup> Raymond A. McConnell, Jr., “The War of Ideas,” *Lincoln Journal*, Reprinted by Press Intelligence, Inc., Washington, D.C., 13 January 1953, in *U.S. President’s Committee on International Information Activities (Jackson Committee): Records, 1950-53, [Box 14, Overt Information and Propaganda, Data for Jackson Committee]*, *Eisenhower Library*. See also Eisenhower, *Campaign Statements*, 393.

In 1952, foreign policy featured unusually prominently as an issue in a peacetime election.<sup>162</sup> Whereas elections are generally won on the promise of improving the economy and addressing domestic issues important to voters, the combined effect of the Cold War, the Korean War, the debates between Eisenhower and Taft concerning the U.S. role in the world, and the anti-communist fervour drummed up by Senator Joseph McCarthy's Congressional witch hunts, was to thrust "the overriding national issue of war and peace" to the centre of the stage during the campaign.<sup>163</sup> Internationalists within the Republican Party argued that "the people in 1952 will realize that they are at this election voting for a 'Commander-in-Chief'—not a peace-time President."<sup>164</sup> This played directly to one of Eisenhower's great strengths as a candidate for president: his extensive and proven leadership in U.S. global endeavours. Eisenhower, described by *Life* on the eve of the election as "the internationally admired and nearly faultless hero," had spent the majority of the previous eleven years in prominent posts overseas and exploited his advantage over his Democratic opponent, Governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, to effectively rally a majority of voters behind his bid for the White House. Eisenhower won a resounding victory over Stevenson and immediately began reformulating U.S. foreign policy to transform the United States into a more efficient and effective adversary of the Soviet Union, both in terms of military and psychological warfare capabilities.<sup>165</sup>

Less than two weeks after his inauguration, Eisenhower delivered his first State of the Union address to Congress. While he admitted that his administration had not had sufficient

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<sup>162</sup> See Cecil V. Crabb, Jr. and Kevin V. Mulcahy, *Presidents and Foreign Policy Making: From FDR to Reagan*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 158.

<sup>163</sup> "Ike's Command Decision," *Life* 6 October 1952, 32.

<sup>164</sup> Charles S. Hamilton, Jr. and John A. Wells, "Letter to William Donovan, 27 December 1951," in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-1952, [Box 35], Eisenhower Library*, 9.

<sup>165</sup> "Candidate Eisenhower and a Tough Campaign," *Life* 3 November 1952, 32. Eisenhower's second greatest strength as a candidate was his electability. Even before Eisenhower officially announced his candidacy, a majority of Republican voters pursued the "back-a-winner" strategy in selecting their delegate. The general belief was that, though other Republican candidates might beat the Democratic nominee, "Eisenhower can surely do it." See Jim McConaughy, "Harnessing a Wave," *Time* 17 December 1951, 21.

time to implement many of its policies, the president, in keeping with his criticisms of Truman's policies, assured the country that foreign policy remained a central issue to him and his staff, and he vowed to "meet the costs of our huge defense" while reducing deficits and balancing the budget. "Our problem is to achieve adequate military strength within the limits of endurable strain upon our economy," proclaimed Eisenhower, who understood as well as any commander-in-chief the strong correlation between a healthy U.S. economy and national security. "To amass military power without regard to our economic capacity," he warned Congress, "would be to defend ourselves against one kind of disaster by inviting another."<sup>166</sup>

Months before Eisenhower won the Republican nomination, his future secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, had offered the U.S. public a glimpse of the "New Look," the name given to Eisenhower's foreign policy strategy. In "A Policy of Boldness," published in *Life* in May 1952, Dulles criticized not only the inefficiency and cost of Truman's policies, but the Democrats' overall Cold War strategy. Containment, Dulles argued, needed to be replaced by a new, bolder strategy of 'rollback,' or 'liberation' for two reasons. First, any policy that required U.S. forces and their allies to hold a defensive perimeter that stretched some twenty thousand miles around the Soviet and Chinese blocs was economically and militarily untenable. The second reason revolved around the key issue of U.S. credibility throughout the world. Dulles' new strategy was designed to signal to U.S. allies and adversaries alike that the United States was committed to liberation. Dulles hoped to combat the growing sentiment around the world that the Cold War was simply a feud between the United States and the Soviet Union and that all other nations were

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<sup>166</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, 2 February 1953," *The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara*.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9829#axzz1lilVGcBr>

As evidence of Eisenhower's belief that the United States needed a strong economy if it hoped to lead the free world, Schaefermeyer points to his inclusion of both the Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, and Budget Director Joseph Dodge in the NSC. Mark J. Schaefermeyer, "Dulles and Eisenhower on 'Massive Retaliation,'" in *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 27.

mere pawns in a high-stakes game for global supremacy in which the ante consisted of nuclear weapons. Dulles and Eisenhower shared an understanding that U.S. credibility hinged on the ability of the United States to convince entire populations that the realization of their aspirations for peace and prosperity were central considerations of U.S. foreign policy planners. Dulles' audacious New Look would directly challenge the Soviet Union and China and thus, U.S. officials hoped, renew the faith and resolve of countries on the border of the communist blocs who felt abandoned by containment.<sup>167</sup>

After his election, Eisenhower worked in concert with Dulles to implement many of the newly-appointed Secretary of State's proposed measures. The essential underlying assumptions of the Eisenhower Administration's Cold War strategy were that the "fundamental motivation" for all Soviet actions was world domination; the Soviet leadership preferred "the process of encroachment to the risks of general war," and, as such; the United States and its allies "must continue to strengthen their military capabilities until it is perceived with clarity that the Soviet Union is unwilling to risk general war [and] has abandoned its goal of world domination."<sup>168</sup> With these assumptions informing their Cold War paradigm, Eisenhower and his advisors crafted the New Look, codified in NSC 162/2 and officially approved by Eisenhower on 30 October 1953.

As expected, one of the principle features of the New Look was a reduction of conventional U.S. forces. Eisenhower shifted U.S. military strategy from an emphasis on preparedness of ground and naval forces to a policy based on massive retaliation with nuclear arms. The central tenet of massive retaliation was that in the event of communist aggression, such as the invasion of South Korea, the United States ought to respond with a direct nuclear

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<sup>167</sup> John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," *Life* 19 May 1952. Reprinted as "A New Foreign Policy" in *Gordon Gray: Papers, 1946-1976 [Box 2 (PSB Personal 1951-1952)]*, *Eisenhower Library*.

<sup>168</sup> Hagerty, "Press Release, July 8, 1953."

attack on the Soviet Union, the perceived source of all communist aggression, rather than by the deployment of large conventional forces. The rationale of the policy was twofold: first, that the U.S. public had very limited tolerance for the cost of conventional wars such as had occurred in Korea, and second, and arguably more importantly, that it would deter communist forces from expanding for fear of such a drastic consequence.<sup>169</sup> Eisenhower ordered both the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons and the development of Strategic Air Command bombing capabilities in bases in Western Europe from which the United States could strike the Soviet Union. This shift towards “the dependence we are placing on new weapons” allowed Eisenhower to achieve one of the primary goals of his new defence strategy by justifying “completely some reduction in conventional forces.” Both Eisenhower and Dulles agreed that the United States could “move towards a reduction in personnel in the armed forces, especially the Army and possibly Navy.”<sup>170</sup>

Another key feature of the New Look was its emphasis on collective security. In his State of the Union address, Eisenhower told Congress that “no single country, even one so powerful as ours, can alone defend the liberty of all nations threatened by Communist aggression from without or subversion within.”<sup>171</sup> Eisenhower, who remained committed to U.S. involvement in NATO, hoped that the New Look would stimulate renewed courage and resolve among U.S. allies, leading them to take more active roles in such collective security measures.<sup>172</sup>

At the heart of the New Look was a renewed commitment to the development and use of effective psychological warfare. In his State of the Union address, Eisenhower declared that “a

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<sup>169</sup> Craig and Logeval, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 145-147.

<sup>170</sup> Department of State, “Memorandum for the Record by the President, November 1, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume II, part I (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 597-598.

<sup>171</sup> Eisenhower, “State of the Union, 2 February 1953.”

