INFORMATION INTERVENTION: UNTAC AS A MODEL FOR PEACEKEEPING INFORMATION OPERATIONS

BY
Geoffrey Cain

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL COMPLETION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
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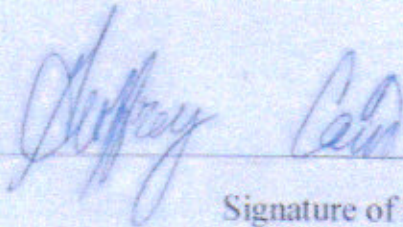UNTAC as a Model for Peacekeeping Information Operations

A Thesis

by

Geoffrey Cain

United States

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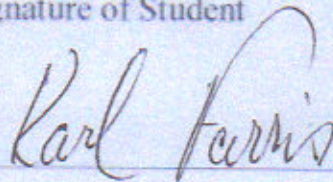The Certificate of Training in United Nations Peace Support Operations

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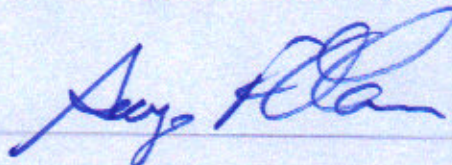
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"Information is the oxygen of the modern age. It seeps through the walls topped by barbed wire. It wafts across the electrified borders. … The Goliath of totalitarianism will be brought down by the David of the microchip."

Ronald Reagan

Fortieth President of the United States of America, 1981–1989

Addressing the Guildhall in London

June 14, 1989

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I. Abstract

As peacekeeping operations become more ethically complex and intrusive in precarious environments such as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the need for assertive "information operations" to gain public support behind missions is becoming ever more vital to success. Yet peacekeeping information operations remain underutilized, scantly understood, and poorly funded among policymakers. In the past two decades, well planned and strategically targeted information campaigns have swiftly garnered support around peacekeeping operations and have helped stabilize volatile political situations. This paper argues that UN mission leaders should model information operations after that of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, which lasted from 1992 to 1993 and had a mandate to directly administer state institutions, including organizing the first free and fair elections in the country. UNTAC's Information Division broadcasted a popular radio program, Radio UNTAC, and espoused intervention in political "hate media." It also imparted Cambodia with a flourishing independent press and contributed to a high voter turn-out despite threats of violence.

Key words: Cambodia, UNTAC, Information Operations, Hate Media, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo

II.   Glossary of Acronyms

AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia, a peacekeeping force deployed in 2007 and still active.

AU: African Union, a regional bloc consisting of 53 African states.

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional bloc of governments.

BLDP: Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party, a minor party in the 1993 election.

CGDK: Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, a three-faction resistance against the Phnom Penh government formed in 1982.

CPP: Cambodian People's Party, the incumbent political party in the 1993 election.

DPI: Department of Public Information, a New York-based UN department that oversees public information activities.

DPKO: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a New York-based UN department that oversees all operational aspects of peacekeeping. Administrative and Logistical support for peacekeeping is overseen by the Department of Field Support (DFS).

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country in central Africa, formerly Zaire.

FUNCINPEC: Royalist party. French acronym means "National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia."

INFO/ED (Info/ED): The Information/Education Division of UNTAC, which oversaw information operations.

Khmer: the predominant ethnic group in Cambodia, accounting for approximately 90% of the people in the country. They speak the Khmer language, which is part of the larger Mon-Khmer language family in Southeast Asia.

MONUC: French acronym that means Mission of the United Nations Organisation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Deployed in 1999 and still active, though renamed in 2010.

MONUSCO: French acronym that means United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Renamed in 2010 from MONUC.

NGO: Non-governmental organization

PRK: People's Republic of Kampuchea, the country's name from 1979 to 1989.

RFA: Radio Free Asia, a non-profit radio station that broadcasts news throughout Asia.

SOC: State of Cambodia, the country's name from 1989 to 1993.

SPK: Sapordomean Kampuchea, a state press agency in the 1980s.

SRSG: Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the senior leadership position in most multi-component peacekeeping operations. They are generally civilians and are responsible for leading and coordinating all mission components. However, the mission's military component Force Commander, while under the SRSG, exercises operational control of the assigned multi-national military units.

