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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

CONTAINMENT 2.0: U.S. POLITICAL WARFARE

by

Nicole M. Alexander

December 2016

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

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CONTAINMENT 2.0: U.S. POLITICAL WARFARE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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from the

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Contemporary Russia has shown an increasing preference for using Cold War–era political warfare techniques, which are deeply rooted in its doctrine and foreign policies. To date, the U.S. response comprises the conventional military aspects of the Cold War–era deterrence and containment rather than political warfare strategies. Exploring previous U.S. experience in political warfare activities—under the broad categories of strategic influence, support to political, social, and counter-government groups, and special warfare—provides insight into determining a contemporary political warfare strategy. This thesis tests three hypotheses regarding U.S. political warfare experience during the Cold War. The exploration of these hypotheses shows that a strategic influence narrative centered on a “full and fair” strategy may produce better results rather than one centered on delegitimizing the enemy. Additionally, it was found that the United States should continue to support political, social, and counter-government groups, but should also take into consideration the type of support being provided while ensuring the group already has certain characteristics and enjoys public support. Finally, Cold War experience indicates that special warfare has the capacity to support and synchronize interagency political warfare activities. This analysis illuminates a path forward for a comprehensive political warfare policy to counter a reinvigorated Russian political warfare strategy.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
COL	colonel
COMINFORM	Communist Information Bureau
DOD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DSE	Democratic Army of Greece
ERI	European Reassurance Initiative
FID	foreign internal defense
Huk	Hukbalahap
JUSMAPG	Joint United States Military Advisory and Planning Group
KGB	Komitent Gosudarstvenoi Bezopasnosti
KKE	Greek Communist Party
LPD	Liberal Democratic Party (Japan)
LTC	lieutenant colonel
MI6	British Secret Intelligence Service
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
OARS	Operation Atlantic Resolve
OCB	Operation Coordinating Board
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SIS	British Secret Intelligence Service
SOF	special operations forces
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USASOC	U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USIA	U.S. Information Agency
UW	unconventional warfare
WWII	World War II

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, despite a supposed restructuring away from Soviet-era policies and systems of political warfare, Russia has shown an increasing preference to return to them. In the Baltics, Russia has continued to intervene in political matters and use propaganda to maintain its influence in the region. In 2008, the Russian intervention in Georgia included the use of proxy organizations, psychological operations, and cyber warfare. The result was a political agreement cementing a Russian role in the Georgia–Russian border region. Russian actions in Ukraine in 2014 were only a culminating event for the political warfare actions Russia had taken in the country over the last decade. The Ukraine intervention also represents the implementation of Russian doctrine and policy emphasizing the role of non-military means to achieve strategic objectives, a hallmark of political warfare.

Even though Russia has been using political warfare as a means of influence, the United States has responded with what could be described as a strategy straight from the annals of military-centric deterrence. In 2014, the U.S. military began Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), a multi-year series of conventional military exercises, training events, and unit rotations in Europe. It was designed to show military strength and capability as well as an assurance of U.S. commitment to collective security and stability in the region. To expand OAR, in 2015, the White House proposed the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), a temporary investment into security assurance programs for U.S. allies in Eastern Europe.¹ In 2016, the ERI budget quadrupled to \$3.4 billion and turned away from the objective of assurance to the objective of deterrence.² The U.S. strategy to counter Russian political warfare in the post–Cold War era has shown a preference for military-centric deterrence.

¹ Shannon Dick, “Assurance and Deterrence in Europe—A Cold War Redux,” *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, March 11, 2016, <http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2016/03/11/assurance-and-deterrence-in-europe-a-cold-war-redux/>.

² Terri Cronk, “European Reassurance Initiative Shifts to Deterrence,” Department of Defense, July 14, 2016, <http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/839028/european-reassurance-initiative-shifts-to-deterrence>.

Russia's actions appear to be based on 40 years of Cold War political warfare experience; the United States should be equipped to combat a strategy reminiscent of that era. Russian political warfare doctrine of the 21st century has its roots in Soviet history. The United States has its own history of political warfare in the Cold War, yet its reaction to Russian political warfare is focused on conventional means to deter and contain further Russian actions. The United States should respond with a balanced policy that uses all instruments of national power. This would require looking back to its Cold War policy, which includes political warfare activities in addition to a conventional military show of capability and strength to inform a contemporary policy.

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

As of 2016, U.S. policy and actions have not reflected the use of all instruments of national power in a cohesive, synchronized strategy to counter Russia's political warfare. U.S. deterrence and containment policies during the Cold War included displays of conventional military and nuclear strength as well as political warfare activities. Exploring the U.S. Cold War political warfare activities could inform current U.S. policy toward a Russia that is using non-military means to achieve its objectives. The research question is as follows:

What combination of programs, concepts, and tools from Cold War political warfare-based activities and policies best advances U.S. strategy to counter Russian political warfare in the 21st century?

U.S. Cold War policies spanned almost 40 years, informing multiple administrations' strategies to deter, contain, and rollback Soviet expansion and influence. Russian actions and doctrine in the late 1990s and early 2000s re-emphasized political warfare, particularly its use of non-military organizations to engage and influence former Soviet societies and governments. Exploring U.S. Cold War history, aside from a conventional military or nuclear build-up, may provide insight into the programs, concepts, and tools the United States could implement in the 21st century.

B. BACKGROUND

U.S. Cold War policies of deterrence and containment had their roots in the writings and publications of former U.S. Department of State (DoS) Foreign Service officer, George Kennan. Kennan's policy options were focused on the concept of political warfare, which he describes as follows:

Political warfare is the logical application of Clausewitz's doctrine in time of peace. In broadest definition, political warfare is the employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives. Such operations are both overt and covert. They range from such overt actions as political alliances, economic measures and 'white' propaganda to such covert operations as clandestine support of 'friendly' foreign elements, 'black' psychological warfare and even encouragement of underground resistance in hostile states.³

The tools and activities of political warfare noted by Kennan evolved into overt and covert activities that include unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), psychological operations, public affairs, security sector assistance, political action, democracy assistance, and a host of other programs. For this thesis, these activities are arranged into three categories: strategic influence; support to social, political, and counter-government groups; and special warfare.

The aforementioned activities emphasize the use of all instruments of national power in political warfare to engage, influence, persuade, and possibly coerce a population or government to achieve a specific policy objective, such as deterrence and containment.⁴ For example, U.S. support to Bolivian security forces combatting Che Guevara's rebels used foreign internal defense as a form of government engagement. Special warfare, executed by special operations forces, also makes up many of the activities in political warfare and in military doctrine is a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions executed in permissive, uncertain, or hostile environments. Influence and information activities, called *strategic influence* in this thesis, include psychological operations, propaganda,

³ Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum," May 4, 1948, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945-50Intel/d269>.

⁴ Charles T. Cleveland et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," *Joint Force Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2016): 102, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/643108/unconventional-warfare-in-the-gray-zone/>.

radio messaging, and cultural exchanges as a means to influence and persuade a target population. As researcher Fred Iklé noted, simply incorporating political warfare into policies is not enough; the success depends on “planned, integrated, and coherent use of the tools of political warfare.”⁵ Planned and integrated political warfare policies executed in the Cold War both by the Soviets and the United States can serve as a backdrop for the contemporary tensions between the United States and Russia today.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

U.S. Cold War policies reflected the objectives of deterring, containing, and rolling back Soviet expansion around the world. In 1947, George Kennan published an article entitled “Sources of Soviet Conduct” in *Foreign Affairs*, which introduced the concept of containment and political warfare to the American public. The Truman administration and the National Security Council (NSC) took notice of Kennan’s official writings on the subject. The next 40 years of deterrence and containment policies outlined in NSC directives, such as NSC-4A, NSC 10/2, and NSC-68, can arguably be traced to Kennan’s influence on the administration.⁶ From the outset, the policies included not only basic deterrence principles of conventional military means but also political warfare activities as outlined by Kennan. Nevertheless, in the decades since the fall of the Soviet Union, research on the deterrence and containment principles from the Cold War has focused on conventional military and nuclear means of executing those policies rather than on political warfare and non-military means. It could be argued though that political warfare and non-military means are necessary complements to conventional deterrence and containment strategies to meet national objectives.⁷

Deterrence is inherently about threats and credibility through force. Paul Huth, a leading scholar in international relations, defines deterrence as

⁵ Fred Iklé, “The Modern Context” in *Political Warfare and Psychological Operations: Rethinking the U.S. Approach*, ed. Carnes Lord and Frank R. Barnett (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989), 6.

⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 52.

⁷ Robert Teague, “Containment: Relevant or Relic?” (master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2011), 2.

The use of threats by one party to convince another party to refrain from initiating some course of action. Threats serve as a deterrent to the extent that it convinces its target not to carry out the intended action because of the costs and losses the target would incur.⁸

For military-based methods of deterrence, the deterring state needs actual military capacity to respond quickly, and with strength, in the event deterrence fails. Without the capability and strength, a deterring state would not be able to deny the attacking state its military objectives once the armed offensive commenced.⁹ During the Cold War, when the United States increased its military capacity and strength, it legitimized deterrence threats to Russia while also providing “teeth” behind the other instruments of national power.

As first proposed by George Kennan, containment strategy was aimed at the psychological aspects of influence, exploitation and vulnerabilities.¹⁰ While Kennan never discounted the role of the military, he stressed that if a threat is not entirely military centric, then a military focused strategy should not be the solution.¹¹ Acknowledging that the Soviet threat was not purely military-focused, U.S. Cold War actions reflected the combination of military and political warfare activities. Nevertheless, Cold War deterrence and containment research is often viewed historically by the actions of each administration and through the lens of conventional military action. M. Elaine Bunn, writing on the concept of tailored deterrence, and Davis, McNerney, and Oliker, writing on extended containment, each attempt to expand and emphasize the non-military aspects of deterrence and containment policies, but the basics of these ideas are still focused on the conventional military role.¹²

Since the 2008 Russian intervention in Georgia, there has been an increase in calls for policies and strategies similar to Cold War containment and deterrence to counter

⁸ Paul Huth, “Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 25–48.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 39.

¹¹ Ibid., 42.

¹² Lynn Davis, Olga Oliker, and Michael McNerney, *NATO Needs a Comprehensive Strategy for Russia* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2015), 14; M. Elaine Bunn, “Can Deterrence Be Tailored?,” *Strategic Forum* no. 225 (January 2007): 2, <http://cyberanalysis.pbworks.com/f/SF225.pdf>.

Russia's reenergized political warfare. The resilience and engagement strategy proposed by the RAND Corporation hints at a policy that uses all instruments of national power to build a country's resiliency and independence, so that the defending country is not vulnerable to Russian pressures.¹³ In a July 2015 editorial on the blog *War on the Rocks*, Mark Galeotti of New York University called for a "hybrid defense plan." Galeotti proposes that the use of all instruments of national power should be a part of a "comprehensive national security strategy, target hardening against [the] hybrid warfare" tactics of Russia.¹⁴ In addition, Galeotti also proposes, "The most powerful defenses against Russian mischief-making and manipulation are, social cohesion, effective law enforcement, an independent and responsible media, and legitimate, transparent and efficient governance."¹⁵ The idea of stabilizing a nation as a method to counter Russian political warfare is similar to previous U.S. Cold War containment practices such as the Marshall Plan and other democracy assistance programs.

The United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) published a counter-unconventional warfare white paper calling for a whole-of-government approach to counter political warfare as seen by Russia, Iran, and China.¹⁶ This paper, and others like it, calls for policies that position a nation state "to attrite and defeat those insurgent, separatist, and terrorist movements which rely on external support" to counter Russia's political warfare activities. In October 2015, Gregory Feifer of *Foreign Policy* magazine proclaimed that Russia's actions demand "a new overarching strategy to limit Putin's influence in a measured way. It should be modeled on what Kennan proposed almost seven decades ago."¹⁷ Academics, military leaders, and researchers are all recognizing that United States policy to counter Russian aggression should incorporate other instruments of national power besides traditional military deterrence.

¹³ Davis, Olikier, and McNerney, *NATO Needs a Comprehensive Strategy*, 14.

¹⁴ Mark Galeotti, "Time to Think about Hybrid Defense," *War on the Rocks* [blog], July 30, 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/07/time-to-think-about-hybrid-defense/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ U.S. Army Special Operations Command, *Counter Unconventional Warfare* (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2014), 6.

¹⁷ George Feifer, "Contain Yourself: The West Needs Containment 2.0," *Foreign Affairs*, October 20, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2015-10-20/contain-yourself>.

Research on U.S. Cold War deterrence and containment policies shows a shortage of focus on political warfare activities in the context of these policies. Since the Cold War, the Russian employment of political warfare, anchored by military capabilities, should serve as a call for nations such as the United States to deter and counter Russian actions. Deterrence should include military and non-military actions to deter both military and non-military actions by aggressor states such as Russia. John Lewis Gaddis, a leading author on containment strategy, also emphasizes that history, rather than theory, is often a better guide to determining transferability of Cold War policies and strategies to present conflicts.¹⁸ U.S. Cold War history obviously includes military and nuclear-centric activities to implement policy. The non-military centric aspects of those policies—through the broad categories of strategic influence; support to political, social, and counter government groups; and special warfare—also make up a large part of U.S. Cold War history.