<sup>172</sup> See Robert L. Ivie, “Eisenhower as Cold Warrior,” in *Eisenhower's War of Words*, ed. Medhurst, 10. Collective security remained a significant aspect of U.S. foreign policy throughout Eisenhower's presidency. Under his leadership, the United States took key roles in the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO, 1954) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, 1955) though, admittedly, neither of these organizations were as successful or long-lasting as NATO.

unified and dynamic effort” in the field of foreign information was “essential to the security of the United States and of the other peoples in the community of free nations.” Thus, at the outset of his presidency, Eisenhower restated his commitment to psychological warfare. “There is but one sure way to avoid total war—and that is to win the cold war,” he told Congress. With massive retaliation serving as the shield of U.S. foreign policy under Eisenhower, psychological warfare became the tip of the spear. Henceforth, through both his administrations every undertaking of the United States government, whether economic, diplomatic, military, or legislative, would be assessed for its value to, and be regarded as part of, psychological warfare.<sup>173</sup> Under Eisenhower’s close guidance, officials within his administrations set about creating a strengthened, unified, efficient, and cost-effective foundation for the president’s goal of vanquishing communism through psychological warfare.<sup>174</sup> Eisenhower can thus arguably be regarded as the first true psychological warrior elected President of the United States.

Both overt and covert psychological warfare were key features of Eisenhower’s foreign policy. However, focus will be given to the former for the remainder of this paper because notable covert operations under Eisenhower, namely the CIA-orchestrated coups in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954) have been covered extensively elsewhere.<sup>175</sup>

It is worthwhile to consider whence the new president derived his passionate personal belief in propaganda as an effective instrument of warfare.<sup>176</sup> In short, Eisenhower had formed this conviction during his service overseas in the Second World War, and was among the very

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<sup>173</sup> Jackson Committee, “Some Notes on American Foreign Policy,” 10.

<sup>174</sup> Eisenhower, “State of the Union, 2 February 1953.”

<sup>175</sup> See, for example, Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: J. Wiley & Sons, 2003) and Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala*, (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1982).

<sup>176</sup> Hixson, Osgood, Craig, and Logevall are among the scholars who note Eisenhower’s relatively exceptional commitment to, and understanding of, psychological warfare. See, for example, Walter Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2008), 186. See also Craig and Logevall, *America’s Cold War*, 159-161 and Osgood, *Total Cold War*.

first top U.S. officers to recognize its potential. “I learned the importance of truth as a weapon in the midst of battle,” he recalled in 1952.<sup>177</sup> As a relatively new weapon, propaganda was derided by many top U.S. government and military officials as a waste of valuable and limited resources in a war that would ultimately be decided by bullets and bombs. Eisenhower, however, recognized that propaganda could have practical applications in bolstering the morale of U.S. allies while simultaneously deflating that of enemy troops. To this end, a staggering eight billion leaflets were dropped over North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Western Europe under his command.<sup>178</sup>

Eisenhower’s commitment to psychological warfare can also be explained by his lengthy experience as a world traveller, through which he learned the consequences of a U.S. refusal or inability to employ effective propaganda. By the time Eisenhower became president, it had been eleven years since he had sailed across the Atlantic, and, as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces during the war and later as Supreme Commander of NATO, he had spent much of the intervening years abroad. In November 1953 Eisenhower told U.S. foreign information staff that over the course of his extensive travelling, he had been frustrated “to realize how little people in so many areas—and many of them classed as normally well-educated people—knew about the United States.” The president told his audience that this perceived ignorance had very grave

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<sup>177</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Letter to C.D. Jackson,” in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-1952* [Box 61, Jackson, C.D.], *Eisenhower Library*.

<sup>178</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 48-49.

consequences to global conceptions of American policies and motives. As a result, Eisenhower adopted the view that the United States could not conduct efficacious foreign relations

unless it did something very positive in the way of letting the world know: (a) what is deep in the American heart; (b) what is the general psychological reaction of Americans to a given set of human problems; and (c) what are the qualities or the motives that characterize the things—inspire the things, America is trying to do in the world.<sup>179</sup>

During World War II, Eisenhower had directly experienced the impacts of negative propaganda directed toward the Allies, practical knowledge of which later served to convince him of the potential for U.S. propaganda to strike a blow at communism in the Cold War. As Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, Eisenhower's role during the war was as much political as military. This was especially the case in his efforts to maintain the unity of the tenuous alliance between the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union. Throughout the war, Nazi propaganda consistently stressed divisions between the so-called Big Three: Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin. Eisenhower understood the drastic consequences to morale that such propaganda could have, and found himself continually combating Nazi propaganda and stressing the unity of the Big Three to the press.<sup>180</sup>

Finally, Eisenhower's dedication to psychological warfare can be understood as a product of the close personal and professional relationships he developed with other devoted and accomplished psychological warriors. Foremost among these was C.D. Jackson, a former executive at *Time-Life International* who not only became a trusted confidant to Eisenhower, but was also appointed Special Advisor to the President in February 1953 to council Eisenhower on

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<sup>179</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks to the Staff of the United States Information Agency, November 10, 1953," in *Eisenhower Public Papers*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 753.

<sup>180</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 50.

psychological warfare.<sup>181</sup> The close and lasting association between the two men began when Jackson took over as Deputy Chief of the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) at Allied Forces Headquarters in North Africa in April 1943. The task of overseeing the PWB, a new organization created by Eisenhower to coordinate liaisons between military operations and the various Allied information agencies, including the OWI, OSS, and the British Ministry of Information, was indeed an ambitious undertaking, but one well-suited to Jackson's management expertise. Robert Sherwood, head of OWI overseas operations, described Jackson as "as good a man as could be found for the highly complex job." Indeed, Jackson excelled in his new assignment, of, as Jackson himself described, "setting up a climate in which the whole gang could operate." The job put him in charge of all OWI personnel in Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey.<sup>182</sup>

During their time together in North Africa and later in Europe, Jackson and Eisenhower developed a mutual respect that endured after the war. In the years between the Second World War and Eisenhower's presidency, the two met as frequently as circumstances would permit, in order to discuss how their respective forms of expertise and influence might benefit Eisenhower's efforts as Supreme Commander of NATO or Jackson's work as president of the National Committee for a Free Europe. Jackson became an increasingly prominent advisor to

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<sup>181</sup> One of Jackson's first actions in this new capacity was to address Eisenhower's cabinet, at the behest of the president, in order to gain widespread support for psychological warfare as an effective instrument of U.S. foreign policy. Jackson provided examples of recent issues and U.S. decisions, and suggested some ways in which they could be exploited for psychological advantage. "Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, February 25, 1953," in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President of the United States, 1952-1961 (Ann Whitman File), Cabinet Series, [Box 1], Eisenhower Library*.

<sup>182</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, "Letter to General McClure, April 11, 1943," in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-1952, [Box 107 (Sherwood, Robert E.)], Eisenhower Library*. For a personal account of Jackson's experiences in World War II, see C.D. Jackson, "Interview with Harris Huey, 26 July 1950."

Eisenhower after the latter officially announced his candidacy for president in 1952.<sup>183</sup> The ties between Jackson and Eisenhower mirror the ties between the newly-elected president and other psychological warriors such as John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, who was appointed Director of the CIA during Eisenhower's first year as president, and Major General Robert McClure, who was assigned to lead the U.S. Military Mission in Iran the same year.

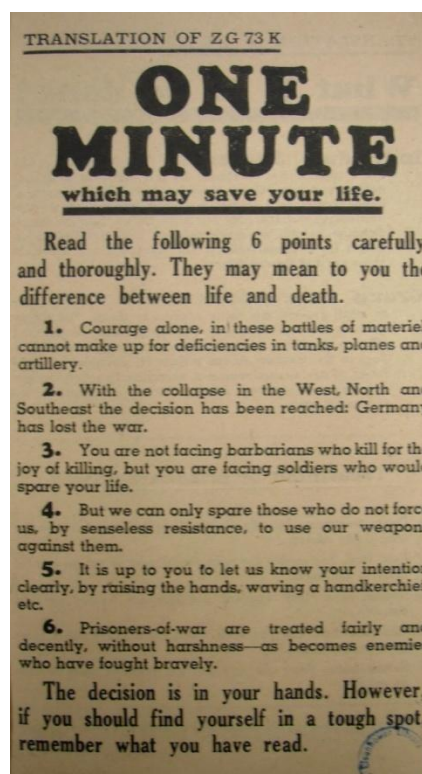
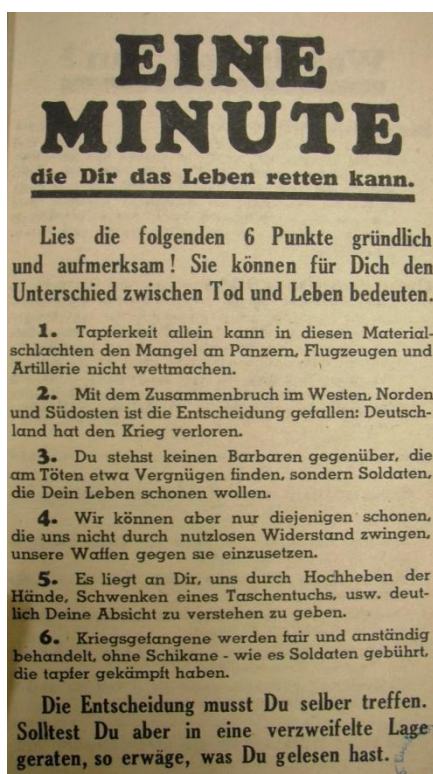


Figure 4. German and English translation of Psychological Warfare Division – Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (PWD-SHAEF) combat leaflet ZG 73 K, which was dropped behind enemy lines in Europe throughout 1944 and 1945. The leaflet's "lack of any political appeal and its short-term soldier-to-soldier language" made it, according to PWD-SHAEF, "probably the most successful single P.W.D. combat leaflet of the Western campaign."<sup>184</sup>

<sup>183</sup> In January 1944 Jackson went to London to serve as Major General Robert A. McClure's deputy at the Psychological Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. After D-Day he went to continental Europe to organize information stations for "occupation propaganda" in newly-liberated countries. He retired from active military service after the war. See Jackson, "Interview with Harris Huey," 19.

