

CHAPTER 12

Propaganda Analysis and Counterpropaganda



Effective PSYOP are based on the collection of intelligence relating to the conditions and attitudes of a target area and audience. An important source of current information is available in opponent propaganda. PSYOP personnel obtain this information through propaganda analysis. Propaganda analysis should be an ongoing mission because there will never be absence of propaganda. PSYOP personnel can use the information gained from propaganda analysis to produce U.S. PSYOP products or to develop counterpropaganda programs. Five major tasks are associated with propaganda analysis and counterpropaganda: collecting, processing, propaganda analysis, advising, and counterpropaganda measures.

Collection

The collection task focuses on collection of information and intelligence relating to opponent propaganda. The PSYOP intelligence element is always collecting intelligence to determine potential target audiences, existing conditions, attitudes, and vulnerabilities. One aspect of this collection effort is the monitoring of communications. This monitoring aids in determining the psychological situation in the AO. Another aspect is the collection of opponent propaganda. For more information on collection, refer to Chapter 5.

Processing

The PSYOP intelligence unit processes information received relating to opponent propaganda. The intelligence unit and the propaganda analyst must maintain continuous coordination. Upon request, the intelligence unit gives needed intelligence and opponent propaganda to the analyst. For more information on processing, refer to Chapter 5.

Propaganda Analysis

The requirements for propaganda analysis depend on the level of opponent propaganda and are not limited to circumstances in which PSYOP units are

actively committed. Consequently, a continuing need exists for propaganda analysis in peacetime and in all regions where U.S. interests are being challenged.

Information Gathered Through Propaganda Analysis

While propaganda analysis is primarily done to gather information to help develop PSYOP programs, it can also uncover intelligence for other uses. Examples of PSYOP intelligence include—

- Conditions affecting the target audience and attitudes resulting from them.
- Issues about which the opponent displays exceptional sensitivity.
- Weaknesses in the opponent's knowledge and understanding of the target audience.
- Successful opponent propaganda themes that require propaganda counteraction.
- Opponent material that displays clumsiness, insensitivity, or inhumanity and might be used as the basis of a propaganda counteraction program.

Besides PSYOP-specific intelligence, analysis may reveal other intelligence. Examples include—

- Indications the opponent is attempting to prepare public opinion for a particular eventuality.
- Errors of fact that suggest a weakness in the opponent's intelligence-gathering organizations.
- New people used in the propaganda, suggesting a shift in personnel in the opponent's structure.

The SCAME Approach

Although a variety of approaches maybe used in the analysis of propaganda, the source, content, audience, media, and effects (SCAME) approach describes a convenient and very efficient system. Information revealed by the SCAME approach helps PSYOP personnel develop counterpropaganda programs. Adherence to this approach ensures a complete and thorough examination of opponent propaganda and largely removes the possibility of error due to omission.

An analysis of propaganda using the SCAME approach determines the source of the propagamda, the message content, the total audience the message reached, and the specifics of the medium used to send the message. The SCAME approach leads to a conclusion concerning the effect or desired effect the propaganda has had on the target audience. PSYOP personnel record their findings on a propaganda analysis form IAW the five SCAME categories (Figure 12-1, pages 12-3 and 12-4).

Source Analysis. A source is the individual, organization, or government that sponsors and disseminates the propaganda. Source analysis examines not only propaganda but also the organization responsible for its development and dissemination. Analyzing the source may help determine credibility, accuracy, and connection to a government, military command, organization, or individual.

To analyze a source, PSYOP personnel must identify the source and determine its status in the opponent's hierarchy. The source may be classified as an actor, an author, or an authority.

S	Source Analysis: What is the real source?
	1. Authority: _____ _____
	2. Authenticity and credibility: _____ _____
	3. Type: White _____ Gray _____ Black _____
C	Content Analysis: What does the propaganda tell about?
	1. Morale: _____ _____
	2. Involuntary information: _____ _____
	3. Biographic information: _____ _____
	4. Economic data: _____ _____
	5. Propaganda inconsistencies: _____ _____
	6. Geographic information: _____ _____
7. Intentions: _____ _____	
A	Audience Analysis: Who is the audience? What are its characteristics (location, size, importance, and political, religious, economic, and ethnic influences)?
	1. Apparent audience: _____ _____
	2. Ultimate audience: _____ _____
	3. Intermediate audience: _____ _____
	4. Unintended audience: _____ _____

Figure 12-1. Sample of propaganda analysis (SCAME formula).