Additionally, concepts from social movement theory may also inform U.S. political warfare policies. Social movement theory provides a framework for analyzing why movements and groups are created and how they evolve. Through this framework, nations that are interested in influencing and supporting groups can understand the necessary conditions for a successful movement.¹⁹ The United States could apply the theory and framework to identify how it might influence, exploit, or leverage a population.

Researcher Doowan Lee suggests that movements and groups have four characteristics: broad socioeconomic processes and conditions, expanding political opportunities, strategic framing narratives, and indigenous organizational strength.²⁰ First, there has to be an impetus that moves a population to organize. The impetus can be socioeconomic conditions such as ethnic divisions, economic downturns, or other pressures on society. Second, there must be political opportunities that the group can leverage, for instance, cohesion or division among elites, the civil-military structure, and

¹⁸ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 287.

¹⁹ Glenn Johnson and Doowan Lee, “Revisiting the Social Movement approach to Unconventional Warfare,” *Small Wars Journal*, December 1, 2014, www.smallwarsjournal.com/printpdf/18227, 1.

²⁰ Doowan Lee, “A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare,” *Special Warfare Magazine*, July–September 2013, 29.

influential dissidents. Third, to leverage these conditions and opportunities, a movement or group must have a consistent narrative that motivates the population to join it. The final characteristic is the actual strength and capability of the organization to effect change. Leaders, resources, and popular support must form under shared values and structures that will sustain the group through any adversity it faces. These characteristics can provide insight into the decision-making process for political warfare activities, which are all essentially based on influencing, engaging and leveraging groups.

A 2011 study, grounded in concepts from social movement theory, reviewed 323 violent and non-violent movements from the 20th century and their quest for political and government changes. The study authors, Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, found that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns against authoritarian regimes were twice as likely to succeed as violent campaigns. The study suggests that for an outside assistance to produce better results and more sustainable outcomes, the assistance must be provided well before confrontations between the movement and the authoritarian regime becomes violent.²¹

Chenoweth and Stephan also found that one of the reasons for the movements' successes was that non-violent resistance campaigns attract a more diverse base of participants. A diverse supporter base includes women, professionals, religious figures, and civil servants. This broad spectrum of participants reduces the risk of violent crackdowns as opposed to movements organized mostly of young, able-bodied men trained as militants. When young men compose the majority of the movement's participant's, security forces are more likely to use violence to quell the movement. A broad spectrum of participants also produces mass participation as well as regime defections. It also allows for the employment of flexible tactics that deteriorate the relationship between a regime and groups, such as the media, economic elites, and even religious authorities.²² Also, as noted by U.S. Department of Defense special operations leadership, "Nonviolent movements find it much easier to garner backing from the

²¹ Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, "Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4, July/August 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2014-06-16/drop-your-weapons>.

²² Ibid.

international community.”²³ Attracting support from the international community may then allow for the movement to continue its development and progress to effect change.

The tools and activities of political warfare are centered on the population just as concepts from social movement theory are centered on the population. While it is not explicit, viewing groups through the characteristics and criteria outlined in social movement theory research implies that there are ways to leverage, support, and influence existing networks. U.S. experiences in the Cold War provide examples of varying degrees of covert and overt actions that influenced, leveraged, or exploited a population using political warfare. This experience, combined with academic context and frameworks, can provide a foundation for future political warfare policies. Addressing the gaps and supplementing with concepts from social movement theory, this thesis explores political warfare activities executed in support of U.S. Cold War deterrence and containment policies.

D. METHOD OF INQUIRY

This thesis fills a gap in the literature about non-military and non-nuclear options in deterrence and containment by exploring three broad categories of political warfare: strategic influence; support to political, social, and counter-government groups; and special warfare. The framework is based on a form of structured, focused comparison, as described by Alexander George, to test hypotheses that correspond with the three categories.²⁴ The three hypotheses tested in this study are as follows

1. Strategic influence operations that justify a nation’s actions and explain its beliefs while delegitimizing the aggressor’s narrative are critical to successful political warfare campaigns.
2. Support to political, social, and counter-government groups to undermine Russian political warfare and exploit vulnerabilities in target societies may play a key role in current deterrence and containment policies.

²³ Cleveland et al., “Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone.”

²⁴ Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 67.

3. Political warfare activities are integral to special warfare doctrine thereby effectively positioning special operations forces (SOF) to support and synchronize political warfare strategies.

Approaching the research question through the hypotheses and three broad categories of political warfare illustrates the other aspects of U.S. containment and deterrence policies in the political warfare environment during the Cold War. This approach should help illuminate the path ahead for U.S. policies to counter Russian political warfare in the 21st century.

E. CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is organized around the hypotheses and how they help shape the answer to the research question and ultimately inform policy recommendations. Chapter II establishes the context for the similarities between Soviet Cold War and Russian post-Cold War political warfare activities. Chapter III explores U.S. strategic influence actions and policies during the Cold War to understand the use and effects of those programs and policies as a test for the first hypothesis. Chapter IV reviews U.S. covert and overt support to political, social, and counter-government groups. Also in Chapter IV, social movement theory introduced in Chapter I literature review provides a framework to glean information from U.S. experience combined with academic research. Chapter V considers the special warfare role in Cold War and post-Cold War operations as an integrating element. Chapter VI analyzes the validity of the three hypotheses for answering the research question. The thesis concludes with recommendations for U.S. policy.

II. SOVIET AND RUSSIAN POLITICAL WARFARE

Though U.S. deterrence and containment policies may have contributed to the Soviet Union's downfall, the Soviet Union still proved adept at using all possible instruments of national power to spread its influence. Over the course of the Cold War, the Soviet Union relied on a combination of security and military intelligence services as well as diplomatic and economic levers to conduct synchronized campaigns around the world. The Soviet Union used these levers to gain influence and economic interdependence within each of the target countries. Additionally, the Soviet Union used these instruments to support communist and socialist parties around the world to actively intimidate the existing government structures.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has employed political warfare doctrine even as it has supposedly reformed parts of its government. There is indeed an appearance of democracy coupled with economic and foreign relations reforms that give the impression of a changed government system. The updated policies have positioned and given Russia a platform from which to project power and influence outside its borders. The respective 2008 and 2014 interventions in Georgia and Ukraine are great illustrations of Russia's use of political warfare. While Russia presumably recognizes its conventional military weaknesses, it can use other instruments of national power to project influence and achieve its objectives similar to Soviet Union actions during the Cold War.

A. SOVIET UNION POLICIES AND ACTIONS

As the Soviet Union began to consolidate its control in Eastern Europe, it only had to exercise a minimal level of influence and exploitation over the vulnerable communities and countries rebuilding after WWII. The Soviets took control of radio stations, dismantled civil society organizations and youth groups, and installed Moscow-trained secret police in every country.²⁵ In every country in Eastern Europe, Stalin had communist envoys influencing political systems in a way that created one-party elections, such as

²⁵ Anne Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944–1956*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 193.

what happened in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.²⁶ Additionally, the Soviet Union ignored election results in Hungary in 1945 and falsified election results in Poland in 1946.²⁷ Russia installed a communist government in Romania and ousted the Bulgarian prime minister while also staging a communist coup in Czechoslovakia in early 1948.²⁸ Furthermore, each of these events started with the sponsorship of pro-communist movements and political parties.

As the Cold War persisted, the Soviets continued to support pro-communist movements and parties to establish control over many governments.²⁹ The Soviet Union supported upwards of 80 communist and socialist parties throughout the world and actively intimidated internal and external opponents.³⁰ Additionally, the Soviets organized demonstrations to initiate public support for the disbandment of opposition parties and movements. To extend influence, the Soviet Union combined these tactics with influence measures (propaganda) and the secret police, exploiting journalists, academics, labor leaders, prominent citizens, and government officials who supported, and would later execute, Kremlin political warfare. These tactics came to be known as “active measures.” They were planned and sometimes executed by the Komitet Gosudarstvenoi Bezopasnosti (KGB), but eventually a wide range of actors became involved in active measures.³¹

The foundation of the Soviet Union’s strategy during the Cold War was to use political warfare. It relied on this strategy to conduct a synchronized campaign that consolidated and solidified its gains in Eastern Europe while attempting to expand into underdeveloped and vulnerable countries around the world.³² Soviet operations included,

²⁶ Ibid., 196.

²⁷ Ibid., 205–212.

²⁸ Ibid., 222.

²⁹ Robert C. Tucker, “The Paths of Communist Revolution, 1917–67,” in *The Soviet Union: A Half-century of Communism*, ed. Kurt London (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 31.

³⁰ Ibid., 35.

³¹ Department of State, *Active Measures Working Group, Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1987–1988* (Department of State Publication 9720) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of States Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 1989), 35.

³² Tucker, “The Paths of Community Revolution,” 36.

but were not limited to, subversion, media manipulation, and propaganda. It was a critical aspect, and often a first step, of Soviet strategy to establish or support communist parties, instigate movements and demonstrations, and support criminal or proxy organizations.³³ The Soviet objective was to use all available instruments to project influence into Europe and abroad while simultaneously denying and deterring United States influence.

B. POST-COLD WAR RUSSIA

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new nation struggled to find its place in the world order.³⁴ Russia appeared to attempt democratic and economic reforms while struggling to remain a powerful player on the world stage. Externally, Russian policies of influence turned to protecting the diaspora in the so-called near abroad as a way to recoup some of the losses of the empire.³⁵ Additionally, Russia began reasserting its control over ethnic Russians and those who were responsive to Russian policies. Doing so positioned the nation and gave it a platform from which to project power and influence outside its borders.

As Baltic states began declaring independence in the 1990s, the Russian diaspora proved a winning excuse for intervention. Researcher Agnia Grigas describes the continued interventions as helping Russia maintain a “zone of privileged interest.”³⁶ Exerting influence in the Baltic states also supported geopolitical interests for access and freedom of movement in the Baltic Sea, which the Kremlin had dominated in the 18th and 19th centuries and throughout the Cold War.³⁷ In Lithuania, the Russians supported the communist party and the Yedinstvo movement of ethnic Russians who were fighting for

³³ Stanislav Lunev, *Through the Eyes of the Enemy: The Autobiography of Stanislav Lunev*, (Lanham, MD: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1998), 78.

³⁴ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Little Green Men: A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014* (Fort Bragg, NC: U.S. Special Operations Command, 2016), 8.

³⁵ Jeffery Dickey et al., “Russian Political Warfare: Origin, Evolution, and Application” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014), 140.

³⁶ Agnia Grigas, *Legacies, Coercion and Soft Power: Russian Influence in the Baltics* (London: Chatham House, 2012), 2.

³⁷ Ari Uheloinen, *Russia’s Geopolitical Interests in the Baltic Area* (Helsinki: National Defence College, 1999), kk.lib.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/96619/Russia's%20Geopolitical%20Interests%20in%20the%20Baltic%20Area%201999.pdf?sequence=2.

independence inside the country.³⁸ Propaganda and organized worker protests were both part of the tactics the Russians used to exert power there. Eventually, the Russian military deployed into Lithuania under the auspices of keeping law and order for Russian citizens in the country.³⁹ Around the same time, the Russians sent “volunteers” along with military support to assist the growing separatist movement in Moldova.⁴⁰ The policy of protecting Russian citizens provided an opportunity for intervention and influence in countries in the Russian near abroad.

Starting in the early 2000s, the domestic political conditions of small, fragmented, and weak political parties made the Baltic countries ripe for Russian influence.⁴¹ Ethnic Russians comprise approximately 30 percent of the population in Latvia and Estonia. While Russian minority political parties have not established footholds in the larger domestic coalition governments, the mayors of major cities, such as Riga, Latvia, and Tallinn, Estonia, are ethnic Russians who represent the Russian-minority political parties in their respective countries.⁴² Throughout the Baltics, Russia creates and maintains Kremlin-friendly networks through organizational assistance, media strategies and campaigns, financial contributions, and personal and professional linkages.⁴³ These linkages are often among interest groups, political organizations, and businesses. Throughout Latvia and Lithuania, Russia funds political organizations and disinformation campaigns and bribes individuals. The “color revolutions” in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan have also served as justification for Russia’s assertiveness in its old stomping grounds. During these revolutions, Russia was able to project its anti-Western narrative in the information realm of political warfare.⁴⁴

³⁸ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Little Green Men*, 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴¹ Grigas, *Legacies, Coercion and Soft Power*, 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁴ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Little Green Men*, 147.