<sup>184</sup> "Current Combat Leaflets," in *Ray W. Barker: Papers, 1942-1946* [Box 2, File "SHAEF Booklet: Current Combat Leaflets, 1944], *Eisenhower Library*.

Two weeks after the 1952 election, C.D. Jackson proposed to president-elect Eisenhower that he form a committee to make a survey of U.S. psychological warfare efforts to date and to determine the course of efforts for the future. On 24 January 1953 Eisenhower established the President's Committee on International Activities, known more commonly as the Jackson Committee after its chair, Wayne G. Jackson of the CIA. The Jackson Committee, which met for the first time on 30 January, was comprised of representatives from the Department of Defense, the CIA, the Mutual Security Agency, and the Office of Defense Mobilization. At the behest of both John Foster Dulles and Eisenhower, C.D. Jackson was appointed to represent the State Department, and made invaluable contributions to the committee's efforts and findings. Over the course of four months, the Jackson Committee interviewed more than 250 witnesses and consulted with various members of Congress.<sup>185</sup> The committee examined virtually every aspect of the International Information Administration which, by the spring of 1953, was conducting foreign information operations from some 200 posts in 86 countries around the world, at a total cost of more than \$90 million. Special attention was given to analyzing the efficacy of the VOA, which devoted sixty per cent of its broadcasts behind the Iron Curtain and had also begun broadcasting into China.<sup>186</sup>

The Jackson Committee presented its findings to Eisenhower in May 1953 and identified several areas for potential improvement. The report began by emphasizing the importance of psychological warfare. By seeking first to provide a working definition of the term itself, the

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<sup>185</sup> Hagerty, "Press Release, July 8, 1953," 5.

<sup>186</sup> By the spring of 1953, 60% of VOA programming was directed behind the Iron Curtain. However, efforts to penetrate the Iron Curtain were hampered by Soviet jamming, resulting in VOA broadcasts reaching Moscow only approximately twenty-five per cent, and other Soviet-controlled regions between sixty and eighty per cent, of the time. The VOA issued six hours of programming per day to China in Cantonese, Mandarin, Amoy, and Swatow. Other countries targeted by the VOA included Japan, Jordan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Burma, Indonesia, Guatemala, Argentina, Panama, Thailand, and several Western European countries. See International Information Administration, "Material Furnished the Jackson Committee on Overt Information and Propaganda by the International Information Administration, February 1953," in *U.S. President's Committee on International Information Activities (Jackson Committee) Records, 1950-1953, [Box 14], Eisenhower Library*.

committee concluded that “psychological activity is not a field of endeavour separable from the main body of diplomatic, economic, and military measures by which the United States seeks to achieve its national objectives. It is an ingredient of such measures.”<sup>187</sup> The corollary of this definition was that psychological warfare could also be employed by the Soviet Union to achieve its objectives and the committee argued that the Soviets were in fact making decidedly effective use of this tool.

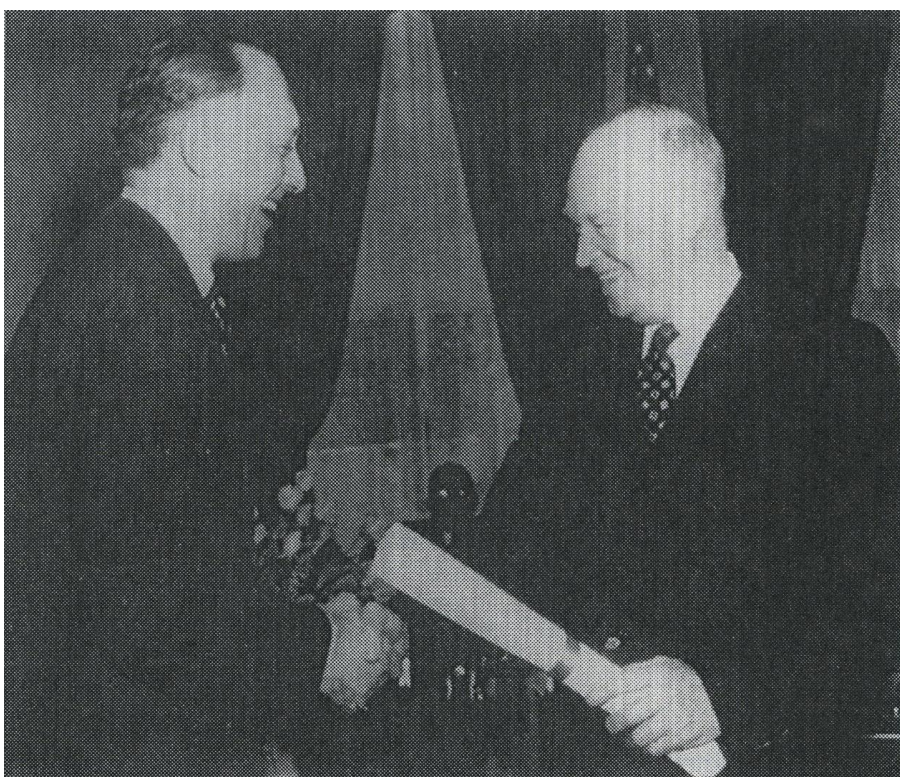


Figure 5. Eisenhower and his close friend and Special Advisor for psychological warfare, C.D. Jackson, in 1953.<sup>188</sup>

According to the Jackson Committee, several factors contributed to the efficacy of Soviet psychological warfare in general and to Soviet propaganda in particular. Foremost among these was the existence of sizable communist parties throughout the world which the committee

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<sup>187</sup> Department of State, “The Report of the President’s Committee on International Information Activities, June 30, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume II, part II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 1796.

<sup>188</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 58.

perceived to be manipulating and infiltrating non-communist parties and organizations. A second important factor was that communist ideology “still has a significant appeal to many people outside the system.” The reason for this appeal, the committee contended, lay in the fact that “most of the recruits are people who believe that they are underprivileged, discriminated against and exploited, and whose religious faith or loyalty to existing institutions has been weakened or broken.”<sup>189</sup>

U.S. psychological warfare agencies, on the other hand, “suffered from the lack of effective central direction.” The interdepartmental Psychological Strategy Board, responsible for planning, coordinating, and evaluating psychological operations, was largely ineffective due to a poorly defined mandate and a failure of the various departments and agencies of which it was composed to coordinate among themselves. Even planning, the one thing that the PSB was said to do reasonably well, was hampered by indecision among or even quarrelling between the various departments.