M

Media Analysis: What media are used and why?

1. Type: Radio _____ TV _____ Posters _____ Leaflets _____
Magazine _____ Newspapers _____ Other _____

2. Frequency: _____

3. Reason: _____

E

Effects Analysis: What impact is this propaganda having?

1. Methods used in analysis: _____

2. Indications of effects: What events appear to be a result of the propaganda efforts? _____

Conclusions: _____

Apparent theme or desired results: _____

Recommended action: _____

Action taken: _____

Analyst's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date: _____

(Attach all examples.)

Figure 12-1. Sample of propaganda analysis (SCAME formula)(continued).

The actor is the person or entity presenting the message. The author is the person or entity who wrote the message. The authority is the person or entity in whose name the statement is made. PSYOP analysts attempt to assess the credibility of the author in the eyes of the target audience. With the information about the source, the analyst can classify propaganda as white, gray, or black.

- White propaganda is disseminated and acknowledged by the sponsor or by an accredited agency.
- Gray propaganda is not specifically identified with any source.
- Black propaganda is identified with a source other than the true one to mislead the target audience.

Content Analysis. Content analysis evaluates what the propaganda message says. It also determines the source's motive and goals. Content analysis reveals the meaning of the message, the reason the message was disseminated, the intended purpose of the message, and the way the appeal was presented. Many techniques used by the source can be identified. These overlapping and difficult-to-isolate techniques can be found in Figure 12-1, pages 12-3 and 12-4.

Content Methods. There are two major methods of content analyses, objective and subjective. A combined use of both methods is ideal to interpret the full meaning and intent of the propaganda message.

With the objective method, the PSYOP analyst systematically analyzes content using classification systems and statistical data bases. Objective analysis has advantages and disadvantages. A variety of up-to-date information is available from computers. PSYOP analysts can analyze large quantities of data effectively and depict the information on charts, graphs, and other easily understood forms. Accuracy and continuity are ensured. The disadvantages include the need for computers and the training to operate the computers. Also, if the computer is inoperative, the information is inaccessible.

With the subjective method, the PSYOP analyst relies on his background, experience, and judgment. Subjective analysis has the advantage of flexibility and mobility. Support requirements are limited, and the analyst does not need training on computers. He can rely on his mind. The disadvantages are that it is time-consuming, it allows the analyst to inject his bias, and it loses institutional memory if the analyst departs.

In content analysis, PSYOP personnel evaluate morale, involuntary information, biographic information, economic data, propaganda inconsistencies, geographic information, and intentions. This analysis may provide both PSYOP-specific and other intelligence.

PSYOP personnel analyze morale by studying propaganda messages. For example, a message quietly and unemotionally delivered may reflect high morale, while silence, bluster, or strident communications may suggest low morale.

PSYOP personnel glean involuntary information from propaganda containing news, opinions, and entertainment. Analysis of this information may reveal useful

intelligence. For example, the coverage given leaders in opponent propaganda may indicate their power within the opponent hierarchy. The leader given the greatest coverage probably wields the most power in that area

PSYOP personnel study propaganda or events that may provide biographical information on particular individuals. For example, the appearance of a new personality at a publicized ceremony may indicate a promotion or demotion has occurred within the government or military power structure. Movements and visits of highly placed officials may suggest imminent political or military action in the areas visited.

PSYOP personnel find economic information in propaganda that reports statistics; however, these statistics may be false. Comparing verified statistics may reveal valuable clues about industrial or agricultural output, labor shortages, or other economic conditions. PSYOP personnel maintain a chart of known statistical data to compare incoming economic data and to evaluate future economic trends. Productivity charts can show past, current, and future anticipated levels of productivity. One example is a reduction in weapons and manpower of the former Soviet military to ease domestic economic failings.