Russia's 2008 intervention in Georgia is reminiscent of Soviet actions abroad during the Cold War. First, Russia denied its involvement while using proxies to execute its plan on the ground. Additionally, it used propaganda and cyber warfare to manipulate economic conditions—all to stress the government and the population.⁴⁵ Russia cultivated lessons learned from the Cold War and post-Cold War era to use in the Georgia conflict. After its United Nations (UN)-sanctioned involvement in Georgian politics—through peacekeeping operations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia—Russia sowed dissent and established its influence both militarily and diplomatically in the country.⁴⁶ Simultaneously, then Prime Minister Putin asserted influence by placing former Russians into key ministry positions in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.⁴⁷

Through its political access to Georgian systems and the resulting tensions created between the government and the people, Russia manipulated the political landscape in Georgia. Due to its shared border, it was able to accelerate its plan by easily inserting the Russian military into Georgia. Additionally, Russia changed its own laws and treaties to support its efforts in Georgia. Moreover, Russia's cyber warfare tactics at the outbreak of military escalation denied and disrupted Georgian communications networks while accumulating intelligence on Georgian military and political networks.⁴⁸ After five days of combat operations, Russian President Medvedev negotiated a peace plan that officially sanctioned Russian dominance on the Georgia/Russia border region.⁴⁹

Russia's actions in Ukraine in 2013 also showed the culmination of long-term political warfare. Russia shares not only a border with Ukraine but also an interdependent economy, military-industrial partnership, and a Russian diaspora. The relationship with, and influence in, Ukraine have been vital to Russian leaders and national objectives for decades. Through information campaigns and the use of an extensive pro-Russian

⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁶ Ronald Asmus. *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: MacMillan, 2010), 65.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁸ David M. Hollis, "Cyberwar Case Study: Georgia 2008," *Small Wars Journal* 6, no. 11 (2011): 3, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/cyberwar-case-study-georgia-2008>.

⁴⁹ Per Gahrton, *Georgia: Pawn in the New Political Game* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 179.

network, Russia has continuously perpetuated Russian-friendly narratives while exploiting opportunities to sow dissent between the people and the Ukrainian government.⁵⁰ In the last few years, As the Ukrainian government continued to pursue further ties with the West, Russia moved for further disruption of Ukrainian politics and continued delegitimization of the Ukrainian government.⁵¹ The variety and complexity of these actions reflect the intensity of Russia’s political warfare.

Russian political warfare in Ukraine included a host of actions targeting specific populations in the country. Russia issued passports to the Russian diaspora and promoted tensions between the Ukrainian Tartar population and the Russian Orthodox Church.⁵² Russia used front organizations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine to promote anti-Western and anti-NATO sentiment. In addition, Russian proxies also encouraged book and school burning while publishing and distributing anti-Ukrainian newspapers.⁵³ Furthermore, Russia’s physical positioning in Crimea and its continued cultivation of relationships, pro-Russian movements, and interdependence with the Ukrainian government allowed Russia to swiftly exploit the growing unrest in Ukraine to “protect Russian nationals” and foment discord in the eastern part of the country.

C. RUSSIAN POLICY

A non-official article published by General Valery Gerasimov seemingly describes Russian strategy in its near abroad. In early 2013, as the tensions in Ukraine were rising, General Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, presented a phased model clearly describing Russian intent and actions in political warfare to meet national interests. What has become known as the Gerasimov doctrine describes a world in which military might and weaponry has been overshadowed by the power of non-

⁵⁰ Peter Pomerantsev, “How Putin is Reinventing Warfare,” *Foreign Policy*, May 5, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/how-putin-is-reinventing-warfare/>.

⁵¹ Dickey et al., “Russian Political Warfare,” 191.

⁵² Walter Derzko, “The Strategic Foresight Institute 2012 Speakers Series with Dr. Lada L. Roslycky: 2012 Speaker Series Session,” *Ukrainian Echo*, September 3, 2012, <http://www.homin.ca/news.php/news/9929/group/27>.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

military means to meet political objectives.⁵⁴ Gerasimov describes non-military means as “the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures- applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population.”⁵⁵ Gerasimov also clearly states that though the use of special operations and other military forces may be necessary, it is often under the guise of other missions to carry out subversion, coercion, and classic unconventional warfare tactics.⁵⁶ In addition, Maciej Bartkowski of Johns Hopkins notes that Putin and the Russian Security Council seemingly made the Gerasimov doctrine official Russian policy after approving an updated Russian military doctrine in December 2014, which was strikingly similar to the strategy Gerasimov lays out in his article.⁵⁷

Gerasimov’s model is clear about the roles of each instrument of national power and the synchronization of these instruments. As shown in Figure 1, from left to right, the model delineates the phases of resolving intergovernmental conflicts beginning with covert instigation of problems within society and ending with establishing peace. The bottom half of the model shows at which phase military and non-military actions will be executed. Finally, the model demonstrates that non-military activities play a central role in achieving Russian objectives.

⁵⁴ Mark Galeotti, “The Gerasimov Doctrine and Russian Non-Linear War,” In *Moscow’s Shadows*, July 7, 2015, <https://inmoscowshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/>.

⁵⁵ Source: Valery Gerasimov, “The Value of Science in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations,” *Military Review* (January–February 2016): 24, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art008.pdf. This was originally in *Military-Industrial Kurier* (February 2013) and translated by Robert Calson, 2014.

⁵⁶ Galeotti, “The Gerasimov Doctrine.”

⁵⁷ Only the Russian language version of the new Russian military doctrine was available on Kremlin’s website as of November 8, 2016: <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf>. Quoted by Maciej Bartkowski, *Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare* (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Center for Advanced Governmental Studies, 2015), http://advanced.jhu.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2015/02/GOV1501_WhitePaper_Bartkowski.pdf, 10.

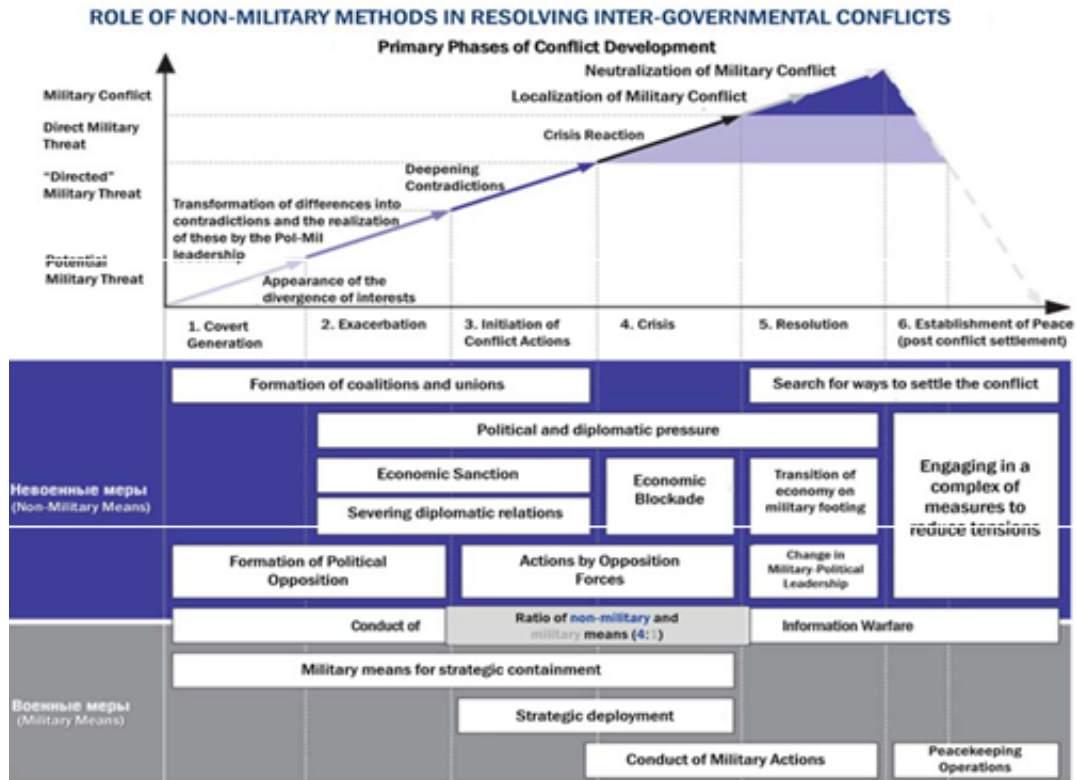


Figure 1. The Gerasimov Doctrine⁵⁸

The military tool is not neglected in the Gerasimov doctrine, but it is deemphasized and serves as a coercive measure to reinforce non-military activities in the strategy. While in Georgia and Ukraine the military conducted traditional military activities, it was not until after non-military actions had prepared the operational area for the ease of use of the military. The Gerasimov doctrine clearly brings to bear all instruments of national power. In describing the model, Gerasimov also points out that the human domain of society is the target.⁵⁹ By using all instruments of national power to form coalitions, unions, and political opposition parties and to bring political economic and diplomatic pressure, Russia is influencing society—not just the targeted government. General Gerasimov’s article and the new military doctrine combined with Russian actions in Ukraine indicate official Russian approval for political warfare abroad. It all highlights

⁵⁸ Source: Gerasimov, “The Value of Science in the Foresight.”

⁵⁹ Ibid., 28.

how Russia sees modern conflict: indirect and asymmetric modes of action in coordination with non-military means implemented via the population, political forces, and social movements. Addressing modern conflict in this manner is not much different than Soviet counter-measures of the Cold War.

Russian policy and strategy for information warfare has evolved, too. The evolution includes updated training and execution methods for the military and non-military alike.⁶⁰ Modern Russian information warfare is derived from its long tradition of *spetzpropaganda* (special propaganda), which has been a staple at in the Russian Military Information and Foreign Languages Department of the Military University of the Ministry of Defense.⁶¹ The training includes tools to organize, develop, monitor and analyze foreign information and military communication.⁶² All levels of government are included in Russian information warfare doctrine. It is taught to and expected to be executed by, not just the military, but also intelligence operatives, journalists, and diplomats. Just like the Gerasimov doctrine, the information warfare doctrine is about using both military and non-military means to achieve diplomatic leverage to meet foreign policy goals.⁶³

Russia has used a three-pronged approach for information warfare policies since the 1990s. The first prong concerns politicians and diplomats who shape and drive the international environment, as evidenced by Russian propaganda targeting the political systems of its opponents. The second prong involves domestic implementation of information security doctrines and policies to influence the minds of Russian citizens. The media in Russia is controlled by the state, ensuring that its citizens only see and hear what the Russian government want them to. The third prong is using the military to conduct information warfare. The military and other agents of the government are indoctrinated with the concepts of information warfare and are expected to implement its tactics at every turn. Additionally, the presence of the military in a more traditional manner enhances

⁶⁰ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Little Green Men*, 14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶² Jolanta Darczewska, *The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare: the Crimean Operations: A Case Study* (Point of View No. 42) (Warsaw Poland: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2014), 9.

⁶³ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Little Green Men*, 15.

Russian information-warfare activities. Its capacity as a credible military tool is coercive and supports non-military means. Military strength, though in the background, supports the extensive use of non-military means which central to meeting Russian foreign policy objectives.⁶⁴

D. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The Soviet Union was adept at using all of its instruments of national power, from diplomatic to military powers, during the Cold War and now Russia continues that tradition in the post-Cold War era. A seemingly academic article published by a senior military general foreshadowed a newly approved military doctrine focusing on political warfare. Russia has used all instruments of national power to extend influence and exploit vulnerabilities—as evidenced by its actions in the Baltics, Ukraine, and Georgia—showing that all possible methods for executing these policies are acceptable. Russia’s 2014 intervention in Ukraine is merely the culmination of political warfare actions that began more than a decade before. Russia’s use of political warfare allows it to remain influential and dominant on the world stage.

⁶⁴ Timothy L. Thomas, “Russian Information Warfare Theory: The Consequences of August 2008,” in *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Stephen J. Blank and Richard Weitz (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, 2010), 266.

III. U.S. COLD WAR STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

The terms information operations, psychological operations, public diplomacy, strategic communication, and public affairs are all familiar concepts when planning and executing programs intended to influence a target audience. In 2003 and in separate academic forums, Colonel Brad Ward and Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Susan Gough broadly labeled these activities strategic influence.⁶⁵ LTC Gough defines strategic influence as follows:

The deliberate, conscious coordination or integration of all government informational activities designed to influence opinions, attitudes, and behavior of foreign groups in ways that will promote U.S. national objectives, combined with other elements of national power to achieve maximum psychological effect.⁶⁶

In 2009, RAND conducted a study for the U.S. Army on influence operations. Similar to Ward and Gough's definition of strategic influence, RAND defines *influence operations* as follows:

the coordinated, integrated, and synchronized application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and other capabilities in peacetime, crisis, conflict, and post conflict to foster attitudes, behaviors, or decisions by foreign target audiences that further U.S. interests and objectives.⁶⁷

This chapter uses the term strategic influence, as defined by Ward and Gough, and includes the concepts and ideas from RAND's definition of influence operations.

Throughout the Cold War, U.S. policies for strategic influence oscillated between high and low priority. The goal of strategic influence activities during the Cold War was to counter determined and steadfast Soviet influence operations. To the United States, the Soviet Union's objectives and actions were as dangerous as those of the Nazi's during

⁶⁵ Brad Ward, *Strategic Influence Operations: The Information Connection* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2003).

⁶⁶ Susan Gough, *The Evolution of Strategic Influence* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2003).

⁶⁷ Eric V. Larson et al., *Foundations of Effective Influence Operations: A Framework for Enhancing Army Capabilities* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2009), 2.