UNAMIC: United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia, a precursor in 1992 to UNTAC.

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme, a body under the Economic and Social Council that coordinates development projects in poor countries.

UNTAG: United Nations Transition Assistance Group, a peacekeeping operation deployed in Namibia from 1989 to 1990.

UNTAC: United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, a multifunctional peacekeeping operation deployed from March 1992 to September 1993.

VOA: Voice of America, the official international television and radio broadcasting service of the US government.

III.   Introduction

After the Cold War ended in 1991, a new style of multifunctional, "transitional" peacekeeping operations in countries like Cambodia and Namibia began relying on large information campaigns as a tool of soft power. Because peacekeeping forces during this period stepped beyond their traditional role acting as neutral military forces and observers to also administer elections, the UN needed to convince local people that they could vote without fear of retribution. It resorted to information operations that reached large swathes of populations and took control of local partisan-based news broadcasting. UN information officers created expansive radio, television and leaflet campaigns, and sent "mobile information teams" around these countries to educate people about voting.

One highly successful peacekeeping information project was in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) from March 1992 to September 1993, which had a wide-reaching protectorate mandate to oversee the existing Cambodian civil administration, hold general elections, and enforce laws in the country. Unlike Cold War-era peacekeeping operations, UNTAC sought to completely transform the Soviet-dominated, one-party dictatorship of the 1980s into a self-governing democracy within 18 months. It was the largest and most expensive peacekeeping operation at the time, costing $2 billion and consisting of 23,000 military and civilian personnel.[1] As part of the UN's new strategy to accomplish its electoral goals, officials announced early on that information operations would be a centerpiece in the mission.

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[1] Benny Widyono, *Dancing in the Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations in Cambodia* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

UNTAC arrived directly after 17 years of genocide and civil war, causing many Cambodians to become skeptical about the UN's and Cambodian government's ability to bring about civil rights, a responsible press, and a multi-party democracy. In some sense, they were correct: UNTAC did not bring lasting peace to Cambodia primarily because it failed to disarm warring factions in the countryside. But it did leave behind a valuable peacekeeping lesson: the success of its Information/Education Division (Info/Ed), which used information operations to parlay anti-UN skepticism and create a more transparent and trustworthy election. Tommy Koh, an ambassador-at-large for the government of Singapore and law professor at the National University of Singapore, later said that the election was one of the most successful aspects of UNTAC.[2]

Info/Ed's effectiveness owes to its wide scope, encouragement of local Cambodians to submit comments anonymously, comprehendible and flat broadcasting tone, and intervention against local propaganda press. These tactics showed Cambodians that they could build a nonpartisan and democratic media environment despite the hostilities between four factions. Outreach teams created thousands of banners, billboards, radio plays, and even television soap operas to encourage Cambodians to register to vote. In rural villages, electricity was limited, leading UNTAC to deploy battery-powered TV sets that played cassette recordings about the election process. Campaigns like these became immensely popular in the power-starved countryside. The important aspect of these informational programs was that they espoused average Cambodians' ability to comprehend their voting choices, focusing on the notion that they could vote secretly and without fear of retribution. Information officers took this approach while also realizing that a large portion of the population was illiterate and could not read the instructions or party names

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[2] Roland Eng, 'Creating Local-Level Stability and Empowerment in Cambodia' in Kevin M. Cahill (ed.), *Human Security for All: A Tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), pp. 106-125.

on the ballots. Parties had to prominently display their symbols, rather than only their written party names on the ballots.

In May 1993, 90 percent of registered voters, or 4.2 million people, turned out for a largely peaceful and transparent election over five days—a pleasant surprise because factional fighting had renewed between the Khmer Rouge and the government, bringing into question the safe and secure public security environment needed for the election and even threatening to unravel the peace process. Among the two largest contenders in the race, the royalist party (FUNCINPEC) took 45.5 percent of the vote, and the incumbent socialist party (Cambodian People's Party, CPP) took 38.2 percent. They formed a coalition government because the new constitution required a 50 percent majority vote to take power.[3]

The remarkably calm vote transpired during a combustible period: before and after the election, various factions had threatened to commit violence, lead secessions, and reportedly even attack UNTAC buildings if results were announced too soon or not re-counted. With the exception of the Khmer Rouge (who had withdrawn from the peace process), UNTAC and the larger political parties managed to hold together a coherent system of campaigning and debate leading up to the election. UNTAC's Info/Ed Division – which had already established strong reporting credibility among Cambodians – helped keep a lid on a volatile situation, because it continued to bombard the population with flat, credible and nonpartisan messages.