In March 1953, Eisenhower observed first-hand the grave inadequacies of the PSB. When Joseph Stalin died on 5 March, officials in the Eisenhower Administration were shocked to learn that no U.S. government agency “had in its files anything resembling a plan or even a sense-making guidance, to cover the circumstances arising out of the fatal illness or death of Stalin.” While the PSB had previously considered the issue, C.D. Jackson denounced the agency’s report on the topic as “worthless.” Under the confused, inefficient, and uncoordinated institutional framework of the PSB and the IIA, Jackson warned that the United States was “incapable of assuming the initiative and moving on the first really great opportunity that has

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<sup>189</sup> Department of State, “The Report on the President’s Committee on International Information Activities,” 1806.

been presented to us.” The United States essentially gave the “enemy,” according to Jackson, “time to pull himself together, get his wind back.”<sup>190</sup>

On 16 March, Georgii Malenkov, Stalin’s heir apparent, delivered a speech to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. in which he announced the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union and declared that any problems that existed between the two superpowers could be peacefully resolved through negotiations.<sup>191</sup>

Signs of Malenkov’s sincerity soon followed his address: a Soviet proposal to exchange prisoners of war from the Korean War, admittance of U.S. correspondents into the Soviet Union, and even a proposal for Malenkov and Eisenhower to meet to discuss nuclear disarmament. However, Eisenhower, Dulles, and the NSC did not interpret Malenkov’s speech as a sincere overture for peace, but rather as a calculated propaganda “peace offensive” designed to undermine the resolve and morale of U.S. citizens and international allies by suggesting that conciliation with the Soviet Union was possible.<sup>192</sup>

The Eisenhower administration hurriedly undertook to reclaim the initiative, and on 16 April Eisenhower delivered his seminal “Golden Age of Peace” address (also called “A Chance for Peace”). The president declared the “readiness of the free nations to welcome sincerely any genuine evidence of peaceful purpose enabling all peoples again to resume their common quest for peace”. While the United States welcomed “every honest act of peace,” Eisenhower proclaimed that his government “care[d] nothing for mere rhetoric.”<sup>193</sup> One aim of Eisenhower’s speech, Osgood contends, was to warn “his listeners not to accept Soviet peace

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<sup>190</sup> C.D. Jackson, “Memorandum to General Robert Cutler, March 4, 1953,” in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President of the United States, 1952-1961, (Ann Whitman File), Administration Series [Box 29, Psychological Warfare], Eisenhower Library*.

<sup>191</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 57-61.

<sup>192</sup> Department of State, “Memorandum by Carlton Savage of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff (Nitze), April 1, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume VIII* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 1138.

<sup>193</sup> Eisenhower, “Toward a Golden Age of Peace,” 36.

overtures too eagerly [by explaining] that the new leaders must prove their goodwill through deeds.”<sup>194</sup> To this end, the president three times during his speech listed a free, united, and democratic Germany as a precondition to any U.S.-Soviet détente.<sup>195</sup>

Eisenhower, Dulles, and other U.S. policy makers considered the president’s speech a great victory in the propaganda battle. The speech, and especially its emphasis on a united and democratic Germany, wrested “the political and psychological initiative from the U.S.S.R. at the critical juncture in international relations.”<sup>196</sup> Administration officials worked tirelessly to ensure that, through the PSB and Voice of America, Eisenhower’s words got more coverage around the world than any declaration of U.S. policy since the Marshall Plan. “A Golden Age of Peace,” which was broadcast around the world and distributed in three million leaflets, had, according to the State Department, “thrown back the so-called ‘peace offensive’ and turned it into a ‘peace defensive.’”<sup>197</sup> While the Eisenhower Administration believed they had won a critical Cold War victory, the episode served to highlight the dire need for a strengthened framework for U.S. propaganda efforts.<sup>198</sup>

In the aftermath of this episode, Eisenhower responded to the Jackson Committee’s criticisms of the PSB by implementing one of its chief recommendations. On 2 September 1953, he issued Executive Order 10483, which replaced the PSB with the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB). While the OCB was comprised of the same departments and agencies as the PSB, namely the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the CIA, the new agency was incorporated into the structure of the NSC. This change was implemented in order for the NSC

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<sup>194</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 64.

<sup>195</sup> Eisenhower, “Toward a Golden Age of Peace,” 39, 41.

<sup>196</sup> Department of State, “The Soviet ‘Peace Offensive,’ April 22, 1953,” *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume II, part II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 1699.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 1699 and Department of State, “Memorandum by Carlton Savage,” 1138.

<sup>198</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 67.

to ensure adequate cooperation between the departments and agencies and to verify that the psychological activities planned reflected the broader national objectives determined by the NSC. To achieve these aims, the OCB held weekly meetings at which the agencies represented shared their goals and strategies.<sup>199</sup>

With the establishment of the OCB, the Eisenhower Administration began to address the numerous shortcomings of existing efforts to plan and evaluate U.S. psychological warfare efforts. The next step was to examine and restructure the IIA and other agencies responsible for the actual execution of overt psychological warfare activities and operations. This process began on 1 June 1953, when Eisenhower appeared before Congress to inform them of the inefficient, ineffective, and overly expensive institutional framework which had been established under the Truman Administration. “A number of programs which implement our foreign policy,” he stated, “have been scattered within the executive branch rather than being grouped together for the most efficient and economical administration.” Eisenhower’s solution to this awkward state of affairs was Reorganization Plan No. 8, which “establishes a new agency—the United States Information Agency—for the conduct of our information programs.” The United States Information Agency, or USIA, integrated four programs already in existence: the psychological warfare activities of the IIA, foreign information activities in U.S.-occupied regions, the information program of the Mutual Security Agency, and finally, the Technical Cooperation Administration.<sup>200</sup>

Over the course of several months, officials debated the aims and institutional framework of the new USIA. The final directive for the guidance of the USIA, approved by Eisenhower in October 1953, listed the primary aim of the agency as submitting “evidence to peoples of other

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<sup>199</sup> Anna K. Nelson, “The Importance of Foreign Policy Process: Eisenhower and the National Security Council,” *Eisenhower: A Centenary Assessment* ed. Günter Bischof and Stephen E. Ambrose (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 113.

<sup>200</sup> Eisenhower, “Special Message to Congress, June 1, 1953,” 343, 345-346.

nations by means of communication techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace.” The agency was charged with the critical task of “explaining and interpreting” the official stated foreign policy of the United States to the people of the world in terms that reassured these people of the direct correlation between U.S. objectives and their own aspirations for peace and prosperity. The directive recognized that in many instances such a connection would often force USIA officials to think “imaginatively.”<sup>201</sup>

This required selecting a few specific themes for the USIA to disseminate around the world. Predictably, the Jackson Committee had identified and denounced the effects of the complete lack of coordination between the numerous competing propaganda agencies created under Truman. The result, the committee declared, was that “no single set of ideas has been registered abroad through effective repetition.” This failure on the part of the U.S. government was said to stand “in sharp contrast to the technique of the Soviets, who have consistently hammered home a few carefully selected central themes: land reform, peace, anti-imperialism, youth.”<sup>202</sup>

The criterion U.S. officials used in each instance when determining whether a specific theme or objective should be disseminated by the USIA was whether it helped “support and explain our foreign policy in terms of others’ legitimate aspirations.” To facilitate this process, officials divided the world into four regions: the Far East; the Near East, Asia, and Africa; the American Republics; and Western Europe. With the world thus divided, policy planners developed region-specific propaganda themes. Operatives in the Far East were instructed to expose communist designs for expansion to the local population. In the Near East, Asia, and

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<sup>201</sup>Eisenhower, “Directive Approved by the President, October 28, 1953,” 728.

<sup>202</sup>Department of State, “The Report of the President’s Committee on International Information Activities,” 1840.

Africa, the USIA pledged U.S. support for “legitimate” local endeavours for peace, independence, and progress, while similar themes were expounded throughout the Western Hemisphere. In Western Europe, the USIA encouraged regional participation in NATO and other collective security measures.<sup>203</sup>

The more the United States government expounded the virtues of U.S. democracy, freedom, and progress, however, the more it opened itself to attack from the Soviet Union and other critics, including many from within the United States, for the widespread segregation and racial violence that prevailed throughout the United States in general, and the Jim Crow South in particular.<sup>204</sup> The circumstances in which many blacks lived in the United States did not fit, Soviet propagandists repeatedly pointed out, with official U.S. self-representations as one nation, “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Likewise, U.S. cooperation with European empires, which continued to administer their colonies on tacitly racist assumptions, were similarly contrasted with U.S. claims to support ambitions of local populations worldwide. To make matters worse, when Eisenhower became president in January 1953, foreign diplomats of colour were often barred by segregation from using public facilities, including restaurants, hotels, and theatres, in Washington, D.C.<sup>205</sup>

Subsequently, any advance in civil rights, regardless of whether it had any meaningful impact on the lives of most African Americans, was immediately seized upon by the USIA as an

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<sup>203</sup> United States Information Agency, “First Report to Congress, August-December 1953,” in *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President of the United States, 1952-1961 (Ann Whitman File) Administration Series [Box 37 (USIA)]*, *Eisenhower Library*, 7-8.