World War II. The Soviet Union was showing its unrestrained eagerness to influence both foreign and domestic audiences with truths, half-truths, lies, and rumors. Scholars believe that U.S. strategic influence activities during the Cold War ultimately contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For this reason, the hypothesis for framing the chapter is as follows:

Strategic influence operations that justify a nation’s actions and explain its beliefs while delegitimizing the aggressor’s narratives are critical to successful political warfare campaigns.

Executing strategic influence in the 21st century against a resurgent Russia should rely on an understanding of what tools were successful during the Cold War.

A. THE COLD WAR BEGINS

At the end of military operations in Europe, General Eisenhower wrote, “Psychological warfare had developed as a specific and effective weapon” and that given the choice, every commander and government used psychological warfare to influence the population, whether enemy, ally, or domestic.⁶⁸ By the end of the Cold War, American-sponsored newspapers were being delivered to ally and enemy troops and former enemy populations; over eight billion leaflets were dropped in the Mediterranean and European theaters.⁶⁹ American cartoons, pamphlets, posters, books, magazines, movies, and radio broadcasts flooded every space within U.S. reach.

As a result of the aggressive propaganda from Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during WWII, many in the United States outside of the military viewed strategic influence and psychological operations as being in poor taste. At the conclusion of the war, President Truman’s administration immediately dismantled the majority of the strategic influence machine.⁷⁰ The Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were quickly liquidated.⁷¹ Both organizations had executed and directed

⁶⁸ Paul Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare* (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1954), 168.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 31.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

government-sponsored propaganda at home and abroad. The widely held notion was that the United States would not need these tools anymore.

Shortly thereafter, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union began with a tit-for-tat series of actions in an effort to assert dominance and influence around the world. In April 1947, the *Voice of America* radio program, a remaining vestige of WWII psychological operations, began broadcasting to the Soviet Union to counter Soviet propaganda against the United States.⁷² Two months later, the United States announced the Marshall Plan, designed to restore political stability and revitalize Europe with the secondary objective of spreading U.S. ideals in the region. To undermine the Marshall Plan and the strategic influence activities supporting it, the Soviet Union established the Communist Information Bureau (COMINFORM) to create a network for influence operations through European communist parties.⁷³ COMINFORM then prompted the United States to reassemble the strategic influence machine that had been dismantled just two years before.

The newly reassembled strategic influence machine included the cogs of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Department of Defense (DOD), and the National Security Council (NSC), which had been established through the National Security Act of 1947. Each of the organizations had its own strategic influence arms and the NSC itself also eventually served as a coordinating board for the implementation of strategic influence activities during the Cold War. In its new role as a policy and coordinating arm, the NSC immediately passed a set of directives that would set the direction for strategic influence programs. The NSC *Presidential National Security Policy Decision 4* and 4A directed the interagency to bolster and implement programs designed to influence foreign opinion on the Soviet Union and the United States.⁷⁴ NSC 4 charged the Department of State with coordinating the various overt programs scattered across the government as

⁷² Lowell Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin: U.S. and British Propaganda Policy and the Beginning of the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 101.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁴ National Security Council, "NSC-4 Coordination of Foreign Information Measures," December 9, 1947, <http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-4.htm>.

well as directed the newly formed CIA to plan and implement covert psychological operations.⁷⁵

The initial approach for the influence programs was for a narrative that represented the United States in an objective and straightforward manner. The “Full and Fair” approach, as outlined by George Kennan, was linked to a political warfare strategy directed at the Soviet intelligentsia.⁷⁶ Those who made up the Soviet intelligentsia were considered influential but did not have a formal role within the Soviet Union decision-making structure.⁷⁷ The State Department’s Assistant Secretary Benton, who was responsible for the execution of overt strategic influence programs, believed that “misrepresentation and propaganda” had no place in this approach to target the Soviet intelligentsia.⁷⁸

The Full and Fair strategy was intended to directly oppose the Soviet programs that involved slandering and lying to their audiences. This approach was used for two years until the Soviets tested their nuclear bomb. Concurrent to the nuclear bomb test, the Soviets unveiled their “Hate America” campaign. The Truman administration declared the campaign as involving “the spread of false information designed to convince satellite countries that communism was superior to democracy,” that the Soviets were peacemakers, and that the United States was a warmongering nation.⁷⁹ The combination of events forced U.S. policymakers to change strategic influence tactics.

The new tactic, the “Campaign of Truth,” was proposed as a full-fledged anti-communist propaganda campaign. The NSC described the Soviet Union as the biggest threat believing that the United States must respond in kind with a massive internal and external build-up of political, economic, and military strength.⁸⁰ Just 10 months later, the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin*, 103.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda and the Cold War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated, 2001), 16.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 50.

⁸⁰ Department of State Office of the Historian, “NSC- 68, 1950” accessed October 20, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

outbreak of the Korean War seemed to confirm the dangers of Soviet expansion and aggressiveness. The war led to the congressional approval of an \$89 million budget to fund the stridently anti-communist “Campaign of Truth.” The full and fair approach was no longer felt to be an option for competing with the aggressive nature of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the United States turned to equally aggressive anti-Soviet strategic influence activities.

The “Campaign of Truth” targeted 28 critical areas of the world, including Iran, South Korea, Indochina, Thailand, Greece, Afghanistan, Finland, and the Soviet satellite regions.⁸¹ The messaging sought to empower those under communist rule to gain their own freedom, hopefully inciting an anticommunist revolution and encouraging defections among the elites. Assistant Secretary of State, at the time, Edward Barrett said there was a need “to expose to all the world the fallacies and the phony nature of communism.”⁸² Activities emphasized dismal living conditions and blamed the Soviet Union for shortages of fuel, vegetables, and dairy. They also reported on widespread arrests and long prison sentences in the communist controlled countries. During this time, the Department of State programs alone were in 93 countries, produced 60 million booklets and leaflets, and broadcasted the *Voice of America* in 45 languages.⁸³ The strategic influence policies were focused on an aggressive hardline approach to anti-communist propaganda as a way to beat communism while avoiding direct military confrontation with the Soviet Union.⁸⁴

After two years of the “Campaign of Truth” disagreement about the tenor of the messaging reappeared in Congress and the administration. Some congressional leaders were supportive of the hardline mission while others wanted to focus on the strengths of the United States rather than weaknesses of the Soviet Union. An inadvertent consequence of the “Campaign of Truth” was the Soviet counter to the narrative. The Soviets declared it as the United States being defensive about democracy and thus demonstrating

⁸¹ Parry-Giles, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 59.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸³ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 43.

⁸⁴ Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin*, 122.

communism's political virility and democracy's fragility.⁸⁵ Eventually, President Truman implemented a new policy calling for more positive themes to offset the defensive nature of the Campaign of Truth narrative.

B. THE EISENHOWER ERA

President Eisenhower understood the wide role of strategic influence in political warfare. Upon assuming his presidency, he made three important changes to Cold War strategic influence policies.⁸⁶ The most important of the three was the establishment of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). For almost 40 years, it served as the only cabinet-level agency to oversee overt information programs abroad. Other changes included replacing Truman's psychological strategy board with the Operation Coordinating Board (OCB) to synchronize national security policy and develop more detailed plans for strategic influence activities.⁸⁷ Additionally, President Eisenhower appointed a special assistant for psychological warfare to advise him on policies and to assist with coordination of the strategic influence activities.⁸⁸ The latter two changes were an effort to provide centralized leadership for propaganda policy and, in effect, elevate strategic influence within the overall foreign policy structure.⁸⁹

Based on the conclusion that it was less effective, the president continued the change in policy away from the "Campaign of Truth." Two committees, established for review of U.S. strategic influence programs, recommended that U.S. strategic influence policy should no longer have an aggressive anti-communist tone because it "had become increasingly less effective as it ... [became] more an instrument of propaganda and less an instrument of information."⁹⁰ U.S. strategic influence operations were thus refocused on creating generational changes in the Soviet intelligentsia.

⁸⁵ Parry-Giles, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 96.

⁸⁶ Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin*, 148.

⁸⁷ Parry-Giles, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 134.

⁸⁸ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 149.

⁸⁹ Parry-Giles, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 134.

⁹⁰ Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin*, 153.

New NSC policies approved in 1955 and 1956 signaled U.S. political warfare programs to further exploit vulnerabilities within the Soviet Union.⁹¹ Additionally, the policies also cemented the strategic influence pivot reinforcing the concept of making evolutionary changes within the Soviet Union that were intended to eventually influence and shift Soviet policies.⁹² The pivot was called “cultural infiltration,” and it was intended to take advantage of what many were calling the “thaw period.” During this period, it was believed that many in the intelligentsia and the Soviet youth were feeling alienated from the communist ideology, and they were thought to be open to outside ideas and anxious to join the larger world community. Strategic influence activities supporting the pivot also had elements of convincing the people of the inferiority of the Soviet Union.⁹³

During the beginning of this pivot, the narrative also included ideas of liberation and freedom from communist enslavement. The narrative was not supported by policies that would support liberation movements though. Unfortunately, the 1956 Hungarian uprising provided a powerful lesson in integrated policies and strategies for political warfare. The people of Hungary mistakenly believed the narrative of liberation meant that the United States would reinforce attempts at resistance with actual military assistance. Unfortunately for the Hungarians, the United States was not prepared to do so, and the Soviet Union delivered a crushing military response to the uprising.⁹⁴ The Eisenhower administration soon moved away from strategic influence messaging that included the concepts of liberation from the Soviet Union.

C. THE “ICE AGE” TO AN AGE WITHOUT THE SOVIET UNION

The post–Eisenhower era is known by some as the “Ice Age” for strategic influence.⁹⁵ With Eisenhower as president, strategic influence in all its forms was embraced

⁹¹ National Security Council, “National Security Council Report,” June 29, 1956, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v24/d104>.

⁹² Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin*, 176.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁹⁵ Gough, *The Evolution of Strategic Influence*, 15.

and served as a critical element of U.S. political warfare.⁹⁶ The newly elected President Kennedy did not have the same feelings. The administration dismantled the OCB and 45 other interagency committees that dealt with strategic-level Cold War planning and execution.⁹⁷ Additionally, the USIA programming changed to a more aggressive narrative, which refuted the idea that the USIA had to be a more objective source of news.⁹⁸ While it was not ignored completely, strategic influence operations throughout the Kennedy administration took a back seat to the primacy of counter-insurgency, special warfare, and covert political action.⁹⁹ President Kennedy believed that the Soviet Union-supported “wars of liberation” in the third world were the biggest threat to the United States, and special warfare activities outside of strategic influence would be the answer.¹⁰⁰

Subsequent administrations through the remainder of the 1960s and 1970s also did not give top-level attention to strategic influence, including in the arena of strategic planning and coordination. A joint staff study conducted in the 1970s noted that ad hoc committees had attempted to fill the void that had led to a lack of coordination and guidance from the national security council level for strategic influence programs.¹⁰¹ Parts of the cultural infiltration programs, such as cultural exchanges and some radio programs, remained, but the emphasis, funding, and other programs did not. During the Vietnam War, military psychological operations felt a resurgence, but they were restricted primarily to that theatre of operations and were mostly at the tactical level.¹⁰² The Vietnam protests and Soviet influence programs negated the few successful programmatic gains outside the Vietnam theatre. Additionally, the societal cultural revolution and disillusionment with American

⁹⁶ S. R. Joey Long, “Winning the Hearts and Minds: U.S. Psychological Warfare Operations in Singapore, 1955–1961,” *Diplomatic History* 32, no 5 (2008): 890.

⁹⁷ Gough, *The Evolution of Strategic Influence*, 17.

⁹⁸ Parry-Giles, *Rhetorical Presidency*, 187.

⁹⁹ Gough, *The Evolution of Strategic Influence*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Alfred H. Paddock Jr, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins*, rev. ed. (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 156.

¹⁰¹ Gough, *The Evolution of Strategic Influence*, 18.

¹⁰² Frank Barnett, “Afterword—Twelve Steps to Reviving American PSYOP,” in *Political Warfare and Psychological Operations: Rethinking the U.S. Approach*, ed. Carnes Lord and Frank R. Barnett. (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989), 212.

values and primacy contributed to the limited emphasis the U.S. government placed on strategic influence.¹⁰³

The Reagan administration re-elevated strategic influence to a top element of national security strategy. The administration was determined to end the Cold War. From 1982 to 1984, President Reagan issued three *National Security Decision Directives* (NSDD) that served as the cornerstone for his strategic influence policies. In 1982, NSDD 45 revitalized the international broadcasting programs—allowing for an expansion to Cuba—and pressed for the continued study of closer integration between the DOD and the DoS strategic influence programs.¹⁰⁴ In 1983, NSDD 77 established a national security council planning group and four standing interagency committees on public affairs, international broadcasting, international politics, and international information. It also gave authority to the DoS to direct other departments to implement strategic influence strategies.¹⁰⁵ Finally, NSDD 130 reiterated the importance and role of information strategy in national security and cemented strategic influence as a central tool in President Reagan’s security policies and strategies. NSDD 130 directed a “sustained commitment over time to improving the quality and effectiveness of U.S. international information efforts” including resources and coordination with other national security elements.¹⁰⁶

During the thaw in the mid-1980s, U.S. strategic influence measures had affected the Soviet intelligentsia and post–World War II generation who were assuming leadership positions within the Soviet Union system. The thaw was considered to be a time of relative intellectual openness among Soviet citizens, which is why the U.S. strategic influence actions during this period are thought to have influenced the Soviet leadership of

¹⁰³ Carnes Lord, “The Psychological Dimension in National Strategy,” in *Political Warfare and Psychological Operations: Rethinking the U.S. Approach*, ed. Carnes Lord and Frank R. Barnett (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989), 13–45, 16.