Despite UNTAC's achievement, peacekeeping practitioners today often overlook information operations, especially in multifunctional efforts that require winning over public support, establishing independent media and administering elections. These efforts usually face shortages

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[3] John Tully, *A Short History of Cambodia* (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2005).

of equipment, planning, training and personnel, and are often improvised with little support from UN headquarters in New York, where little staff proponency exists for information operations. This is mostly because of a lack of recognition and understanding of information operations, which policymakers often look down on as mere public relations or "PR," and the fact that the current generation of peacekeepers has largely forgotten the successes of UNTAC that took place nearly 20 years ago. Despite the amount of time that has passed and the advances in media and technology that have become mainstream in developed countries, the realities of information operations in post-conflict countries remain the same decades later, relying heavily on radio and anti-hate messages to reach low-literate populations; the lessons of UNTAC are therefore just as relevant today as they were in 1993. I argue that during the mission planning process at UN headquarters and during operations in the field, the mission's leaders should model information operations after the UNTAC Info/Ed campaign, given its effectiveness at quickly mobilizing voting populations and intervening in often hateful, partisan press in post-conflict environments.

IV.   Cambodia and UNTAC: Overview

From 1975 to 1979, the ruthless Khmer Rouge regime sought to turn Cambodia (then named Democratic Kampuchea, DK) into a Maoist agrarian paradise, leading to the deaths of as many as 1.7 million people from execution, disease, starvation and overwork. The casualties comprised nearly a quarter of the population, a period known in popular culture as "The Killing Fields." In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia in response to recurrent border skirmishes and ousted the Khmer Rouge from the capital, Phnom Penh.

That year Vietnam set up its own socialist government in Cambodia, renaming it the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). About 500,000 refugees fled the country following the Vietnamese invasion. Of that number, 350,000 ended up living in refugee camps at the Thai-Cambodian border. For the next 12 years, a coalition of three rebel factions loyal to the Khmer Rouge, to Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and to Western countries (these three rebel factions were collectively known as the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, CGDK) waged civil war from their bases in Thailand. Policymakers and the press referred to the quandary as the "Cambodia problem," for which UNTAC would eventually seek a solution.

Awkward and unfamiliar Cold War alliances backed each side, turning the conflict into a "proxy war" consisting of regional and Western powers. China, the US, and the Association for South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) supported the CGDK resistance coalition, whereas the Soviet Union and Vietnam supported the PRK regime in Phnom Penh. In the 1980s the PRK faced the herculean task of establishing legitimacy during a time of extreme poverty in Cambodia and dominance by its reviled neighbor Vietnam. Cambodia depended heavily on that country for military materiel and advice, and on the Soviet bloc for donor aid. The situation was compounded by Western and ASEAN countries' trade and aid sanctions, and their allowance of the Khmer Rouge to occupy the Cambodia seat at the UN, and to coordinate attacks into Cambodia from refugee camps inside Thailand. These deep divisions and the lengthy civil conflict imparted a pragmatic and non-ideological mindset on PRK leaders and the resistance – setting the platform for their opportunistic maneuverings that would become a challenge to UNTAC's mandate.