<sup>204</sup> Mary Dudziak, “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative,” *Stanford Law Review* 41, no.1 (November 1988): 62-63. See also Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001) and Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>205</sup> Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 91. Incidentally, the Cold War also provided context for arguments in favour of segregation. As one scholar observes, segregationists and white supremacists in the United States continually argued that “efforts to abandon racial segregation were communist-inspired and would undermine the fabric of American society.” This view was common even among educated white Southerners. See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 28.

opportunity to improve global perceptions of domestic race relations. For example, in nearly every one of its publications, the USIA devoted extensive coverage to *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court decision of May 1954 which declared segregation of public schools unconstitutional, and USIA operatives around the world were instructed to use any means at their disposal to inform local populations of the ruling. Even though *Brown v. Board of Education* led to fewer than seven per cent of Southern black schoolchildren attending integrated schools by the end of Eisenhower's presidency in 1961, the USIA glossed over the relatively slow pace with which civil rights legislation was implemented and focused instead on the 'progress' of "The Negro in American Life."<sup>206</sup>

Despite the discrepancies between USIA portrayals and the reality of everyday life for blacks in the United States, the agency maintained that its efforts were concentrated on "factual, objective news reporting." The belief among U.S. psychological warriors that the new agency avoided "strident and propagandistic material" reflected the assumption that they were simply telling the truth to the rest of the world.<sup>207</sup> The tactic of objectively reporting the facts, as officials saw it, was designed to discredit the Soviet Union's perceived deceitful propaganda machine while simultaneously restoring U.S. credibility worldwide. A congressional investigation into foreign information practices of the IIA and other agencies created under Truman had revealed a credibility gap due to "an excessive profession of U.S. humanitarian principles or altruistic purposes."<sup>208</sup> The credibility gap troubled Eisenhower, whose overseas experiences led him to understand the challenges such conditions presented to the conduct of U.S.

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<sup>206</sup> Borstelmann, *Cold War and the Color Line*, 93 and Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 280-281.

<sup>207</sup> USIA, "First Report to Congress," 7.

<sup>208</sup> Another factor contributing to the loss of U.S. credibility was the widespread "official use of terms like 'target' or 'target areas' when discussing friendly nations." See Hickenlooper Subcommittee, a Subcommittee of U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Staff Memorandum No. 8: Criticisms and Suggestions on the Overseas Information Programs," in *Jackson Committee, Eisenhower Library*, 4.

foreign policy. The president told USIA staff in November 1953 that when the United States presented its version of contemporary global affairs “to a foreigner, and he just replies ‘Propaganda,’ and walks off, you realize that something is wrong.” Eisenhower challenged USIA staff to bridge the gap between the United States and people around the world by first understanding, then living, and finally by selling, the American dream. In this way, Eisenhower believed, the minds, hearts, and souls of people everywhere would become convinced of the superiority of the U.S. model of government and society to any dictatorial alternative. “We in our Fourth of July speeches say America seeks no dominion over others, she believes in the dignity of man. We say all the real things. And we believe them. They are true.”<sup>209</sup>

Another characteristic of foreign information agencies under Eisenhower was their militarized bureaucratic structure. The new institutional framework of the OCB and USIA reflected Eisenhower’s larger efforts to militarize the federal bureaucracy in general in order to achieve increased efficiency. Throughout his lengthy military career, Eisenhower repeatedly displayed his exceptional commitment to organization, discipline, and accountability, and as commander-in-chief he remained dedicated to those same principles as he sought to strengthen the efficacy of existing government institutions at a reduced cost to the U.S. taxpayer.<sup>210</sup> Psychological warfare efforts under Truman had been severely hampered by an uncoordinated and divided command structure issuing vague and often competing directives from New York or Washington to overseas operatives. The structure of the USIA, though it emphasized “decentralization, with greater responsibility on the USIS officers overseas,” was virtually the opposite and militaristic in character. The USIA consolidated existing organizations under a centralized and unified command, while allowing overseas operatives considerable flexibility for

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<sup>209</sup> Eisenhower, “Remarks to the Staff of the United States Information Agency, November 10, 1953,” 753-755.

<sup>210</sup> Eisenhower, “Special Message to Congress, 1 June 1953,” 342.

planning pertinent and focused region-specific operations. Each of the four regions was headed by an Assistant Director of the USIA, an expert in his respective region who spent the majority of his time overseas and returned to Washington roughly only every two months to meet with the Director of the USIA, Theodore Streibert, to ensure worldwide operations satisfied the larger objectives of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>211</sup>

Besides Eisenhower, C.D. Jackson was the most vocal proponent of the opinion that “in military terms, Psychological Warfare may of necessity have to be strategically under the control of Washington, but tactically it has to be under the control of the boss on the spot.” Jackson’s convictions in this matter stemmed from his own experiences as a leading psychological warrior during the Second World War. When Jackson took over OWI operations in North Africa in 1943, both propaganda policy and operations were planned in Washington. Jackson claimed that within forty-eight hours of arriving in North Africa, he concluded that such an arrangement was senseless and arranged for psychological warfare to be absorbed into the military command structure of Allied Forces Headquarters under the Supreme Commander. The result, Jackson recalled, was that psychological warfare “became a weapon, rather than a nuisance from there on.” On the other hand, according to Jackson, OWI officials in the United States charged that he had “sold out to the military.”<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless he remained committed to staying the course, and his decision was gradually vindicated by the efficient use of psychological warfare during subsequent Allied operations. Throughout the post-war period, Jackson repeatedly stated his position that psychological warfare efforts must “be policy-wise within the very broad

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<sup>211</sup> The United States Information Service (USIS) was fully integrated into the USIA, and refers to overseas operations. The only reason the term was retained was because it was already familiar to local populations around the world. See USIA, “First Report to Congress,” 1, 4.

<sup>212</sup> Jackson, “Letter to Charles M Spofford,” 6.

framework of the overall U.S. grand strategy, but operationally have got to be under the fast-reacting control of the immediate local boss.”<sup>213</sup>



Figure 6. The caption to this picture, from the USIA pamphlet entitled “The Negro in American Life,” read “These neighbors in a housing project, like millions of Americans, are forgetting whatever color prejudice they may have had; their children will have none to forget.”<sup>214</sup>

Eisenhower’s efforts to streamline foreign information programs allowed him to fulfil his campaign promise of improving efficiency, eliminating redundancies, and reducing costs to U.S. taxpayers. Virtually every aspect of overt psychological warfare made budget cuts a part of the restructuring process. While the foreign library program, which was used by an estimated 54

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>214</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 47, 55.

million people worldwide, was subject to only minor cuts, the budgets of the VOA and film agencies were reduced by twenty-five and fifty per cent, respectively. To meet the demands of the new budget, VOA staff was reduced by twenty-five per cent from 13,500 members in December 1952 to slightly more than 9,000 by the end of 1953. The only USIA activity to receive a budgetary increase was the Office of Private Cooperation. This was due to the perception that “the maximum of business and other non-governmental actions and services must be marshalled behind the Government’s information program. This has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective ways to strengthen the entire program.” As a result, the budget of the Office of Private Cooperation doubled during the first year of the USIA.<sup>215</sup> Privately-operated groups like the Advertising Council benefitted tremendously from the budget increase and worked in close cooperation with the government to develop and execute propaganda initiatives.

Another central aspect of the institutional reorganization was Eisenhower’s decision to establish the USIA as an independent agency, marking the first time since U.S. foreign information programs were established in the late 1930’s that such agencies were not directly administered by the State Department. The removal of foreign information programs from the Department of State ran contrary to the recommendations made to Eisenhower by the Jackson Committee. When asked to examine the suggestion of the creation of an independent agency, the committee recommended that a new organization which combined the IIA with other programs remain in the State Department. This recommendation was based on the committee’s “conviction that information activities conducted by a free society are necessarily based upon

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<sup>215</sup> USIA, “First Report to Congress,” 1-3, 8.

foreign policy. The Department of State,” the committee continued, “is primarily responsible for the development of such policies.”<sup>216</sup>

Several factors may have led Eisenhower to a contrary decision. In April 1953 the Hickenlooper Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations released its own, equally critical survey of existing foreign information programs. In its critique of the VOA, the Hickenlooper Subcommittee charged that “the State Department has too tight a control on broadcasting and issues too many policy directives.” The result was that the VOA “can never be as flexible and free as it must be in order to prove effective.” The subcommittee pointed to the BBC, which it said was informed of the British government’s policy but not subject to state-issued directives, as a more efficient, cost-effective, and credible model for the VOA to emulate. In short, it was recommended that the VOA be taken out of the hands of State Department officials in Washington and placed in those of local U.S. ambassadors and USIA operatives.<sup>217</sup>

Similar arguments came from within the foreign information establishment itself. For example, one month after the Jackson Committee submitted its final report, the president received a memorandum from Robert Johnson, the last Administrator of the IIA, in which Johnson argued that “one of the greatest handicaps to a successful international exchange program has been the difficulty of operating within the Department of State.” Johnson cited both the “traditional coldness of the career diplomat toward newer techniques of international communication” and, of greater consequence, “the tremendous size of the Department, resulting in a system of multiple clearances which has reached paralyzing proportions” as the two greatest

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<sup>216</sup> Department of State, “The Report on the President’s Committee on International Information Activities,” 1870. Foreign exchange programs, including the Fulbright International Educational Exchange Program, remained under the State Department.