PSYOP personnel look for inconsistencies in propaganda because these discrepancies may provide insights into conditions within the target area. This information could include reports concerning the readiness of combat forces and plans for operational activities. An example is the massing of combat forces and equipment near a border as a "training exercise." PSYOP personnel establish an indicator accuracy checklist to help them analyze and recognize propaganda inconsistencies. This checklist has questions about the feasibility or accuracy of the propaganda being presented. For instance, opponent mechanized forces are in a C1 combat readiness posture as stated by the sponsor, however, intelligence indicates a major shortage of petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL). This intelligence points out that the opponent is not combat ready, since he lacks POL.

PSYOP personnel get important geographic information from sources claiming victories and identifying places and individuals. Such information can be confirmed through other intelligence sources and assets.

PSYOP personnel look for propaganda that may conceal the real intentions of a country. A typical example is a country attempting to convey the impression that future hostile outbreaks are the fault of another nation while the country is preparing for an attack. For instance, a country increases the strength of its armed forces or gets advanced weapons systems with the stated intention of "defending itself from a hostile neighboring country."

Content Categories. Content categories are classifications of the propaganda being analyzed. Content categories are used in both objective and subjective analyses. PSYOP personnel can add new categories as needed and change the definition of old categories to fit circumstances. The general content categories are subject matter, direction, values, and method.

- Subject matter. This category is the most general in nature and answers the elementary question, "What is the subject of the communication?" This

category is used to determine the relative emphasis the opponent gives to different topics in a sample of propaganda.

- **Direction.** This category determines the “slant” of the propaganda by finding the ratio of favorable to unfavorable, or pro to con, or cohesive to divisive. Using this category, the analyst can determine the attitude of a source toward a given topic.
- **Values.** This category is concerned with the aims or desires of people. It includes such things as money, love, social position, career advancement, health, and education. From these categories, comparative attitudes or moral questions can be determined.
- **Method.** This category is concerned with the techniques or “tricks of the trade” used by the source. These techniques are discussed in Figure 12-1, pages 12-3 and 12-4.

Conclusions to Content Analysis. The final step in content analysis is to come to a conclusion. The conclusion includes such matters as comparative attitudes or predictions of future actions.

Audience Analysis. Audience analysis involves studying the total audience reached by the propaganda. It determines the reasons a particular audience was selected and the rationale for a particular line of persuasion.

Purpose of Audience Analysis. By hypothesizing the attitudes and conditions of the target audience as viewed by the propaganda source, the analyst determines the target of the message and examines its characteristics. The purpose of audience analysis is to determine—

- Conditions and attitudes affecting the target audience.
- The strategy used by the propaganda source.
- Specific target audiences selected by the source.
- Vulnerabilities that can be exploited.

Audience Analysis Groups. An essential part of audience analysis is identifying the source’s target. These targets range from broad categories, such as a nation of people, to specific categories, such as a rifle platoon. Audiences can also be classified based on income, nationality, geography, ethnicity, political preferences, religion, race, social class, caste, and other factors. Audience analysis identifies four major classifications of audiences: apparent, ultimate, intermediate, and unintended. Refer to Chapter 6 for classification and description of audiences.

Conclusions to Audience Analysis. The target audience is analyzed by description, location, size, background (political, religious, economic, ethnic), and social class. The analyst should identify as many types of audiences as possible. He should find out why and how each target audience is being used. He should also list the conditions and attitudes of each audience involved in the communication process. Once the analyst positively determines his ultimate audience, he must justify his conclusions.

Media Analysis. Media analysis determines why a dissemination method was chosen, what media capabilities the opponent has, and how consistent the message

content was. Source, content, and audience all affect the choice of media to send propaganda. Source analysis may show that the choice of media was based on the availability of a particular medium. Content analysis may reveal that certain characteristics of the medium would further propaganda objectives; therefore, that medium is selected. Audience analysis may show that a particular medium was selected because of the estimate of conditions and attitudes of the ultimate audience. PSYOP personnel may find the information needed to conduct media analysis in the records of previous propaganda efforts directed at a specific audience within the target area. This knowledge may enable the analyst to reinforce or reject his original conclusions on the target audience the opponent was trying to influence.