The four sides entered into peace negotiations in 1988. In 1989, right after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Vietnam-backed Cambodian government changed its name to the more neutral-

sounding State of Cambodia (SOC), and Vietnamese occupation forces finished their steady

withdrawal of the country. By then Cambodia had liberalized its markets and legalized the

private ownership of land. The dissolution of the Soviet Union proved to be the main tipping

point for Cambodia, because it deprived the country of aid and subsidies from the Soviet bloc

and from Vietnam, a communist neighbor that was was facing its own dearth of Soviet

subsidies.[4]

Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja, two professors of development studies at the University of

Gothenberg in Sweden, suggest two reasons for Cambodia's sudden move from conflict to peace

talks. First, the end of regional Cold War alliances allowed the competing interests in the UN

Security Council to agree on a settlement that would include all four warring parties, including

the genocidal Khmer Rouge. The Cambodian peace process was one of a growing number of

multi-national interventions in developing countries that had fallen into civil conflict during the

Cold War. Second, as the Harvard University political scientist Samuel Huntington argued, the

world witnessed a spike in the global demand for democratization called the "Third Wave" of

democracy. The victorious powers of the Cold War found democracy to be the most acceptable

form of government, and on this notion they created stipulations to disbursing donor aid and

diplomatic recognition.[5]

On October 23, 1991 in Paris, Cambodia and 18 other countries countries signed "The

Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict," known in

shorthand as the Paris Peace Agreement. The agreement stipulated that all parties would disarm

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[4] David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008).

[5] Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja, 'Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society?' in Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja (eds.), *Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2009), pp. 1-30.

and observe a cease-fire, and that the UN Security Council would establish a multi-component

peacekeeping force in Cambodia to help Cambodia transition from civil conflict to attain a freely

elected government that could attain diplomatic recognition from most countries. UNTAC was to

be responsible for the entire electoral process – from writing the electoral law to validating the

vote count – and was to take over many of the country's administrative and information offices

to ensure a neutral political environment in the transitional period leading up to the elections.[6]

That same month, the UN deployed a preparatory force of 116 military observers in the UN

Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) to help maintain the cease-fire, while the main body

of UNTAC components was being recruited and organized for deployment.

By March 15, 1992, the main body of UNTAC officials arrived, led by the Head of Mission and

the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Yasushi Akashi of Japan, and the military

component's Force Commander, Lieutenant-General John Sanderson of Australia. The larger

UNTAC force continued deploying throughout the next few months. When they fully established

UNTAC, the operation was organized into seven major functional components: military, civilian

police, electoral, human rights, rehabilitation, repatriation, and civil administration. Overall, the

operation consisted of three phases: deploying and establishing UNTAC's presence in Cambodia,

establishing a safe and secure environment by disarming and demobilizing the military elements

of the parties, and then overseeing the electoral process. It was characteristic of this era of

multinational interventions that the UN poured enormous resources into conducting the election,

upon which it measured UNTAC's success as a whole. The UN recognized information

operations in their support role as a foundation to reaching this objective.

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[6] Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict,
http://untreaty.un.org/unts/120001_144071/2/2/00000971.pdf, accessed August 18, 2010.

For the first six months, the situation ran somewhat smoothly. The four parties appeared to be disarming and relations were generally stable between UNTAC and factional officials. Almost mid-way through UNTAC's mandate, however, the security situation deteriorated when in June 1992 the Khmer Rouge suddenly withdrew from the peace process. The schism created a daunting specter for the SOC faction: UN peacekeepers had successfully disarmed local SOC militias, but had failed to disarm an uncooperative and renegade Khmer Rouge that was now committing violence in parts of the countryside. The Maoist group was swiftly gaining territories, usually initiated through artillery attacks in the northwestern provinces of Kampong Thom, Siem Reap and Battambang. Reports had also surfaced about race-related killings of ethnic Vietnamese people inside Cambodia. Some were carried out by sympathizers of the anti-Vietnamese Khmer Rouge. Other murders appeared random and without political reason, possibly a result of bandits taking advantage of the oversupply of weapons from the civil war.[7]

Because the hostilities boiled over right after voter registration had opened in October 1992, many Cambodians felt insecure and skeptical about partaking in the elections. Rumors surfaced, for example, that polling stations contained secret cameras, and that the pencils for marking ballots contained radio beacons that would transmit voting choices to the parties.[8] Adding to their fears, the Head of Mission, Mr. Akashi, continued to seek a non-confrontational solution consisting of written and spoken declarations to dealing with the Khmer Rouge despite their

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[7] United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) – Background (Full Text), http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untacbackgr2.html, accessed June 20, 2010.

