

~~EYES ONLY~~

CC-CAG

23 November 2003

Memorandum for: General Abizaid

Subject: Strategic Communications – What Can we do?

Issue: Strategic Communications/IO is universally recognized as a failure, but there has been little corrective action.

Discussion:

- Responsibility for establishing priorities and directing the effort lies with the White House/NSC. (b)(6) directs GWOT Strategic Communications and the Iraqi Stabilization Group has a representative on the NSC working group. State Department has expertise in this area in the Strategic Communications/International Information Program and has responsibility for public diplomacy. DDIO has responsibility for efforts within DOD. While Strategic Communications is not a CENTCOM responsibility, there is much that CENTCOM can do to improve our efforts.
- The Command could improve its ability to fuse the disparate messages and guidance that emanate from various agencies and place them in context of the Command's priorities and perspectives on the problems we face in the region.
- The Command could produce clear, unequivocal strategic communications messages for the Commander's approval and dissemination to subordinate commanders and staffs.
- CENTCOM could, as you have directed, improve its ability to communicate our actions and appreciation of the situation to civilian leadership and the American public.
- The Command could develop an improved public affairs strategy that engages domestic, Arab, and Iraqi media.
- The Command might also, as LTG Barno suggested, help influence the IO/Strategic Communications efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan through indigenous leadership.

Recommendations:

- Approve the immediate formation of a five-man Combined Strategic Communications Board (already under consideration by Deputy Commander and COS).
 - Assign a US O-6 the lead. Assign a UK deputy and ask the UK to continue to fill that position with someone who is media and public relations savvy (b)(6)
 - Look for reservists on active duty who have PR/marketing experience and who are also familiar with the theater.
 - Establish PAO liaison with the board.
- Request through DDIO that NSC produce a regional IO/Strategic Communications plan.
- Institute bi-weekly CENTCOM press conferences and monthly engagement with Arab media.
- Increase Coalition visibility during CJTF-4 press conferences (flags, occasional coalition officer up front).

(b)(3), (b)(6)

~~EYES ONLY~~