Factors in Media Analysis. Messages can be received through audio, visual, and audiovisual means. In addition, the following factors should be considered when conducting media analysis:

- Frequency refers to how often a medium is disseminated. Newspapers or magazines may be daily, weekly, or monthly. Radio or television may be daily, weekly, hourly, morning, or evening broadcasts.
- Placement is the position of the propaganda within a medium. Some examples are lead stories, feature articles, or placement in the economic or community section of a newspaper.
- Place of origin can be openly acknowledged or inferred. The origin of electronic media may be pinpointed by direction finding. The origin of other media may be harder to find.
- Technical characteristics can be classified according to frequencies or channels, modulation, signal strength, or retransmission identification. Printed material is characterized by number of pages, quality of paper, and print quality. Another classification of visual and audiovisual media is color or black and white.
- Method of dissemination determines how media are classified. Loudspeakers can be stationary, vehicle-mounted, or backpacked. Leaflets may be delivered by hand, aircraft, balloons, artillery bombs, or sea floats.

Types of Transmission Modes. PSYOP personnel should also consider transmission modes when conducting media analysis. Transmission modes may be overt or covert. Overt transmissions include openly delivered posters, leaflets, or broadcasts originating from openly acknowledged transmission stations. Covert transmissions include broadcasts originating from clandestine transmission stations and printed media surreptitiously delivered.

Conclusions to Media Analysis. Disseminated propaganda can also show enemy weaknesses. Propaganda printed on inferior grades of paper may indicate supply shortages. Weak broadcasting signals, interrupted programs, poor program production, or too few operating stations may suggest a lack of communications equipment, facilities, supplies, and trained personnel.

Effects Analysis. PSYOP personnel conduct effects analysis to determine the overall results of opponent propaganda. For instance, results may include the

specific effects of the propaganda on the target audience and the reasons it was effective, partially effective, or totally ineffective. (See Figure 12-1, pages 12-3 and 12-4). PSYOP personnel must understand these effects so they may develop PSYOP themes to counter them. In effects analysis, PSYOP personnel determine propaganda effectiveness by studying four general types of evidence responsive actions, participant reports, observer commentaries, and indirect indicators. These types of evidence are discussed in Chapter 11.

Advising

PSYOP personnel advise the supported commander and coordinating staff of the current situation regarding the use or anticipated use of opponent propaganda in the AO. This task also includes advice on available options for use of counterpropaganda based on—

- Propaganda analysis.
- Current intelligence.
- Planning considerations listed in the section on counterpropaganda.

Counterpropaganda Measures

Part of the challenge of counterpropaganda is to decide when to conduct a counterpropaganda program, if at all. Specific measures used to prevent or counter opponent propaganda depend on a variety of conditions and indicators. Analysts get some indications through propaganda analysis. Based on the PSYOP unit's advice, the supported commander will decide when to use counterpropaganda measures. Counterpropaganda includes preventive action, counteraction, and rumor control.

Preventive Action

Preventive action takes the form of propaganda awareness programs that inform and expose military (U.S. and friendly troops) and friendly populations to the nature of opponent propaganda. Generally, analysts develop information programs for military and civilian populations. Exposure programs are developed for military personnel. The programs help them understand their vulnerability to propaganda. As part of these programs, military personnel see magazine articles, receive training at service schools, and hear briefings about the propaganda themes most likely to be used against them. Friendly civilian populations see PSYOP products designed to inform them of opponent propaganda themes that may be used against them.

Preventive Action Components. Preventive action has several components. These components include command information, information articles, institution, exposure, and civilian information.

Command Information Component. This component consists of a series of briefings covering major propaganda themes. These briefings are self-contained packages designed to be given as part of a unit's regular training program.

Information Articles Component. This component consists of approved articles written for military magazines. The component provides information that will increase the soldiers' survivability on the battlefield. These articles generate interest in PSYOP and encourage input from the field.

Institution Component. This component contains exportable training materials, such as outlines and other training aids. The content of this component will expand the material contained in the information articles component.

Exposure Component This component includes scenarios to be used during field and command post exercises. The component introduces units to realistic PSYOP. Scenarios include leaflets, posters, and radio and loudspeaker broadcasts. Radio and loudspeaker broadcast material includes scripts of the messages to be used during exercises. The scenarios use opponent's probable propaganda themes. They are designed to be used by personnel with little or no PSYOP training.

Civilian Information Component. This component consists of PSYOP products developed by the supporting PSYOP unit. It covers information on opponent propaganda themes put out to the civilian populace.