[8] John Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia' in Monroe E. Price and Mark Thompson (eds.), *Forging Peace: Intervention, Human Rights and the Management of Media Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 177-200.

stated and demonstrated unwillingness re-enter the peace process.[9] The SOC, fearful of the inroads being made by their opponent, began a radio campaign against the Khmer Rouge and UNTAC, claiming the peacekeepers could not be trusted to protect Cambodians. As the violence escalated, UNTAC assumed the power to arrest perpetrators in December 1992.

The situation continued to become more volatile as all four factions appeared to be turning against the UN protectorate that they had agreed to host. In April 1993, political party campaigning for the scheduled May election began. UNTAC stepped up its security, dispatching civilian police to monitor political rallies and to patrol voting stations. Yet the violence continued through that month, killing several UNTAC personnel and civilians. In the face of the attacks, however, a surprising 96 percent of the voting-age population registered for the May elections. The elections were carried out from May 23 to 28, with almost 90 percent of registered voters turning out.

The electoral count indicated that royalist party, FUNCINPEC, received 45.5 percent of the vote, the CPP received 38.2 percent, the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) took 3.8 percent, and 17 other political parties won the remainder. Seats in the 120-member National Assembly, the lower house, are assigned by a proportional representation system. The count meant that FUNCINPEC won 58 seats, the CPP won 51, the BLDP won 10, and a fourth party, MOLINAKA, won 1.[10]

At first, UNTAC's gambit to continue with the electoral process in a questionable security environment looked like a success. Both FUNCINPEC and the CPP had endorsed the election

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[9] Macalister Brown and Joseph J. Zasloff, *Cambodia Confounds the Peacemakers, 1979-1998* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[10] United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) – Background (Full Text), accessed June 20, 2010.

results. After a week, though, the CPP alleged that voting irregularities had occurred at many polling stations, and requested that UNTAC hold a new election. After UNTAC refused to recount the votes, factions of the SOC in the eastern provinces of Kampong Cham, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng—roughly 40 percent of the country—declared they would secede from Cambodia. To stop a potential post-election slide into conflict or anarchy, the coalition government agreed to a fragile compromise whereby co-prime ministers from the two parties which had garnered most of the votes, Prince Norodom Ranarridh of FUNCINPEC and Hun Sen of the CPP, would rule side-by-side. The UN endorsed this compromise, declared the operation a success and formally withdrew in September 1993.

A moderately stable (though delicate) government and an independent press flourished in the post-UNTAC period of the mid-1990s. The co-prime ministers shared an uneasy power alliance until July 1997, when the CPP's Hun Sen launched a coup d'etat against FUNCINPEC's Ranarridh and ousted him from power.[11] Today Hun Sen remains the sole prime minister in what many scholars call a stable but corrupt hybrid government that includes characteristics of both dictatorship and democracy.[12] Sporadic fighting with the Khmer Rouge continued until 1998, when Pol Pot died and the group was disbanded. These two events – Hun Sen's coup and the failure by UNTAC to disarm the factions – have led many scholars to question the long-term effectiveness of UNTAC in post-conflict reconstruction and democratization.[13] Still, Info/Ed remains one of UNTAC's few successes, because it helped establish an independent press and popularized the Cambodian election model that both continue today.

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[11] Chandler, *A History of Cambodia.*

[12] Öjendal and Lilja, 'Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society?' pp. 1-30.

[13] *Ibid.*

V.   Introduction to Information Operations

Dan Lindley, a political science professor at the University of Notre Dame, defines information operations as the use of all media and forms of communications – anything from puppet shows to television programs – to support the mandate of a peacekeeping operation.[14] Karl Farris, former head of the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at the US Army War College, argues that the primary objectives of information operations are to "facilitate the deployment of the mission into the area of operations and then gain and maintain the support of target audiences for the work of the mission."[15]

Rather than being only "PR," information operations exist on a continuum between simple and complex. The most basic type of operation is press relations, in which a spokesperson releases information to reporters by speaking at conferences or publishing media advisories. On the other end of the continuum are large-scale "information intervention" campaigns. These substantive projects, of which some activities require authorization under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, can have mandates to monitor local propaganda groups (often referred to by practitioners as "hate media") and to counter-act them with fair, truthful and straightforward information, and in extreme cases to forcibly intervene to stop communications that threaten the mission.[16]

"Hate media" are powerful tools that in the past two decades have prompted international bodies to allocate more resources to information operations. In countries similar to Cambodia that have experienced civil war and low literacy rates, sensational and unfounded broadcasts have quickly

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[14] Dan Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 11, no. 4, April 2004, pp. 608-624.