¹⁰⁴ National Security Council, *National Security Decision Directive 45* (Washington, DC: National Security Council, 1982).

¹⁰⁵ National Security Council, *National Security Decision Directive 77* (Washington, DC: National Security Council, 1983).

¹⁰⁶ National Security Council, *National Security Decision Directive 130* (Washington, DC: National Security Council, 1984).

the 1980s.¹⁰⁷ The cultural infiltration policies exploited Soviet communist vulnerabilities at a time of relative openness and supported the reemergence of targeted information operations during the Reagan administration.¹⁰⁸ For the United States, the new Soviet leaders of the late 1980s appeared to signal the long-term effectiveness of cultural infiltration policies of the 1950s and 1960s.

D. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Strategic influence policies changed throughout the Cold War because of a variety of factors. The factors ranged from political and public support of the influence concepts to opportunities presented from a target population. The policymakers and American public wanted to be viewed as full and fair and thus could not remain committed to the early strident anti-communist propaganda of the early Cold War. On the same note, the Ice Age in strategic influence also proved that both the administration and public must also stridently support the role of strategic influence as part of political warfare.

The Cold War strategic influence policies of virulent propaganda do not appear to be the activities that truly influenced the Soviet population. Those programs were stymied by the lack of results coupled with the American distaste for propaganda in general. Ultimately, success in U.S. strategic influence came more from policies of cultural infiltration, showing the positive aspects of American culture, while also providing an alternative to Russian media. Implementing the concepts of Full and Fair strategic influence and the cultural infiltration program today may not provide immediate gains, but may provide more lasting effects.

As is always the case, there are advantages and disadvantages to a Full and Fair approach to strategic influence. Noticeable results of the Cold War's Full and Fair approach were not seen until almost 30 years after implementation. Additionally, the strategic influence strategy was synchronized with the greater political warfare policy of the time, something the United States currently lacks. However, an approach similar to Full and Fair may be less expensive and more palatable and relatable just as it was during the Cold War.

¹⁰⁷ Schwartz, *Political Warfare against the Kremlin*, 211.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages it may pay long-term dividends for the United States to contemplate Cold War experiences with Full and Fair and cultural infiltration-type strategies that are carefully coordinated at the strategic level.

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IV. SUPPORT TO POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND COUNTER-GOVERNMENT GROUPS

Whereas strategic influence focuses on messaging a target group, support to political, social, and counter-government groups is focused on actions that provide tangible resources and influence to a group. Supporting these groups is often more personal and may even be controversial depending on the type of support and the objectives of the group or operation. For the United States, support to a third-party group may often take the form of overt democracy assistance but also may include covert action, such as political action and paramilitary support. During the Cold War, these activities were all intended as a means to contain, roll-back, or deter Soviet Union expansion.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union consistently engaged third-party political, social, and counter-government groups around the world. Instead of directly confronting each other, the nations used their instruments of national power to exploit vulnerabilities elsewhere to influence change in their favor. U.S. Cold War policies involved countering Soviet active measures executed to support communist expansion. In addition, they were also intended as a means to stabilize a country or community that was vulnerable to Soviet exploitation. The controversial aspects of covert action in Iran, Chile, and Afghanistan are often cited as examples of U.S. Cold War support to political, social, and counter-government groups.

Understanding the policies and activities of U.S. overt and covert support to third-party groups can inform a new policy for political warfare with Russia today. The hypothesis explored in this chapter is

Policies must include support to political, social and counter-government groups to undermine Russian political warfare and exploit vulnerabilities in target societies.

As noted in previous chapters, Russia continues to influence and exploit vulnerabilities in neighboring communities and nations while sponsoring political entities and social groups. The U.S. history of third-party support should not be overshadowed by controversy but instead provide lessons to counter contemporary Russian actions. This chapter examines

U.S. Cold War activities—both covert and overt—that supported political, social, and counter-government groups.

A. COVERT SUPPORT TO POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND COUNTER-GOVERNMENT GROUPS

Covert action programs provide a third option for an administration when overt assistance and diplomacy do not meet the intended goals and when military force is too extreme. Since President Truman signed NSC policy 10/2, covert action has been an activity executed by the CIA during peacetime, while also establishing that covert operations are to be consistent and supportive of national policy objectives.¹⁰⁹ Cold War covert action in support of the Marshall Plan, to counter communist expansion in Latin American, and Europe were developed in response to foreign threats to U.S. national interests. They were a means to support U.S. objectives by influencing foreign governments, populations, and leaders in ways that would benefit the United States.¹¹⁰ Throughout the Cold War, as initiated by President Truman, covert action supported U.S. political warfare policies intended to contain, deter, and roll-back the Soviet Union.

There is a range of different activities within covert action, but this thesis focuses on political action, paramilitary operations, and propaganda. Surprisingly, no U.S. president or government organization had explicitly defined covert action until President Reagan signed Executive Order 12333 in 1981. Covert action is defined as

Activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives abroad which are planned and executed so that the role of the United States Government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly, and functions in support of such activities, but which are not intended to influence United States political processes, public opinion, policies, or media and do not include diplomatic activities or the collection and production of intelligence or related support functions.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ State Department, Office of the Historian, “National Security Council Directive 10/2,” June 1948 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945-50Intel/d292>.

¹¹⁰ William J. Daugherty, *Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the Presidency* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 41.

¹¹¹ Exec. Order No. 12333, 3 C.R.F. (1981), accessed October 25, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12333.html>

Political action is about affecting and influencing the political situation in a target country or target group. Activities include, but are not limited to, funding political campaigns, funding or instigating demonstrations or strikes, and supporting social groups and civil society organizations. Although paramilitary operations can include training guerilla and paramilitary forces, it also can include training sanctioned government security forces. As noted in Chapter III, covert propaganda is the dissemination of specific messages to a target audience via a variety of mediums, such as radio, books, newspapers, journals, and leaflets. At the heart of covert action is the requirement to hide the U.S. hand in the activity while still achieving national objectives.

The first foray into covert action was political action in the French and Italian elections in 1948. The political action programs in the elections were supporting efforts to execute the Marshall Plan, which at the time was gaining traction in the U.S. Congress as a way to rebuild Europe and stem the expansion of Soviet influence. In France and Italy, the communist parties had declared political war on the Marshall Plan and the United States. In November 1947, in response to growing fears about the communist parties, President Truman signed policy directive NSC 1 and, subsequently, NSC 2 and 3. These policies directed all elements of national power, including the newly formed CIA, to defeat the communists in the impending French and Italian elections.¹¹²

Political action is considered generally inexpensive but can take long-term commitment depending on the requirements. The political action program in Italy continued after the initial successes of the late 1940s through the late 1960s when the Italian communist party finally collapsed.¹¹³ In Italy alone, the CIA spent \$200 million in aid and programs to support moderate and anti-communist parties. An interesting note with the Italian case is that Alcide de Gasperi, who the United States favored and who eventually won the 1948 elections, would not accept U.S. support unless all non-communist parties received support.¹¹⁴ Spreading the U.S. support to all non-communist

¹¹² Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 243.

¹¹³ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 83.

¹¹⁴ John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Incorporated, 2009), 39.

parties was thought to be a means of maintaining a sense of democracy and avoiding the idea of a rigged election by the Americans. In France, the CIA undermined the influence of communist labor leaders spending millions of dollars on election campaigns and anti-communist propaganda.¹¹⁵

U.S. programs in the Philippines and Japan defeated communist movements and parties while cementing U.S. influence in key Asian countries. Throughout the 1950s in the Philippines, covert action against the Hukbalahap (Huk) rebellion included a combination of paramilitary support to revitalize the Philippine military but also political action to support political parties and the election process.¹¹⁶ In Japan, political action programs supporting the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LPD) and individual entities continued from President Eisenhower through the Nixon administration. While there are charges that the LPD dominated and controlled party politics for 40 years, the action is also credited with thwarting socialist opponents in Japan.¹¹⁷

Operation TPAJAX, the program to overthrow Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, is controversial to some but serves as an example of influencing and supporting a political and social group through covert action. TPAJAX is viewed as controversial to some because the support provided to the Iranian Shah and his followers is viewed as hypocritical, as the United States promoted the values of democracy but still intervened in a democratic process. Activities in TPAJAX consisted mainly of propaganda and political action though there was an element of paramilitary operations resulting in a coup. The CIA instigated demonstrations and riots while using propaganda to influence the Iranian people and military elites against the prime minister and in favor of the Shah. The Shah, with the support of the military, eventually forced Mossadegh to resign.¹¹⁸ During the 26 years the Shah reigned in Iran, the United States had access to intelligence listening sites on Soviet missile test ranges. These listening sites were used to collect

¹¹⁵ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 38.

¹¹⁶ Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 139.

¹¹⁷ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 140.

¹¹⁸ Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 205.

information on Soviet missile characteristics and to later verify Soviet compliance with arms reduction treaties.¹¹⁹ The manager of the program, Kermit Roosevelt, believed that the operation succeeded because the people and the Iranian Army already supported the Shah; thus, the agency did not have to create support but only bolster existing momentum in the country.¹²⁰

Future U.S. presidential administrations and CIA leadership did not always heed the lessons learned from TPAJAX. In Guatemala, Kermit Roosevelt's lesson on the importance of supporting existing movements and individuals seemed to be ignored. Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman relied heavily on the Guatemalan communist party for support, though it is unclear whether the Soviets themselves were supporting him.¹²¹ The operation to oust Arbenz, code-named PBSUCCESS, included propaganda but relied heavily on creating and supporting the Guatemalan rebels led by former Guatemalan Army officer, Castillo-Armas. The Castillo-Armas force never truly enjoyed popular support and could not gain enough influence to oust Arbenz and assume control of the country. The turmoil caused by the covert action, including aerial bombing and sinking of supply ships, led to the Guatemalan Army forcing the resignation of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman.¹²² The operation itself was deemed a covert action success, though detractors would point to 40 years of military dictatorship that would eventually kill hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans.¹²³

Similar to Guatemala, the political action program in Chile highlighted the extremes to which an administration might go to ensure the target does not receive internal or external support from the Soviet Union or communist parties. The Chilean program started with the Kennedy administration in 1962. It was a supporting activity to the overt democracy assistance provided through the "Alliance for Progress" agreement the

¹¹⁹ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 27.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹²² Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 121.

¹²³ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 139.

Kennedy administration signed in Latin America.¹²⁴ The initial U.S. support to the Chilean rightist party under Eduardo Frei was relatively inexpensive, uncontroversial, and kept the communist and Soviet supported party and its leader Salvador Allende, out of power until 1970. According to Chilean law, a person cannot hold office in two consecutive terms, so Frei was ineligible to run again. When the Christian Democratic Party could not field an alternative candidate attractive to the United States, the political action program turned to “spoiling operations.”

The redirection of the program was an example of the seemingly extreme measures the administration was willing to take to influence the politics of a nation. Spoiling operations included buying congressional votes, propaganda to discredit Allende, and the plans for a potential military coup.¹²⁵ The spoiling operations failed, and Allende eventually became president. Two years later, in 1973, a military coup ejected him from the presidency resulting in many years of a military dictatorship in the country. Though the United States was not involved in the 1973 coup, detractors believe that previous U.S. anti-Allende programs were the catalyst for the coup and subsequent dictatorship. The programs in the Guatemalan and Chilean cases may have been programmatic successes, but the emphasis on paramilitary activity and the ousting of a popularly supported entity resulted in controversial outcomes.

In Europe and the Soviet Union, U.S. covert action programs were extensive and had long-term objectives. The decades-long programs ranged from support to trade unions and anti-Soviet political entities to the infiltration of books and magazines behind the Iron Curtain.¹²⁶ Another operation, the “nationalities” program, spanned multiple administrations and was intended to ensure the heritage, culture, and languages of ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union were maintained. The secondary objective was that it

¹²⁴ James A. Barry, “Managing Covert Political Action,” Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, accessed July 14, 2016, https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol36no3/html/v36i3a05p_0001.htm, 21.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Operation GLADIO was also extensive during this time; however, Chapter V discusses the operation in more detail.

would also serve as a direct attack on the internal legitimacy of the Soviet government.¹²⁷ Each U.S. administration considered the aforementioned programs, and many others like them, necessary to influencing the political leanings of those in the Soviet Union.