Opponent Propaganda Themes. Five specific themes are outlined in awareness programs. These themes are used to exploit the psychological soft spots created by an individual's needs, goals, fears, and worries. These themes include officer-enlisted relationship, fear of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) warfare, fear of death and mutilation, racial differences, and noncombatant evacuation.

Officer-Enlisted Relationship. This theme attempts to cause animosity or dissension among members of the armed forces based on inequality of pay and benefits. It also focuses on maltreatment of lower-ranking service members by the officer corps. This theme, when effective, greatly reduces unit effectiveness and readiness by damaging morale, discipline, and esprit de corps.

Fear of NBC Warfare. This theme focuses on the horrible aspects of NBC warfare and attempts to promote a feeling of hopelessness and doom. Graphic photos, films, and written materials heighten this awareness and generate fear and panic.

Fear of Death and Mutilation. This theme continues to be used frequently throughout the world because it creates or promotes fear and panic in the target audience. It may lead civilians to believe they will be tortured or killed if they support the opposition.

Racial Differences. This theme attempts to create mistrust and suspicion among the different races within the target audience. A major point addressed is the unfair treatment of the target audience in the past or present, such as slavery or genocide. It attempts to focus on major differences and prejudices (real or fabricated) to weaken cohesiveness and cause animosity and fear. For example, Vietnamese captors often used this theme against American black captives. They wanted the captives to feel that they were suffering for the white man just as their ancestors had as slaves. This technique was used in the attempt to weaken or destroy cohesion and solidarity with white captives.

Noncombatant Evacuation. This theme is used to persuade audiences they should move to a safe area where they can be protected by an armed force. A government often uses this technique to separate an insurgent force from the civilian populace and to deny the insurgents logistical and intelligence support.

Counteraction

Counteraction is any measure that PSYOP units use to reduce or neutralize the effects of opponent propaganda. It maintains the psychological initiative and keeps the opponent reacting. Often, especially in combat, the most effective counteraction is to ignore certain opponent propaganda activities and continue with other active PSYOP campaigns.

Counteraction Measures. PSYOP units may counter opponent propaganda in many ways. The most important way is for friendly forces to establish clear political goals and to ensure they are understood by the public. The specific measures taken under counteraction depend on the intensity and the effectiveness of opponent propaganda in the AO.

An intense level of opponent propaganda often characterizes operations in a military operation short of war. The authority to access and employ mass communications media limits the ability to effectively counter opponent propaganda. PSYOP personnel must remember that besides mission limitations, the resources available will impact on the decision of how to employ counteraction.

During war, counteraction requirements may be initially high. These requirements are based on anticipated opponent propaganda at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels targeting both U.S. soldiers and foreign population groups. As the conflict lengthens, requirements for counteraction at the tactical level generally decrease in relation to exploitation missions, while remaining constant at the military strategic level.

Counteraction Planning Considerations. During counteraction planning, analysts must study the planning considerations before conducting the program. The program should be employed only after all the following considerations have been thoroughly studied:

- What type of useful intelligence was gathered during propaganda analysis? Can this intelligence be used to determine the type of counteraction program?
- What is the current and potential impact of the opponent propaganda?
- What target vulnerabilities, susceptibilities, and counteraction objectives were identified by target audience analysis?
- Are sufficient time, personnel, and resources available to put together an effective, timely counteraction program?
- Will a specific counteraction program help or hinder ongoing PSYOP programs?
- Will the counteraction program bring unwanted publicity to the opponent PSYOP campaign?
- What is the most appropriate counteraction technique for the particular situation?

- Is the counteraction program going to be carried out quickly to prevent the target audience from forming opinions based on the content of opponent PSYOP materials?
- What is the probability of counteraction program success?

Counteraction Techniques. PSYOP personnel should use counteraction techniques only after all factors have been thoroughly studied. These techniques include direct refutation, indirect refutation, diversion, silence, restrictive measures, imitative deception, conditioning, forestalling, and minimization.