[15] Karl Farris, lecture at the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS), Newport Naval Base, Rhode Island, 2010.

[16] Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', pp. 608-624.

mobilized seemingly neutral populations to commit atrocities, including genocide. In Rwanda in 1992 for example, two radio stations (Radio Rwanda and Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines) promoted the killings of the Tutsi minority south of the capital, Kigali. Responding to one message, Hutu civilians and paramilitary forces killed hundreds of Tutsi in that year. Following several more broadcasts and political events, more than 800,000 people died in Rwanda in 1994.[17]

A 2003 UN handbook on multidimensional peacekeeping operations suggests the basic tenets of effectively running information campaigns – and is the first UN doctrine to do so in recent history. It first acknowledges that "A peacekeeping operation may enjoy initial worldwide support, but without an effective and consistent public information campaign, support can quickly turn to apathy and even opposition." Countless polls and studies firmly back this assertion. In military interventions and wars – the most well-known example in the US being the Vietnam War – public favor usually starts out at a sufficient level but declines as a casualties rise and as victory appears unattainable.

The UN further notes that information campaigns must clearly explain the operation's mandate to the local population, to the local and international media, and to government and non-government donors. The UN should obtain the consent of all parties before engaging in the activities – making information operations no different than other sub-fields of peacekeeping in terms of legal and ethical considerations. A final concept, which former Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized, sought to protect the diplomatic process while claiming to work with the

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[17] Darryl Li, 'Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, March 2004, pp. 9-27.

media in an honest and timely manner. "Our media policy must … balance the need to be open and the need to respect confidentiality," he wrote in a 1999 memo to his heads of departments.[18]

The UN lists six public information objectives for peacekeeping operations:

1. Ensure the peacekeeping operation's mandate and responsibilities are fully and widely understood;

2. Promote all aspects of the work of the peacekeeping operation to the national and international community;

3. Implement a communications strategy that actively supports the peacekeeping operation's objectives;

4. Advance the peace process through the creation of timely and relevant "information products";

5. Defend and protect the peacekeeping operation from unjustified criticism and misinformation; and

6. Counter propaganda, false information and hate messages that are harmful to the objectives of the UN and peace process.

The handbook also suggests three "purposes" that should influence the formulation of any information strategy:

1. Identify the target audiences, such as local and international media, parties to the conflict, civil society groups and organizations, local opinion makers, key member states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and mission personnel;

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[18] *Handbook on UN Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations,*
http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/library/Handbook%20on%20UN%20PKOs.pdf, accessed June 23, 2010.

2. Identify and develop key messages that support mission priorities, and;

3. Identify the most appropriate medium to reach each target audience (radio, television, print, theatre, word of mouth, etc.)[19]

VI. Information Operations in UNTAC

Info/Ed in UNTAC built on the successes of a predecessor peacekeeping mission, the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia from 1989 to 1990. At the time, the concept of information operations was so new that Cedric Thornberry, chief of the UNTAG mission, reportedly asked his staff what an information campaign actually was.[20] Leading up to a UN-sponsored election in 1990, UNTAG used radio, television, pamphlets and speeches to educate voters about the purpose of its mission and dispel fears that the UN was not impartial. In Cambodia, the UN recognized early on that information would be a prime component of UNTAC. Tim Carney, the information adviser to the SRSG, stated this position early in 1992, and was the first person in peacekeeping history to hold a "chief of information" post.[21]

The 1993 election was successful also because of Info/Ed's tightly coordinated "information intervention" campaign. Information intervention is an "aggressive form of information-related action" first to provide counter-information that opposes harmful incitement, rumors or hate media, and in extreme circumstances to suppress or directly take control of the sources of that information.[22] This strategy is mostly practicable in conflict and post-conflict countries, with the

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Ingrid A. Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information: Caught in the Crossfire*, London: Frank Cass, 1999.