In the 1970s and 1980s, U.S. policy focused on countering Soviet active measures and exploiting the growing dissension in the Soviet Union. President Carter initiated programs that were targeted at the exploitation of the internal political situation and dissident movements gaining momentum in the Soviet Union.¹²⁸ For example, the Solidarity movement in Poland is thought by many to be the impetus for the eventual fall of the Soviet Union. Following the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981, the United States and the Vatican both worked to provide support to the movement that had taken root during the 1970s.¹²⁹ The success of Solidarity cannot be solely attributed to United States or the Vatican, but it is believed that without support from either entity, the movement would have taken much longer and may not have stayed peaceful. Researcher Carl Bernstein suggests that because Solidarity already enjoyed popular support, covert action was merely required to support marginally through the provision of funds and supplies, and often intelligence, to ensure the movement could continue to operate.¹³⁰

Throughout the Cold War, many of the policies that used covert action were explicitly anti-communist and centered on influencing groups and populations. The policies included covert action programs to address problems and situations that could not be solved solely through overt means but were in concert with overt activities. Henry Kissinger, national security advisor to two administrations, said that these programs were often initiated to “promote internal change” as well.¹³¹ For the United States, covert support to political, social, and counter-government groups was a means to prevent

¹²⁷ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 74.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹²⁹ Carl Bernstein, “The Holy Alliance,” *Time Magazine*, June 24, 2001, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,159069,00.html>.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Allan E. Goodman, *Twentieth Century Fund*, and Bruce D. Berkowitz, *The Need to Know: The Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Covert Action and American Democracy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 1992), 39.

communist expansion and deal with the impending dangers of pro-communist regimes. Covert activities that were likely to receive widespread approval if revealed were those that supported popularly backed entities, remained relatively inexpensive, and often did not go to what many would consider as extremes to institute change.¹³² Conversely, the controversial covert activities were those where the requirement for popular support and authentic leadership capabilities of a group were overshadowed by traditional characteristics of military strengths—particularly in covert paramilitary operations. Those programs often resulted in what could be described as programmatic successes with controversial results.

B. OVERT DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

Thomas Carothers, a democracy assistance researcher, describes two approaches to democracy assistance: political and developmental. In the political approach to democracy assistance, the essential institutions of politics—elections, political parties, and politically oriented civil society groups—receive the support and aid. The political approach to democracy assistance has many of the same tactics as covert political action; except that in this approach, the support is overt and not shielded from outside scrutiny. In the developmental approach to democracy assistance, the support and assistance is intended to address concerns about equality and justice while educating people on the concepts of democracy. The objective of democracy assistance programs is to create a functioning government and state system through sustainable long-term changes within political and socioeconomic populations.¹³³

During the Cold War, the United States began executing democracy assistance programs as an overt means to support political goals to fight the expansion of communism. Democracy assistance was provided out of concern about Soviet and communist exploitation of vulnerable nations and communities rather than out of concern for the development and future of the nations and democracy itself. The lines of effort for

¹³² Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 57.

¹³³ Thomas Carothers, “Democracy Assistance: Political vs. Developments?” *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 1 (2009): 5, doi: 10.1353/jod.0.0047.

democracy assistance were assisting elections, strengthening the administration of justice, and encouraging the population to participate in governance. All instruments of national power were involved in democracy assistance programs, but generally, the DoS, U.S. Agency for International Development USAID, and congressionally funded organizations, such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), were the primary executors of these programs. The administrations' policies provided the focus for programs and thus affected the consistency, location, and emphasis of the programs.

Since the 1950s, the use of overt assistance has ebbed and flowed with U.S. interest in supporting international development and democracy. Democracy assistance is a byproduct of development assistance, which gained prevalence during President Kennedy's administration. In the Kennedy administration, there was a general feeling that the United States, with its energy and resources, could help third-world nations move from dictatorship to democracy through economic improvements.¹³⁴ Responding to the beliefs in the Kennedy administration, USAID was created in 1961 when the Foreign Assistance Act was approved. Five years later, the Title IX amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act required USAID to implement economic programs that encouraged participation of democratic private and local government institutions in an attempted shift to more politically oriented assistance programs.¹³⁵

From its inception, USAID has been generally hesitant to be involved in politically oriented programs. The organizational culture is bent toward socioeconomic development rather than organizational development, though USAID has executed programs that promote democracy and not just development. Programs in the early years included supporting foreign legislatures, legal institutions, civic education, labor unions, and local governments. Conceived in the late 1960s and executed during the 1970s, USAID funded a program that strengthened the capacity of legislatures in South Korea, Brazil, Ethiopia, Lebanon, and Costa Rica.¹³⁶ However, in Africa, the success of democracy assistance is

¹³⁴ Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 20.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

low. In a 1997 study by Bratton and Van De Wall, of the 25 cases of aid in Africa, only eight resulted in democratic transitions.¹³⁷

In Guatemala in the late 1960s and early 1970s, USAID programs trained leaders in rural communities to get involved in their own community development. As mentioned in the covert action section of this chapter, alongside the USAID support, the DOD and the CIA were actively supporting the Guatemalan military counterinsurgency campaign against growing guerrilla forces and organized political opposition as a part of their continued support to Guatemala based on the 1950s covert action program. Unfortunately, a 1980s study found that more than 750 of the rural leaders who participated in the USAID program were murdered by the Guatemalan military that the DOD and CIA had been backing.¹³⁸ The Guatemalan experience should be an example of the importance of interagency planning and execution in foreign policy with regard to supporting political, social, and counter-government groups.

During the 1980s under President Reagan, democracy assistance continued to be a core priority of U.S. foreign aid. The Reagan administration was building on the economic development programs from the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Carter administrations that had made economic development the mainstay of their democracy oriented programs. Some historians believe there is a direct relation between the doubling down on democracy assistance in the 1980s and the heightened anti-communism of the Reagan administration. While the anti-communist policy seemed to be rooted in military strength, promoting the ideology of democracy was instituted to directly counter the Soviet Union's considerable investment in campaigns and programs spreading communism.¹³⁹

It was during the Reagan era that NED was approved for congressional funding to implement overt democracy assistance. The idea for the NED dates back to congressman Dante Fascell in the 1970s, and its initial budget was \$18 million.¹⁴⁰ NED is a

¹³⁷ Stephen Brown, "Foreign Aid and Democracy Promotion: Lessons from Africa," *European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 2 (2005): 182.

¹³⁸ Carothers, *Aiding Democracy*, 27.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

congressionally funded non-profit organization with an independent board of directors, management, and staff. NED was established as a government funded anti-communist organization whose programs were intended to counter communist ideals.¹⁴¹ Through four main grantees during the Cold War, projects dispatched experts on representative political parties, free market economies, independent trade unions, and a free press around the world to influence and engage target groups. In the post–Cold War era, NED continues its charter of strengthening democratic institutions and fosters democratic values in over 100 countries.¹⁴²

USAID and NED sponsored multiple democracy assistance programs in the 1980s. Their election centric projects were throughout Latin America—Haiti in 1982, Guatemala and Honduras in 1985, Chile in 1988, Paraguay in 1989, and Nicaragua in 1990.¹⁴³ Along with covert political action, the United States took a political approach to overt democracy assistance while aiding the Solidarity trade-union movement in Poland throughout the 1980s.¹⁴⁴ In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the NED supported human rights organizations, dissident publications and media, and other potential sources of influence in the Soviet Bloc.¹⁴⁵

C. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

As reviewed in this chapter, United States experiences in covert action and democracy assistance provide insights to future political warfare policies. Covert action, particularly political action, and democracy assistance programs provide a combination of options to influence people and the political outcomes of a target country. Whereas covert action is intended to disguise the hand of the United States, democracy assistance programs are overt actions that show the intention of the United States to support or

¹⁴¹ James Phillips, *The National Endowment For Democracy: An Important Weapon in the War of Ideas* (memorandum no. 360) (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 1993), <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1993/07/the-national-endowment-for-democracy-an-important-weapon-in-the-war-of-ideas>.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Carothers, *Aiding Democracy*, 35.

¹⁴⁴ Carothers, “Democracy Assistance,” 11.

¹⁴⁵ Carothers, *Aiding Democracy*, 37.

influence a target country or entity. As introduced in Chapter I, social movement theory and the results from the Chenoweth and Stephan's study give academic based context to lessons learned from U.S. Cold War experience in supporting political, social, and counter-government groups.

The Cold War experience and the research show that external support is necessary, but there are particulars to that support that can make a difference in avoiding controversy while still meeting national objectives. First, the chapter highlighted the importance of a comprehensive policy that integrates all instruments of national power to support or sponsor a popularly backed movement. The policy may also require consistency and a long-term outlook to achieve the desired objectives. Social movement theory and the Chenoweth and Stephan's research indicate that popularly backed movements that remain non-violent and receive support from the margins have an increased chance to effect desired change, such as regime reform. The research also corroborates the positive and non-controversial aspects of covert political action and democracy assistance programs of the Cold War. An analysis of U.S. Cold War activities, combined with social movement theory concepts, show that support to political, social, and counter-government groups can end in outcomes favorable to the group and the supporting nation.

V. ROLE OF SPECIAL WARFARE AS A SUPPORTING AND SYNCHRONIZING ELEMENT

This chapter briefly examines both the specific special warfare activities of the Cold War and the special operations role supporting and synchronizing into a modern-day political warfare campaign. The examination of the special warfare activities and tools are shown through operations in Greece, Europe, Indochina, and Latin America. These operations show the policies executed at the tactical level that contributed to the larger strategic effort of other government agencies in United States political warfare policy.¹⁴⁶ As will be noted later in the chapter, many of the activities that make up political warfare are doctrinally special warfare activities executed by military special operations forces and can be executed in support of other covert or overt programs. The hypothesis guiding this chapter is as follows:

Political warfare activities are integral to special warfare doctrine thereby effectively positioning SOF to support and synchronize political warfare strategies.

Additionally, the role of special warfare in the human domain and working with population networks provide context to the positioning of SOF as a supporting and synchronizing element.

Military operations in Greece show the implementation of foreign internal defense and capacity-building that became cornerstones of special warfare. Operations in Europe highlight an almost 40-year commitment by SOF to unconventional warfare and counter-unconventional warfare. Counterinsurgency operations in Indochina highlight the evolution of special warfare tasks to meet political warfare objectives. In Latin America, SOF executed special warfare activities in a support role to multiple interagency political warfare plans providing opportunities to expand strategies into various parts of the population networks. Lessons learned from these operations have been applied to modern-day SOF policy regarding interagency integration. This chapter reveals that special

¹⁴⁶ Dan Madden et al., *Special Warfare: The Missing Middle in U.S. Coercive Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2014), 2.

warfare activities place SOF in a supporting role to execute political warfare policy. Special warfare activities within the population and networks also provide opportunities for other government and host nation agencies to use SOF as an integrating element with other covert and overt programs.

A. BACKGROUND

Special warfare activities of the Cold War and beyond have their roots in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).¹⁴⁷ As defined by Army Doctrine Publication 3–05, special warfare is

The execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.¹⁴⁸

Once the OSS disbanded after WWII, it was not until 1952 that the Psychological Warfare Center (later named the Special Warfare Center) and its subsequent SOF units began their evolution from OSS to modern-day SOF.¹⁴⁹ The special warfare activities SOF executed during the Cold War were in support of political warfare policies to contain, deter, and roll back the Soviet Union.

As the Cold War evolved, special warfare activities also evolved. In the early years of the Cold War, the special warfare activities of unconventional warfare and psychological operations were the core tasks for SOF just as they were the core tasks for the OSS. Special warfare activities began to include a range of lethal and non-lethal tasks, such as foreign internal defense, counter-unconventional warfare, capacity building,

¹⁴⁷ Isaac Peltier, *Surrogate Warfare: The Role of U.S. Army Special Forces* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), 6.

¹⁴⁸ Department of the Army, *Special Operations*, Army Doctrine Publication 3–05 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 9.

¹⁴⁹ Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces*, 1st ed. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986), 154.

counter insurgency, and civil affairs operations.¹⁵⁰ These special warfare tasks from the Cold War are still relevant and executed in the 21st century. As noted in Chapter I, most of these activities fall under the operational definition of political warfare as well.¹⁵¹

B. SPECIAL WARFARE ACTIVITIES AND EVOLUTION

Cold War operations in Greece, Europe, Indochina, and Latin America provide examples of special warfare activities and tools. Examining operations in these regions shows indications of political warfare policies executed at the tactical level while contributing to the larger strategic effort.

1. Greece

In the 1940s, Greece was on the verge of civil war when the Greek Communist Party (KKE) refused to participate in rebuilding the Greek political and social systems.¹⁵² With support from the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's communist leader Tito, the KKE was intent on bringing communist rule to Greece. In May 1947, President Truman pledged support to the Greek government through the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, declaring, "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."¹⁵³ At the time, the Greek armed forces were considered to be in shambles and unable to maintain internal security in Greece.¹⁵⁴ Following the approval of the Marshall Plan, the U.S. military mission in Greece used capacity building, foreign internal defense, and

¹⁵⁰ Counter-unconventional warfare is not a doctrinal term but has been defined and used extensively in USASOC publications. It is defined by USASOC in various white papers as operations and activities conducted by the U.S. Government and supported by SOF against an adversarial state or non-state sponsor of unconventional warfare. It includes a whole-of-government approach such foreign internal defense and improving law enforcement, rule of law, and governance in order to address civilian grievances. These actions shore up the stability and legitimacy of the state and increases it ability to deny UW. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, *SOF Support to Political Warfare* (Ft. Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2015); U.S. Army Special Operations Command, *Counter-unconventional Warfare*.

¹⁵¹ David Stone, *Wars of the Cold War* (London : Brassey's UK, 2004), 159.