Direct Refutation. This technique is a point-for-point rebuttal of opponent propaganda charges. PSYOP personnel use it when they know the opponent's message can be proved completely wrong. The refutation should be credible to the target audience. It should be circulated as widely and quickly as possible while getting the true information to the target audience before the original message has a chance to do any lasting damage. One drawback PSYOP units encounter when they use this method is that it may give added publicity, strength, and possible credibility to opponent messages by repeating them. This aggressive technique also attracts attention.

Indirect Refutation. This technique involves the introduction of a new set of relevant themes that refute opponent propaganda by indirect means. These indirect means include implication and insinuation. Indirect refutation challenges the credibility of opponent propaganda. The advantage of this technique is that it does not reinforce or spread opponent propaganda as readily as direct refutation. An example of this method would be to discredit the integrity of the sponsor or a prominent member of the opposition by damaging his credibility. This method serves to weaken the sponsor's message.

Diversion. In this technique, PSYOP units try to overshadow the content of the opponent message by presenting a theme that draws more attention or creates greater concern from the audience. This diverts the audience's attention from the opponent message and focuses its attention on the friendly message.

Silence. This technique implies that no response is necessary to counter the propaganda. It denies feedback since the opponent message is not further publicized. This technique should be used when counteraction is dangerous or the effect uncertain. Before selecting this method, the effect of silence on the target audience must be analyzed. This technique is often used in counteraction because it avoids giving the opponent message publicity and supplying the opponent with feedback.

A statement made when using this technique is, "The charges are so absurd they don't warrant a response." The effects of this technique are measured through intelligence feedback.

Restrictive Measures. This technique uses measures that deny the target audience access to propaganda. These actions may call attention to the propaganda and encourage the target audience to obtain, read, or listen to the information covertly. Restrictive measures are never completely effective because enforced isolation of the target audience is impossible. Restrictive measures are not normally

recommended. This technique has been used extensively in repressive governments restricting the flow of news and information to the populace.

Imitative Deception. This technique involves changing propaganda to decrease its edibility and effect. Imitative deception is closely associated with black propaganda and covert and deception operations. Because this technique can cause the user to lose credibility, it is exploited infrequently. The technique usually involves physically altering the propaganda product, such as physically altering a leaflet or radio broadcast.

Conditioning. This technique sets up education and information programs that condition the target audience and reduce its susceptibility to influence by opponent propaganda. It prepares the audience for events that are occurring or will occur—for example, the introduction of armed forces into an area to establish order.

Forestalling. This technique anticipates potential opponent propaganda. It keeps the opponent from using situations by bringing them before the audience first. To use this technique effectively, PSYOP personnel must know how the opponent will react when he becomes aware of the situation. Using this technique also counteracts subjects potentially exploitable by opponent propaganda before the opponent seizes them for his own purposes. This technique allows PSYOP personnel to conduct preemptive measures to reduce the effects of the anticipated opponent propaganda.

Minimization. This technique involves acknowledging propaganda but reemphasizing the content of the material. It is used whenever PSYOP personnel cannot refute, discredit, or remain silent on a matter or when they want to preserve their credibility. When using minimization, PSYOP personnel must remember that acknowledging opponent propaganda without effectively reemphasizing the content can give the appearance the United States accepts the propaganda as true. Minimization can be applied in three ways:

- It can emphasize aspects of the propaganda material that are favorable to the target audience.
- It can insinuate that the whole story cannot be told now, suggesting that the full facts will prove the propaganda false or at least inaccurate.
- It can give brief attention to the subject to maintain credibility in its most vital aspects and then drop the subject.

Rumor Control

PSYOP personnel can counter damaging rumors by educating the populace to regard all rumors as contemptible, untrustworthy, and inspired by the opposition. Rumors may also be countered by furnishing the audience with factual information about all matters of public concern. This technique is related to the civilian information component of preventive action. The difference is that this technique is used after opponent propaganda has been disseminated.

Summary

Propaganda analysis and counterpropaganda involve five major tasks: collection, processing, propaganda analysis, advising, and counterpropaganda. A continuous

need exists for propaganda analysis in peacetime and in all regions where U.S. interests are challenged. Propaganda analysis is used to obtain intelligence from opponent propaganda that can be used to produce U.S. PSYOP products or in developing counterpropaganda programs. Once propaganda analysis is completed and counterpropaganda has been considered, the PSYOP unit can advise the supported commander of the options available to prevent success or to counter opponent propaganda.