<sup>217</sup>Hickenlooper Subcommittee, “Staff Memorandum No. 8,” 17-19.

contributing factors for his criticisms.<sup>218</sup> As Johnson's arguments appealed to Eisenhower's personal commitment to both psychological warfare and organizational efficiency, it is reasonable to conclude that Johnson's memorandum influenced the president's decision.

Eisenhower also had a narrower tactical imperative for removing foreign information from the State Department: namely, to publicly disassociate Secretary of State John Foster Dulles from state-sponsored propaganda. The creation of the perception among the public of Dulles's ambivalence towards propaganda was a deliberate and key component of the New Look. A common view of the administration's foreign policy during Eisenhower's presidency was that the brash and unpredictable John Foster Dulles expounded bellicose anti-communist policies based on the idea of massive retaliation while the president repeatedly extended overtures of peace to the Soviet Union. This account, however, elides the nuances of the conscious tactic which was, in reality, far more complex. Despite Dulles' repeated public calls for rollback, privately he was committed to a policy of military containment, though he continued to advocate for renewed efficiency and reduced military costs. The Secretary of State fully supported arguments that the defensive posture of containment allowed the United States greater opportunity to pursue psychological warfare. Dulles and Eisenhower agreed that liberation would not come from U.S. military forces but instead through overt and covert psychological warfare. While Dulles publicly pursued diplomacy to achieve the administration's goals, privately he issued "complete, day-to-day guidance on U.S. foreign policy" to the Director of the USIA, Theodore Streibert. The juxtaposition between Dulles' and Eisenhower's public positions, which gave U.S. foreign policy its "schizophrenic appearance," was in fact a calculated tactic deliberately designed to confuse the enemy. Through the aggressive statements of the Secretary of State and the peaceful initiatives from Eisenhower, the administration "sought to make

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<sup>218</sup> Robert L. Johnson, "Memorandum for the President, July 29, 1953," 27.

ambiguity their ally.” The mixed message also allowed the administration to appeal simultaneously to fervent anti-communists at home and to issue international calls for peace abroad.<sup>219</sup> The removal of state-sponsored propaganda from the State Department was the latest in a series of significant departures from U.S. tradition that characterized the early Cold War.

U.S. self-identification as the leader of the free world and the concomitant participation in peacetime collective security measures like NATO were radical deviations from the long-standing tradition of isolation. U.S. presidents had historically heeded the advice of George Washington who, in his Farewell Address of 1796, had implored his successors to abstain from permanent entangling alliances.<sup>220</sup>

As already noted, the post-1945 use of official peacetime propaganda was in and of itself also a break from the general opinion in the interwar period that only fascist, communist, and other anti-democratic regimes resorted to such means of influencing domestic and world opinion. By the late 1940s, U.S. government and military officials, as well as ordinary citizens, had largely become eager to tell their “side of the story to Europe and the world.”<sup>221</sup> However, for the most part they retained their ambivalence towards employing state-sponsored domestic

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<sup>219</sup> See Schaefermeyer, “Dulles and Eisenhower,” 42 and Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, 106. This strategy led many contemporary observers to conclude that Dulles was the lone architect of foreign policy and that he circumvented the president on many issues. Dulles did have significant influence on foreign policy and never allowed or acknowledged an equal within the State Department or any other agency charged with conducting foreign policy. Yet Dulles, who enjoyed considerable authority and independence, never acted without Eisenhower’s approval. Writing in the late 1980s, Crabb and Mulcahy contend that such a “close relationship in the formulation and execution of American foreign policy” as that which existed between Eisenhower and Dulles “has not been realized by a president and secretary of state since.” Dulles’ understood that his preeminence was based on “his successful representation of Eisenhower’s policies and his cultivation of the president’s confidence.” Crabb and Mulcahy, *Presidents and Foreign Policy Making*, 157.

<sup>220</sup> George Washington, “George Washington’s Farewell Address, 1796,” in *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy: Documents and Essays, Volume I: To 1920*, Seventh Edition, ed. Dennis Merrill and Thomas G. Paterson, (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 73-75. I do not use the term “radical” lightly. U.S. leadership of and participation in peacetime collective security arrangements was indeed a critical departure from a long-standing tradition. The trend has continued to this day. For discussions of isolationism and post-war internationalism, see Ronald E. Powaski, *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe, 1901-1950*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1991) and George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>221</sup> Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*, 772.

propaganda. While the country became increasingly self-righteous in globally distributing its self-representations as a free and democratic society, the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 continued to block federal agencies from targeting U.S. citizens for propaganda. Yet, by 1953 leading officials in the Eisenhower Administration began to reinterpret traditional notions of the role of psychological warfare in a democracy, and they increasingly viewed U.S. citizens as legitimate targets of state-sponsored propaganda.

In relation to psychological warfare, democracy was a double-edged sword for the Eisenhower Administration and the USIA. Democracy, on the one hand, was one of the most effective rhetorical themes at the disposal of foreign information agencies. U.S. propagandists, for example, employed democracy rhetorically in its response to attacks from the Soviet Union and other critics of the ubiquitous racism and segregation that pervaded the United States. The USIA responded to such criticisms by admitting to wrongs in the past, namely slavery and racism, but also by asserting that race relations were continually improving throughout the country and that reconciliation and redemption were only possible in a democracy such as that of the United States. The USIA emphasized states and regions where integration was already in place in schools and other public venues. The agency extolled the role democracy played in the process by telling the world stories of black writers and journalists who were free to speak and thus educate white Americans about the injustices suffered by blacks, further paving the way for reconciliation.<sup>222</sup>

Democracy, on the other hand, could also impede U.S. psychological warfare efforts. Robert Johnson told Eisenhower that repeated Congressional investigations of foreign information programs made it difficult for those programs to function because of a lack of certainty regarding the amount of future support or appropriations from Congress upon which

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<sup>222</sup> Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 44-54.

they could continue to rely. This in turn made it difficult to attract the most capable employees because the agencies could not guarantee them a lengthy career.<sup>223</sup> Congressman Walter Judd identified another key issue with legislative oversight of foreign information programs: “as soon as we report to the full Congress,” he told Secretary of State Dulles, “our plans are public and no good.”<sup>224</sup>

Many leading government officials began to recognize the ways in which democracy impeded U.S. Cold War strategy. For example, whereas the authoritarian Soviet leadership imposed its policies on its people, U.S. leaders were subject to the will of the people through democratic elections. A government accused of being soft on communism could expect to lose its next election. Conversely, officials understood that the success of their Cold War policies relied on the resolve of a public willing to see them through. The Jackson Committee concluded that “an unshakeable confidence” among the U.S. populace “that the human values for which this country stands will, in fact, prevail” was positively “essential to the successful resolution” of the Cold War.<sup>225</sup>

Eisenhower, who had witnessed first-hand the impact of propaganda on liberated peoples in Europe during the Second World War, understood the implications of domestic morale to the Allies’ broader war objectives. Yet despite his best efforts, Press Secretary James Hagerty reported in July 1953, “the American people do not yet grasp the import of the President’s recent words that we live in an age, not an instant, of peril.” The Jackson Committee shared Hagerty’s conclusions that “a greater effort is needed to inform our citizens of the dangers that confront them, the power of the enemy, the difficulty of reducing that power, and the probable duration of

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<sup>223</sup> Johnson, “Memorandum for the President, July 29, 1953,” 28.

<sup>224</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Telephone Conversation with Congressman Judd, March 6, 1953,” in *John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1951-1959, Telephone Conversation Series, [Box 1], Eisenhower Library*.

<sup>225</sup> Jackson Committee, “Some Notes on American Foreign Policy,” 10.

the conflict.” The committee proposed “the creation of new methods for achieving a consensus among the American people on the purposes and problems of our foreign policy.”<sup>226</sup> The committee’s conclusions echoed arguments put forth by George Kennan more than six years earlier. In his ‘Long Telegram,’ Kennan had advised State Department officials in Washington that the importance of educating the public on the “realities” of the Cold War could not be overstated. While Kennan acknowledged the role of private advertising to this endeavour, he argued that ultimately “it must be done mainly by Government, which is necessarily more experienced and better informed on practical problems involved.”<sup>227</sup> By mid-1953, propaganda efforts designed specifically to influence domestic audiences reflected the view among top government officials that, while democracy played an important role in the government’s Cold War strategy, it must not be allowed to restrict that strategy. U.S. citizens thus became legitimate targets of subsequent state-sponsored psychological warfare.