¹⁵² Robert M. Mages, "Without the Need of a Single American Rifleman: James Van Fleet and His Lessons Learned as Commander of the Joint United States Military Advisory and Planning Group During the Greek Civil War, 1948–1949," in *The U.S. Army and Irregular Warfare, 1775–2007*, ed. Richard G. Davis (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2008), 197.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

counter insurgency as the main tools to support and eventually rebuild the Greek armed forces. U.S. special operations forces did not exist at the time, but the overall U.S. military role was indicative of future foreign internal defense operations, which would become a lasting special warfare mission for SOF.

By late October 1946, just before the United States pledged support to Greece, the KKE retreated to northern Greece to rebuild and refit to continue the fight against the non-communist Greek government and armed forces. Upon retreat, the KKE formed a new communist-led military called the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). The DSE was organized as a trained active guerilla army of 23,000 soldiers. Both the KKE and the DSE claimed to also have an underground support network of 50,000 people and the support of 500,000 sympathizers throughout Greece.¹⁵⁵

In addition to supporting and rebuilding the official Greek Armed Forces to maintain security, the Joint United States Military Advisory and Planning Group (JUSMAPG) mission included working within the political and governance systems to get the required support to the Greek armed forces. The U.S. military had to work with the government system to support the rebuilding of the Greek military and to execute the Marshall Plan aid programs.¹⁵⁶ Over the course of the next two years, JUSMAPG advisors not only reorganized the Greek armed forces but also worked with them to clear DSE insurgents from the Greek mountains by helping design and execute offensive operations.¹⁵⁷ In 1949, after a series of effective operations, the commander of the JUSMAPG, James Van Fleet, saw the results from his rapid and comprehensive reorganization of the Greek armed forces, which were thus able to execute a decisively aggressive campaign against the insurgents.¹⁵⁸ While the JUSMAPG did not achieve all its reorganization goals, the newly organized Greek armed forces are credited with

¹⁵⁵ Stone, *Wars of the Cold War*, 36.

¹⁵⁶ Hy Rothstein, "A Tale of Two Wars: Why the U.S. Cannot Conduct Unconventional Warfare" (PhD., diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 2004), 59.

¹⁵⁷ Mages, "Without the Need," 197.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

ensuring Greek independence from communist control. Historian Robert Mages suggests the success of the JUSMAPG in Greece is largely due to the application of four principles:

1. Work with and support elements in the indigenous armed forces and government that share American goals and objectives.
2. Demand accountability and have advisor teams share the hazards and hardships of the force
3. Build the indigenous army according to the requirements of the conflict.
4. Remember that the war must be waged and won by the indigenous army and the government it defends.¹⁵⁹

The lessons learned from these principles became essential elements of special warfare and SOF policies and doctrine throughout the Cold War and into post-Cold War operations.

2. Europe

In the events leading up to the Cold War, the United States began its first European interventions in Turkey and Greece followed by subsequent support to other European nations through the Marshall Plan. As noted in previous chapters, the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency had taken the lead for preparations and activities within the Soviet zones of influence in Eastern and Central Europe at the beginning of the Cold War. Shortly thereafter, in 1952, the 10th Special Forces Group was activated at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Subsequently, it was deployed to Bad Tolz, West Germany, in preparation for military requirements in Europe after the East German uprising. In the fall of 1953, there was a sudden revolt in East Germany resulting in the violent suppression of protesters by Soviet tanks and armed forces.¹⁶⁰ The newly formed 10th Special Forces Group remained in Europe, preparing for unconventional warfare against continued Soviet Union repression and expansion.

Preparing for unconventional warfare in Europe included training a stay-behind network of resistance fighters and supporters in Western Europe in what would become a

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 199.

¹⁶⁰ Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, 203.

lasting special warfare task for SOF throughout the Cold War. This network was code-named GLADIO. The CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, or MI6) served as the executive agents for these stay-behind networks, recruiting, and funding them. However, the U.S. Special Forces and British Special Air Service (British SOF) trained and worked with the GLADIO networks for over 30 years. These networks were established in case of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. If the Soviets invaded, the network was to remain behind enemy lines to establish and strengthen local resistance movements and to sabotage the occupying forces. Though NATO headquarters controlled the networks, the responsibility for training and operations of forces in different countries was split between the United States and Britain. The training and development of the GLADIO network exercised basic special warfare activities as well as interagency and intergovernmental support and integration.¹⁶¹

3. Indochina

The United States initiated special warfare activities in Indochina in the late 1950s with support to French and CIA operations. The nearly 15-year involvement in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia would for many years be the defining times for special warfare during the Cold War. SOF was left to wither away after Vietnam but would be revitalized in the 1980s after a series of terrorist activities and legislation changes.¹⁶² Many of the lessons learned from special warfare core tasks in the Indochina region contributed to the interagency integration and planning that is still used in 21st century SOF operations. One of those lessons is that conventional military methods do not work in a conflict that is as much about politics and governance as it is about military strength and capability.¹⁶³

Initially, the CIA had responsibility for unconventional warfare activities in Laos and Vietnam. SOF was also in Laos during project White Star in 1959. Project White Star became a joint DOD-CIA project to enable the Laotian army to counter insurgent

¹⁶¹ Ganser Daniele, *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), xi, 1–2, 42–59.

¹⁶² Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare*, 163.

¹⁶³ Thomas K. Adams, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (Portland, OR: Routledge, 1998), 289.

activities by Laos guerrillas supported by North Vietnam.¹⁶⁴ In Vietnam, SOF, which would eventually have 26 teams executing the program, was primarily responsible for the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program planned and funded by the CIA. The program focused on the development of village defense forces and district-level response units. The program was also assisted by USAID to support numerous civil affairs programs to include supplying basic medical aid.¹⁶⁵

Vietnam also introduced the new mission of counterinsurgency.¹⁶⁶ At President Kennedy's behest, Cold War policy reoriented toward "wars of national liberation" and assistance for friendly governments countering insurgencies.¹⁶⁷ SOF became the instrument to implement counter-insurgency and what some would call counter-unconventional warfare. In supporting this effort, military psychological operations in Vietnam were operating alongside 10 U.S. agencies that were actively participating in psychological operations and associated programs.¹⁶⁸ In the end, the SOF role in Vietnam diverged from traditional special warfare to more conventional reconnaissance and search and destroy missions, which degraded special warfare use and capabilities during this period.

4. Latin America

Special operations forces have long been engaged in Latin America with various missions, from support to CIA-led covert political action and unconventional warfare to foreign internal defense and capacity building. In Honduras and El Salvador, special operations had a prominent role in counter-insurgency assistance. Through a CIA-led program, special warfare units supported the anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua and were active in Grenada and Panama.¹⁶⁹ In Bolivia, the SOF mobile training team deployed in

¹⁶⁴ Rothstein, "A Tale of Two Wars," 64.

¹⁶⁵ Adams, *U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 84.

¹⁶⁶ Sam Sarkesian, "The American Response to Low-Intensity Conflict: The Formative Period" in *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict: A Comparative Analysis*, ed. David A. Charters and Maurice Tugwell, 1st edition (Washington, DC: Pergamon Press, 1989), 37.

¹⁶⁷ Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare*, 157.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁶⁹ Adams, *U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 174.

1967 and began operations with the Bolivian Rangers against Che Guevara's insurgents. In October 1967, Che Guevara was caught in what may be described as a classic example of foreign internal defense.¹⁷⁰ In his 2004 doctoral dissertation, Hy Rothstein attributes the adoption of democratic forms of government in almost every Latin American country to over 50 years of involvement in special operations support to the military elite in those countries.¹⁷¹ Democratic reform, capacity building, and security sector reform were all end goals of U.S. political warfare policies during the Cold War.

5. Case Summary

For over 30 years during the Cold War, SOF regularly executed missions supporting irregular and insurgent forces such as the Mujahidin in Afghanistan and the anti-government resistance movements in Angola and Cambodia.¹⁷² In the Pacific theater, special warfare units were training forces in South Korea, Philippines, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, and elsewhere.¹⁷³ In each location, as well as the specific areas discussed previously, training and capacity building were at the root of the mission. Globally, the special warfare activities were always in support of the Cold War political warfare strategy. As the policies changed to meet goals to support, stabilize or even de-stabilize governments, special warfare activities were intended to reach Cold War objectives to contain and rollback the Soviet Union.

C. SUPPORT TO AND INTEGRATION WITH THE INTERAGENCY

During the Cold War, special warfare missions were linked to the anti-Soviet strategic policy and often worked in support of CIA-led efforts or alongside USAID and DoS in places like Vietnam and in Latin America. By definition, special warfare places SOF among the population, working alongside them in various lethal and non-lethal activities. Among other things, working amid the population enables SOF to identify

¹⁷⁰ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Special Operations in Peace and War*, U.S. Special Operations Command Publication 1 (MacDill AFB, FL: U.S. Special Operations Command, 1996), 2–10.

¹⁷¹ Rothstein, "A Tale of Two Wars," 77.

¹⁷² Adams, *U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 174.

¹⁷³ Susan Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 1997), 13.

population characteristics and assess various criteria for support and programs. The capability to identify and assess becomes especially useful in scenarios in which decision makers and the interagency want to apply the criteria and characteristics identified in social movement theory, as referenced in Chapter I. Generally, the ability to work among the population not only informs but also leads to identifying networks and groups that require support—or can be influenced and leveraged by other interagency programs.

The 2013 U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) strategic vision had six priorities and optimizing partnerships with the interagency was at the top.¹⁷⁴ The USASOC vision also explained that the “temperament, education, and training of SOF personnel drive[s] them to seek and combine the expertise resident across SOF, U.S. government agencies, nongovernment organizations, academia, and think tanks.”¹⁷⁵ Additionally, a 2015 white paper by USASOC describes SOF, and Army special operators in particular, as proven integrators of “indigenous forces, local populations, joint force components, U.S. agencies, and coalition partners.”¹⁷⁶ USASOC suggests that the activities inherent in political warfare rely on the “synchronized and evolving combination of capabilities possessed, enabled or supported by SOF,” enabling SOF to be the connective tissue and synchronizing element for the interagency in political warfare.¹⁷⁷ The SOF acceptance of the military’s role within the interagency is possibly a lesson learned from the Cold War when, as James Jay Carafano and Paul Rosenzweig point out, the military as a whole attempted to avoid integrated interagency operations while also ignoring the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) on the battlefield.¹⁷⁸

The breadth and depth of SOF around the world serves as a capability to be leveraged to integrate interagency political warfare policies and objectives on the ground. As recently as March 2016, then Special Operations Commander, General Joseph Votel

¹⁷⁴ U.S. Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022* (MacDill AFB, FL: U.S. Special Operations Command, 2014), http://www.soc.mil/Assorted%20Pages/ARSOF2022_vFINAL.pdf, 22.

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Army Special Operations Command, *SOF Support to Political Warfare*, 28.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ James Jay Carafano and Paul Rosenzweig, *Winning the Long War: Lessons from the Cold War for Defeating Terrorism and Preserving Freedom* (Lanham, MD: Heritage Books, 2005), 43.

acknowledged that more than 10,000 special operations forces are deployed in nearly 80 countries to support and integrate with the capabilities of conventional, international, and interagency partners.¹⁷⁹ In discussions on political warfare and gray-zone challenges, SOF leadership recognizes that DOD is not the agency that should be leading in the interagency in political warfare.¹⁸⁰ However, many of the activities that comprise political warfare have been cultivated and refined by SOF over the last six decades and should be implemented as a tool for supporting and, most importantly, integrating contemporary political warfare strategies. In 2015 a U.S. interdepartmental committee drafting political warfare policy recognized that special warfare is a leading activity for implementing political warfare policy and has a role integrating both covert and overt interagency activities programs.¹⁸¹

As special operations leaders define it, political warfare falls within the so-called “gray zone” between war and peace yet fights for influence and dominance within a population. Special warfare activities, as executed by SOF, overlap with many of the political warfare activities that are required to identify, leverage, and influence a population. The sheer size and number of special operations forces deployed around the world working among the population in support of national security objectives also makes them the logical element to integrate political warfare programs within the targeted population.

D. CONCLUSION

Often, the literature on military actions during the Cold War disregard special warfare as part of political warfare and instead focus on nuclear and ballistic missile options or conventional military deterrence. Military involvement in political warfare is

¹⁷⁹ *Statement of General Joseph L. Votel, U.S. Army Commander United States Special Operations Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, March 8, 2016, http://www.socom.mil/Documents/Votel_03-08-16.pdf.

¹⁸⁰ Gray Zone challenges are defined as competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality. U.S. Special Operations Command, *The Gray Zone* (Washington, DC: U.S. Special Operations Command, 2015), <https://publicintelligence.net/ussocom-gray-zones/>.