Citizens were not only warned of the impending dangers of the Cold War, but were also employed as informal “ambassadors” of the United States. A forty-one-page pamphlet entitled “Americans Abroad: Spokesmen for the U.S.A.” instructed citizens travelling abroad on how they should respond to questions about the United States from foreigners. If asked, for example, “are you Americans as materialistic as some people say you are?” travellers were directed to answer along the lines that “if by being materialistic you mean Americans want to live as well and comfortably as they can, we plead guilty.” However, they were admonished to mention that, while some Americans are enamoured of consumerism, “many more of us are deeply concerned with the spiritual and cultural side of life.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Hagerty, “Press Release, July 8, 1953,” 5.” Also, Jackson Committee, “Some Notes on American Foreign Policy,” 4.

<sup>227</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 62.

<sup>228</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 248.

To circumvent the legal prohibitions against using foreign information agencies to influence domestic opinion, the Eisenhower Administration used other federal agencies and departments to “educate” the U.S. public. The Federal Civil Defense Administration, the Office of the Press Secretary, the Departments of State and Defense, and the Advertising Council, tirelessly targeted domestic audiences with propaganda. In the Jackson Committee’s view, these public and private groups together successfully united the U.S. population to the government’s anti-communist crusade and gave the people the requisite strength and morale to see the Cold War through to the end.<sup>229</sup>



Figure 7. President Eisenhower at the Voice of America headquarters in New York City.<sup>230</sup>

In the winter of 1948-1949, Ralph Block, a State Department official involved with the IIA and, later, the USIA, cautioned that, were the U.S. government to cross the line into domestic propaganda, it would violate its longstanding “respect for the right of human beings to think for

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

themselves.” Block argued that claims by the government that it disseminated only “factual truth or ‘information,’ as distinguished from propaganda” were merely rhetorical devices employed to leave government officials “at a distance free to disclaim moral responsibility for ‘influencing’ anyone.”<sup>231</sup> However, while it may have appeared to Block and others that, in disseminating propaganda to domestic audiences, the U.S. government had become, as Kennan had warned, like the enemy it was attempting to defeat, Kennan himself had back in 1947 already reconciled domestic propaganda with the “courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society.” According to Kennan, who compared communism to a “malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue,” the entire U.S. Cold War effort hinged on the “health and vigor of our own society.” U.S. government efforts to ‘inform’ the public, he thought, marked the

point at which domestic and foreign policies meet. Every courageous and incisive measure to solve the internal problems of our own society, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morale and community of our own people, is a diplomatic victory over Moscow.<sup>232</sup>

Thus, for Kennan and other U.S. officials, the United States could, and in fact was required to, employ certain measures seemingly inconsistent with peacetime democracy, namely domestic propaganda programs, though without becoming “like those with whom we are coping.”<sup>233</sup>

Government officials frequently blurred the lines between domestic and foreign propaganda. For example, throughout 1953 the State Department worked closely with USIS operatives in Iran to ensure that both the U.S. and Iranian publics received the same message that the Shah of Iran enjoyed widespread popular support while the democratically-elected leader, Mohammed Mossadegh, invited ruin upon Iran by actively allowing communist infiltration into

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<sup>231</sup> Ralph Block, “Propaganda and the Free Society,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2, no. 4 (Winter 1948-1949):678.

<sup>232</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 63.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

his country. Loy Henderson, the U.S. ambassador to Iran, went so far as to ask the State Department to run an editorial prepared by his embassy, entitled “Dilemma in Iran,” in the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, and *Newsweek*. Henderson then used the USIS to distribute throughout Iran the same article, which had been purposefully stripped of “the stigma of government sponsorship.”<sup>234</sup>

Arguably the USIA’s greatest single propaganda endeavour of 1953 was its widespread dissemination of Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” address, which he delivered before the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 8 December 1953. The speech was conceived, beginning as early as April, to be yet another direct response to the Soviet peace offensive which, in its continual attempt to portray the United States as the aggressor, included calls for nuclear disarmament. The leadership of both the United States and the Soviet Union understood that because the United States relied on nuclear deterrence to cancel the overwhelming superiority of Soviet conventional forces, nuclear disarmament by the United States would be tantamount to what C.D. Jackson called “defensive suicide.”<sup>235</sup> In his address, Eisenhower not only highlighted the peaceful applications of atomic innovation but called the bluff of the Soviet Union’s calls for peace by hinting that the United States would consider nuclear disarmament on condition of a corresponding general reduction in conventional forces. In short, as one OCB representative remarked in February 1954, Eisenhower’s speech “placed the Kremlin in the position of reacting favorably or standing condemned by their own previous propaganda pleas before the bar of world opinion.”<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 137-138.

<sup>235</sup> C.D. Jackson, “Memorandum: The President’s Atomic Proposal before the U.N.” in *C.D. Jackson: Papers, 1931-1967 [Box 29, Atoms for Peace Evolution]*, Eisenhower Library.

<sup>236</sup> Richard Hirsch, “Note by OCB Representative, February 4, 1954,” in *C.D. Jackson: Papers, 1931-1967 [Box 29, Atoms for Peace Evolution]*, Eisenhower Library.

U.S. officials believed, however, that the impact of the president's speech would be severely limited if the United States did not follow up with every instrument of psychological warfare at its disposal. Unlike the defensive scramble in which the United States found itself in the aftermath of Stalin's sudden death, officials were far more proactive with the "Atoms for Peace" address. The first example of this new approach was in selecting the most beneficial place and date of the speech. As already noted, the address was months in the making and officials wrestled with the decision of when and where it should be delivered, a decision which was quickly laid to rest upon Eisenhower's acceptance of the invitation to address the General Assembly in December. With time to prepare, the USIA made sure the VOA would broadcast the speech around the world. Recordings of the speech were sent to more than fifty USIA posts worldwide and 300,000 written copies in ten languages of highlights of the address ensured the speech was given maximum foreign language exposure abroad.<sup>237</sup>

The USIA also publicly reported unclassified accomplishments of the United States in the field of atomic energy to various educational institutions and several labour, industry, and business groups. C.D. Jackson predicted in 1955 that historians would one day cite Eisenhower's address as the inauguration of a new era in which nuclear technology accounted for a large portion of the world's energy.<sup>238</sup>

At this point, U.S. psychological warriors felt they had won a key victory over the communists on the battlefield of hearts and minds. "Atoms for Peace," one OCB official observed, "placed the U.S.S.R. in a defensive position. The speech captured the hopes of the common man and the interest of the scientific and intellectual classes."<sup>239</sup> The first significant

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<sup>237</sup> USIA, "First Report to Congress," 3.

<sup>238</sup> C.D. Jackson, "Letter to Merlo J. Pusey, February 5, 1955," in *C.D. Jackson: Papers, 1931-1967 [Box 29, Atoms for Peace Evolution]*, Eisenhower Library.

<sup>239</sup> "Hirsch, "Note by OCB Representative."

test of the USIA and OCB compared favourably to previous efforts by the IIA, PSB, and other earlier psychological warfare agencies. The swift and earnest attempts by the Eisenhower Administration to deliver clear, effective, and efficient propaganda abroad appeared vindicated. That the administration was able to accomplish this with a smaller budget than previous administrations seemed a testament to Eisenhower's commitment to, as well as his gift for, organization.

The newfound proficiency of U.S. psychological warfare agencies changed the very nature of the Cold War during Eisenhower's presidency. When Eisenhower took office in January 1953, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were at a standstill. The USIA helped end the deadlock by shifting the attention of both domestic and international audiences away from the military aspects of the conflict and the vituperative anti-communism upon which the IIA and other previous agencies focused. Under Eisenhower's aegis, U.S. psychological warriors, according to one scholar, "focused on chances for peace."<sup>240</sup> U.S. psychological warfare efforts during his administration succeeded in convincing many contemporary observers and, later, revisionist historians such as Robert Divine and Stephen Ambrose, of Eisenhower's desire to achieve a lasting peace with the Soviet Union. More than sixty years after his presidency, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library & Museum in Abilene, Kansas continues to commemorate the "eight years of peace and prosperity" that characterized Eisenhower's presidency. A close examination of the scope, content, and institutional structure of psychological warfare, as well as the assumptions that informed the establishment of the USIA, reveals, however, that in reality Eisenhower's presidency did not signal a *détente*. Rather,

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<sup>240</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 354.

it represented the dawn of a new era in the Cold War, one in which the primary standard of power shifted from a preponderance of military might to the ability of one superpower to exploit the psychological and political dimensions of the conflict to gain advantages over its adversary. With the establishment of the USIA, the United States had, indeed, a powerful new weapon at its disposal.