¹⁸¹ Office of the President of the United States, “Draft: U.S. Political Warfare Policy,” 2015, <http://orchestratingpower.org/lib/LIC/PW/2015%20draft%20PWP.pdf>, 33.

more than those things; it is also about networks, the population, stability, and reform. The use of the military, and specifically SOF, provides options and signals the intent and resolve of the United States. Special warfare provides an opportunity to assert military strength and capability without escalation to a more traditional form of warfare. Special operations leaders agree that SOF's proficiency in special warfare in "low-visibility, small-footprint, and politically sensitive operations" within a target population provides options for the United States to execute political warfare.¹⁸²

Special warfare and political warfare reside in the gray zone between politics and military conflict and between war and peace. Both require coercive measures of military strength while employing other means for influencing and engaging a population. Special warfare is an integral part of any political warfare strategy and doctrinally many of its activities fall under the political warfare definition. The special operations forces that execute special warfare are thus positioned and have the capacity to support and synchronize interagency political warfare activities within the target population.

¹⁸² Cleveland et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," 102.

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VI. CONCLUSION

Despite supposed reforms after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has shown an increased preference for political warfare as a means to advance its foreign policy and remain a dominant player on the world stage. Russia's pretense to protect ethnic Russians abroad has allowed it to execute political warfare policies with minimal rebuke from other nations, such as the United States. Continued influence in the political and social fabric of other nations coupled with strategic influence programs ensures countries within the near-abroad remain in the Russian "zone of privileged interests."¹⁸³ The 2014 Russian intervention in Ukraine was a manifestation of policies to use mostly non-military means to meet political objectives

On the other hand, U.S. policy and actions have not adequately responded to the contemporary Russian political warfare threat and have disregarded the lessons of U.S. political warfare successes of the Cold War. U.S. Cold War deterrence and containment policies included political warfare activities in three broad categories: strategic influence; support to political, social, and counter-government groups; and special warfare. Neither the current policies of the United States nor research on deterrence and containment reflect the political warfare aspects of Cold War policy that can inform a contemporary strategy for countering Russian political warfare.

The research question for this thesis was as follows:

What combination of programs, concepts, and tools from Cold War political warfare-based activities and policies best advances U.S. strategy to counter Russian political warfare in the 21st century?

To answer the research question, three hypotheses were proposed and explored. The hypotheses were as follows:

1. Strategic influence operations that justify a nation's actions and explain its beliefs while delegitimizing the aggressor's narrative are critical to successful political warfare campaigns.

¹⁸³ Grigas, *Legacies, Coercion and Soft Power*, 2.

2. Support of political, social, and counter-government groups to undermine Russian political warfare and exploit vulnerabilities in target societies may play a key role in current deterrence and containment policies.
3. Political warfare activities are integral to special warfare doctrine thereby effectively positioning SOF to support and synchronize political warfare strategies.

The hypotheses provided a framework for exploring Cold War deterrence and containment policies in the context of political warfare. To answer the research question, the remainder of this chapter analyzes the validity of each hypothesis while considering elements of social movement theory. The thesis concludes with recommendations for a U.S. strategy to counter Russian political warfare.

A. HYPOTHESIS 1—STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

Although the role of strategic influence seemed to oscillate from one administration to the next, it was the changes in, and the eventual balance between, the mode and aggressiveness of the U.S. narrative that seemed to have the most strategic influence effects on the outcome of the Cold War most. During the Ice Age referenced in Chapter III, some policymakers viewed strategic influence as less important compared to other aspects of political warfare. However, the balanced narratives of the strategic influence programs before and after the Ice Age may have contributed most to the changing mindsets of the Soviet leadership, which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Regarding the aggressiveness of the narrative, U.S. policymakers and society alike seemed to prefer the strategies of the full and fair information approaches to others. From the perspective of the American public and policymakers, cultural infiltration to influence lasting changes in the foreign audience seemed to be more acceptable and reflective of American values. Campaign of Truth-style strategies, which assertively delegitimized the Soviet Union, were often compared to the aggressive and nasty messaging of Soviet strategic-influence methods, which were considered distasteful to the American public and policymakers.

The first hypothesis is validated with a caveat regarding emphasis of the two narratives. As shown in Chapter III, programs that resonated and seemed to have lasting

effects were those that exposed the target population to different aspects of the U.S. system, culture, and ideals. The caveat to the hypothesis is that a balance must be achieved when delegitimizing the aggressor nation's narrative. The Soviet's manipulated the Campaign of Truth narrative, pointing to it as an indication of U.S. defensiveness about democracy and Western ideals. Additionally, the results and abrupt cancellation of programs like the Campaign of Truth show that decision makers and the public must be whole-heartedly behind any aggressive messaging; otherwise, the messaging may be called to a halt. Research on U.S. strategic influence during the Cold War shows that programs focused on making long-term changes in society may have more influence and staying power than overly aggressive messaging strategies that show the faults of the opponent.

Emphasizing the right narrative is crucial to developing a strategic influence program to counter Russia in the 21st century. The narrative and strategy should have a long-term outlook while focusing on the benefits of U.S. and Western ideals. Directly countering and delegitimizing Russia's narrative has a role but it should not be the strategy's main emphasis. Lessons from the Cold War show that policymakers and society may have a low threshold of tolerance for overemphasizing a narrative. Most importantly, an aggressive delegitimizing narrative is not necessarily effective and may not meet the desired strategic influence objective.

B. HYPOTHESIS 2—SUPPORT TO POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND COUNTER-GOVERNMENT GROUPS

Covert and overt support to political, social, and counter-government groups was a consistent tool used by all administrations during the Cold War. Political action programs in Italy, Japan, the Philippines, and Latin America were longstanding programs that supported a combination of all three. Overt democracy assistance focused on the concepts of stabilizing governments and educating groups on democratic ideals and governance options. Combined, overt and covert support to various groups was a means for the United States both to counter Soviet support and to influence nations that may have been susceptible to communism.

Social movement theory, referenced in Chapter I, offers insight into which groups should receive support and how best to support them. The factors outlined by researcher Doowan Lee regarding the political and societal conditions necessary for a movement to progress are specific about conditions to consider. The nation who contemplates support should recognize and contemplate the noted strengths, capabilities, and makeup of an organization. The results from Chenoweth and Stephan's research challenges the notion of when a group should be supported and whether or not that support should be geared toward military or non-military support.

The aforementioned lessons from the Cold War complement research in social movement theory. After operation TPAJAX in Iran, CIA operative Kermit Roosevelt expressed that the success of the operation was due to the movement already having public support and key characteristics that supported its path to success.¹⁸⁴ For some programs, military-centric strength and capabilities appeared to be the deciding factor on which group the United States supported. However, the focus of assessment before determining support to a group should center on actual public support and governance capabilities. Social movement theory and lessons from the Cold War suggest that if the United States were to support a group, the capabilities and organizational makeup of the group, combined with internal political and societal conditions, must be in U.S. favor.

Findings from Chapter IV suggest that for the contemporary tensions between Russia and the United States, the United States should continue to support political, social, and counter-government groups. Though research validates the hypothesis, there is one significant consideration regarding the selection of which group to support and when. Thus, while support to various groups should be a tool in a contemporary strategy against Russia, the considerations of public support, organizational characteristics, and external societal conditions should play a major role in the final decision to support.

¹⁸⁴ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 138.

C. HYPOTHESIS 3—SPECIAL WARFARE AS A SUPPORTING AND SYNCHRONIZING FUNCTION

U.S. special operations forces executed special warfare in support of political warfare strategies to meet deterrence and containment objectives during the Cold War. The tasks ranged from foreign internal defense throughout Latin America to preparation for unconventional warfare in Europe. In Indochina, the original special warfare tasks dating back to the OSS were expanded to include counter-insurgency. Special operations forces played key roles in the region, integrating counterinsurgency with covert paramilitary operations and overt capacity-building programs. Special warfare placed special operations forces in direct contact with populations the United States was intent on influencing, leveraging, or exploiting using political warfare.

In the post–Cold War era, special operations forces and special warfare activities have, almost by default, evolved into a natural integrating element across the interagency and host nation governments. As noted in Chapter V, nearly 10,000 U.S. special operations forces are deployed in over 80 countries around the world.¹⁸⁵ They are executing special warfare tasks, such as foreign internal defense and capacity building, while developing relationships and partnerships with key influencers both internal and external to the U.S. government. Special warfare activities are centered on developing relationships with the population, and those relationships can often be expanded to support the objectives of political warfare. The special warfare experience and the requirement to work with the population as well as support other instruments of national power make special warfare a supporting and synchronizing function in political warfare to counter Russia in the 21st century.

Experience in the Cold War shows that special operations and the execution of special warfare can meet objectives of influencing the population as well as serving as an integrating element. Additionally, special operations forces and special warfare activities serve as a signal to U.S. allies—and Russia—of the U.S. commitment toward its objectives. The use of special operations is also a subtle demonstration of military strength

¹⁸⁵ *Statement of General Joseph L. Votel.*

and capability. The hypothesis regarding the tool of special warfare as a supporting and integrating element is valid. Special warfare activities and special operations have proven capable of supporting and connecting population networks with the interagency and overall U.S. political warfare strategy.

D. THE COMMON THEME

While not part of the original hypotheses, the common theme found throughout the research was that each U.S. administration appears to have had a comprehensive policy and strategy to deter, contain, and rollback the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the early years, directives and strategies such as NSC 10/2, NSC 68, and NSC 5501 directly acknowledged the Soviet threat and provided guidance and authorization to counter or deter the threat. During the Reagan era, NSDD 32 and NSDD 54 soon thereafter reenergized the U.S. strategy against the Soviet Union, authorizing a broad range of covert operations with complementary overt economic and diplomatic programs to undermine Soviet policy objectives.¹⁸⁶

Today's unclassified and publicly available policies toward countering Russia neither include all instruments of national power nor provide clear, decisive guidance.¹⁸⁷ Even if there are classified covert policies for covert action or military programs, there should be an unclassified overt policy that fully acknowledges Russia's intent, objectives, and actions as a prerequisite for developing a clear comprehensive strategy to meet U.S. objectives and thwart Russia's goals. U.S. objectives must be clearly defined; otherwise, there is no endstate to work toward. A comprehensive policy on Russia should be a part of a larger policy against all U.S. adversaries.

The 2015 political warfare policy drafted by an interdepartmental committee provides a first step toward ensuring all instruments of national power are included in a response to a non-military centric threat. While the policy discusses all countries that pose a political warfare threat—namely Russia, China, and Iran—it is mainly focused on

¹⁸⁶ Daugherty, *Executive Secrets*, 198.

¹⁸⁷ James Jay Carafano et al., *U.S. Comprehensive Strategy toward Russia* (Report No. 173) (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 2015), <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/12/us-comprehensive-strategy-toward-russia>.

providing guidance for U.S. political warfare.¹⁸⁸ The stated objective in the political warfare draft policy is as follows:

[to] isolate, erode, manipulate, exhaust, wear down, attrite, overthrow, reduce, replace, or create the conditions to coerce a belligerent government or regime to acquiesce to our national objectives, without going to war.¹⁸⁹

The policy outlines how the United States would use all instruments of national power in a combination of overt and covert actions. The actions outlined include the activities discussed in this thesis as well as other diplomatic and economic measures.

The draft policy is clear regarding the roles of each instrument of national power though it arguably lacks expanded guidance to implement these actions in a coordinated manner over time. In theory, the coordinating function assigned to the Department of State and the NSC Board for Low Intensity Conflict would ensure specific guidance and integration for all political warfare activities. The coordination and integration of all political warfare activities is important to ensure that programs do not overlap or counter each other. The coordinating element must also be empowered to do its job. The operations coordinating board and psychological strategy board of the Eisenhower and Truman administrations, respectively, were supposed to coordinate policy and strategic influence programs, but neither appeared to achieve the level of coordination and planning desired. In the end, a clear comprehensive strategy that acknowledges the threat and provides guidance to meet defined objectives must be applied against Russia.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Russia in the 21st century is continuing a policy of political warfare while the United States appears to be executing a policy focused on deterring Russian conventional military actions. While Russia remains weak relative to the United States, it does share the Soviet Union's willingness to use its assets for political warfare.¹⁹⁰ The United States

¹⁸⁸ Office of the President of the United States, "Draft: U.S. Political Warfare Policy," 2.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁹⁰ Carafano et al., *U.S. Comprehensive Strategy toward Russia*.

must look back to the Cold War to use all available levers and options for political warfare in the 21st century.

As both Kennan and Gaddis noted, a non-military threat cannot be countered solely by a military strategy. Research for this thesis showed that concepts and policies, such as strategic influence; support to political, social and counter-government groups; and special warfare, were integral elements of deterrence and containment policies of the Cold War. A comprehensive 21st century policy strategy is necessary to advance U.S. interests and undermine those of our enemy.

It would be advantageous to take into account U.S. Cold War political warfare experience in a contemporary policy toward Russia. The policy should include strategic influence concepts and programs similar to the full and fair and cultural infiltration approaches as they have been linked to long-term changes in individual belief systems toward the United States. Just as Russia continues its support to political, social, and counter-government groups, so should the United States. Cold War lessons of supporting groups already enjoying public support combined with characteristics outlined in social movement theory should be included in the decision process. SOF and special warfare provide an opportunity for the United States to apply a military tool in a non-conventional manner as an integrating element in political warfare. The United States has the requisite experience in political warfare to deter and contain a threat such as Russia. It should unveil a comprehensive political warfare policy that applies U.S. experience toward a reinvigorated Russian strategy.

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