## Afterword

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, U.S. officials were forced to respond amidst a “public diplomacy gap.” As smoke billowed from the ruins in New York and at the Pentagon, countless Americans, shocked by the tragic horror that claimed the lives of more than 3,000 civilians, repeatedly asked “why do they hate us?” As the dust and emotion gradually settled, an increasing number of U.S. citizens and public officials understood that, as Bruce Gelb, former director of the USIA, noted, “it is not Americans who are hated, it is the policies of our government.” For Gelb and others, this realization then raised a series of questions, perhaps the most obvious being whether or not the “haters” fully understood U.S. foreign policies.<sup>241</sup>

The public diplomacy gap was partly due to President Bill Clinton’s decision, as part of a series of economic and political concessions he was forced to make to a Republican-controlled Congress, to integrate the USIA into the State Department in 1999. The absorption of the USIA was by no means a smooth process, producing bureaucratic chaos and leading to drastically underfunded and outdated approaches to the global dissemination of U.S. state-sponsored propaganda. It is likely that the terrorist attacks would have occurred regardless of any proactive propaganda measures on the part of the U.S. government. However, many public officials and pundits argued that the attacks signalled a failure on the part of the U.S. government to connect

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<sup>241</sup> Bruce S. Gelb, “Public Diplomacy and the United States Information Agency, Yes!” *Ambassadors Review* (Spring 2004). Accessed online at [http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ambrev/2004\\_spring/e.html](http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ambrev/2004_spring/e.html). Gelb served as director of the USIA from 1989 to 1991, and as U.S. ambassador to Belgium from 1991-1993.

the lessons of the critical role of foreign information during the Cold War to a post-Cold War environment.

After 9/11, Washington found itself in a position similar to that of the early Cold War, when the U.S. government seemed incapable of convincing large segments of the world's population of its purportedly altruistic and benevolent objectives. Instead, a growing number of observers around the world were talking about U.S. imperialism, assigning nefarious motives to U.S. global policies, and responding with scepticism and cynicism to speeches on the new War on Terror by President George W. Bush, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell. As one scholar avers, "the best public diplomacy in the world could not have averted the terrorist 9/11 attacks, but it would have helped on 9/12 and thereafter."<sup>242</sup>

From 1938 to 1953, U.S. policy makers grappled with indeed some difficult questions regarding the role state-sponsored propaganda should play in shaping world opinion of the United States. After the backlash directed at CPI propaganda following the First World War, many government officials during the Second World War, including President Roosevelt, were reluctant to implement federal propaganda programs and did so only reluctantly and with the understanding that they were only temporary wartime measures.

After the Second World War, the threat of fascism was replaced by the perceived threat of a worldwide communist takeover. As the 1940s came to a close, the great economic, cultural, and military superpower of the United States appeared to many observers to be losing the battle for hearts and minds worldwide to the Soviet propaganda machine. U.S. policy makers began to question and eventually dismissed the idea that the United States could effectively respond to Soviet propaganda through temporary half-measures. When Eisenhower became president, he

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<sup>242</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, "Speeding the Strange Death of American Public Diplomacy: The George H.W. Bush Administration and the U.S. Information Agency," *Diplomatic History* 34, issue 1 (January 2010): 48.

put the entire weight of his office behind ensuring that the USIA had the organizational framework, funding, and personnel to effectively roll back communist propaganda around the world.

One of the most striking distinctions between Eisenhower and Truman was the former's willingness to overtly target U.S. private citizens with state-sponsored propaganda. While covert programs designed to influence domestic public opinion about the Cold War had been initiated by the CIA during Truman's presidency, Eisenhower and many of his advisors viewed the stakes of the Cold War as being simply too great to allow any chance that large segments of the U.S. population would support any opinion on the conflict other than that of the official stated position of the federal government. Thus the Cold War fundamentally altered the nature of U.S. democracy. As the United States portrayed itself as the paragon of freedom of choice and expression, the limits of that freedom became narrower. Domestic audiences were increasingly told precisely what and what not to think by the USIA and other federal agencies.

The foreign information activities of the USIA undoubtedly aided U.S. efforts to win the Cold War. For the remainder of Eisenhower's presidency, the agency remained an integral part of his foreign policy. As expected, the USIA exploited every opportunity available to condemn communism and the Soviet Union while extolling the virtues of U.S. democracy and free-market capitalism. Osgood argues that no other events offered a greater opportunity to showcase the prominence of propaganda in foreign policy than the public diplomacy between U.S. and Soviet leaders at the turn of the decade. The so-called "kitchen debate" between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and U.S. Vice-President Richard Nixon in Moscow in July 1959 offered the USIA

the chance to celebrate Nixon for “illustrating the miracles of consumer capitalism.” As a result of U.S. propaganda, many U.S. observers concluded that Nixon had “won” the debate.<sup>243</sup>

The kitchen debate is only one instance of USIA attempts to influence worldwide opinion during crucial moments in the Cold War as Eisenhower’s successors continued to make psychological warfare a key element of U.S. Cold War foreign policy. However, the institutional framework for covert propaganda created during his presidency underwent a series of changes which reflected the assumptions of each president. For example, John Kennedy abolished the Operations Coordinating Board in 1961 in favour of granting more control over planning to the State Department. The revamped USIA played a crucial role in the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 by working in close concert with top intelligence and military agencies as well as the Kennedy White House to ensure that the U.S. version of events reached as broad a global audience as possible. By collaborating with these groups, the USIA was able to learn of impending or potential crises and prepare printed, audio, and film material in several languages for global dissemination before they were even needed.<sup>244</sup>

For his part, Lyndon Johnson preferred an approach similar to that created under Eisenhower and reintroduced undersecretaries from several executive departments, as well as representatives from the armed forces, into the planning process.<sup>245</sup> As the Vietnam War escalated in 1965, Johnson charged the USIA with being the sole agency responsible for all psychological warfare aspects of the conflict, with the exception of those directly in support of

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<sup>243</sup> Osgood is not so sure, and argues that “in hindsight, Khrushchev’s performance was more striking.” By appearing “jovial and approachable,” as opposed to the menacing figure many people would have expected of a Soviet leader, Khrushchev was able to soften the image of the Soviet Union. From a psychological warfare perspective, this is precisely what the Soviet Union needed at the time as details of Stalin’s draconian policies gradually surfaced. See Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 356-357.

<sup>244</sup> John W. Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 84.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.

military operations. By 1967, 12 to 14 per cent of USIA operatives were in Vietnam.<sup>246</sup> In short, the USIA continued throughout the Cold War to deliver on its mandate to provide an efficient, organized instrument through which the U.S. government could effectively control its image both abroad and at home.

Although Eisenhower's successors made various adjustments to the institutional framework of state-sponsored propaganda, for the remainder of the Cold War the USIA continued to operate as an independent agency with relatively little congressional oversight. Whereas other aspects of foreign policy were subject to rigorous scrutiny by the various congressional subcommittees on foreign affairs, the congressional appropriations committees became "the most active overseers of USIA programs." The marked budget increases, from \$84 million in 1954, to nearly \$120 million in 1960 and over \$185 million in 1966, suggest that the appropriations committees were as committed to the USIA as were its founders.<sup>247</sup>

The Cold War propaganda efforts of the USIA coincided with and played a key role in a prominent feature of U.S. foreign policy during the latter half of the twentieth century: imperial expansion. The half-century from the end of the Second World War to the 9/11 terrorist attacks witnessed an unprecedented level of U.S. military intervention and global economic, political, and cultural expansion. While these efforts were frequently and understandably met by protest, U.S. psychological warriors ceaselessly explained away expansion to both foreign and domestic audiences as a Cold War necessity to prevent a global communist takeover. This is not to suggest that the USIA was always successful in convincing the world of the supposed benevolent

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<sup>246</sup> Robert E. Elder, *The Information Machine: The United States Information Agency and American Foreign Policy*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1968), 20.

<sup>247</sup> Ronald I. Rubin, *The Objectives of the U.S. Information Agency: Controversies and Analysis*, Praeger Special Studies in International Politics and Public Affairs, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 189. See also "Agency Appropriations (in Millions of Dollars) for Fiscal Years 1954-67," in Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 308.

and altruistic motives of the United States. The agency did, however, place U.S. imperialism in a context that at least made sense to, even if it did not satisfy, many observers around the world and within the United States.

However, within a few short years after the end of the Cold War, Eisenhower's vision for the USIA was dead. Whether the "haters" of the twenty-first century abhorred Americans or only the policies of their government, it is clear that the government failed to encourage U.S. psychological warfare agencies to replace the backdrop of the Cold War with a new context for U.S. foreign policy. The hubris, ignorance, or lack of understanding of attitudes outside the United States on the part of U.S. officials demonstrated their inability to grasp the importance, as Eisenhower understood it, of the role of world opinion to the conduct of foreign policy.

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