[21] Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', pp. 610.

[22] Mark Thompson, 'Defining Information Intervention: An Interview with Jamie Metzl' in Monroe E. Price and Mark Thompson (eds.), *Forging Peace: Intervention, Human Rights and the Management of Media Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 41-68.

intent of fostering trust towards the peacekeeping force, the elections, and other objectives. Information intervention has also been referred to in more moderate strategies such as "transformational journalism" and "peace broadcasting," related concepts in which the media step beyond their traditional reporting role typical of wealthy democracies, finding ways in post-conflict countries to open up and shape public political discussion.[23] All these concepts are applicable to developing countries where few non-partisan media outlets exist. Info/Ed accomplished information intervention in four ways in Cambodia:

- establishing an authoritative, neutral alternative to party-run outlets;

- monitoring programming in the existing media for defamatory or irresponsible coverage;

- establishing journalistic ethics; and

- encouraging the development of an independent media.[24]

Several more factors contributed to the success of Info/Ed. Judy Ledgerwood, a cultural anthropologist at Northern Illinois University and former UNTAC information officer, further argues that Info/Ed was successful because it advocated average Cambodians' ability to understand the choices offered to them. Rather than assume that the UN only needed to "educate" Cambodians about the voting process, the goal was to assuage their fears, and to convince them that their votes were secret and made a democratic impact.[25] Secondly, the UN did not have much media competition and could easily dominate the news flow: Cambodian

[23] Eng, 'Creating Local-Level Stability and Empowerment in Cambodia', pp. 121-122. Also Karol Jakubowicz, 'Keep the Essence, Change (Almost) Everything Else: Redefining PSB for the 21st century' in Inrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne (eds.), *Public Service Broadcasting in the Age of Globalization* (Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre and Nanyang Technological University, 2006), pp. 94-116.
[24] Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia', pp. 180-186.

[25] Judy L. Ledgerwood, 'UN Peacekeeping Missions: The Lessons from Cambodia', *Asia Pacific Issues: Analysis from the East-West Center*, no. 11, March 1994, pp. 1-11.

media were scarce in number, technically inferior, possessed a limited reach and were not credible.[26]

Info/Ed's success also rested on its high concentration of staff expertise, which few other UNTAC divisions possessed in large numbers. Many of its personnel were Cambodia specialists with backgrounds in anthropology, international relations, history and media. Its somewhat large staff consisted of 45 international personnel, 14 of whom spoke and read Khmer and had worked in the country before. Two anthropologists on the team, Judy Ledgerwood and John Marston, are now well-known Cambodia scholars. Tim Carney, head of the Info/Ed campaign, later reflected on the applicability of this important lesson to future peacekeeping operations, when he wrote, "A politically knowledgeable analytical element, best based in the SRSG's [Special Representative of the Secretary-General's] office, is indispensable to avoid elementary mistakes in dealing with the host culture, and ensuring real-time understanding of public positions in nations where UN languages are not widely used. UNTAC's SRSG, Akashi, learned this lesson in Cambodia. Later, when he was appointed Head of Mission in UNPROFOR, (the peacekeeping mission in the area of the former Yugoslavia) he "recruited a Yugoslav specialist to be a part of his staff," according to Tim Carney.[27]

Info/Ed consisted of three units: Production, Control and Analysis/Assessment. The Production Unit created distributional materials such as brochures, posters and its own radio program for the Cambodian public, trying to build trust in the election and in UNTAC. This unit can claim most of the successes of Info/Ed, particularly with its radio program, Radio UNTAC. Next, the

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[26] John Marston, 'Cambodian New Media in the UNTAC Period and After', in Steven Heder and Judy Ledgerwood (eds.), *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under United Nations Peace-keeping* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 208-222.

[27] Timothy Carney, 'UNTAC's Information/Education Programme' in Nassrine Azimi (ed.), *The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia: Debriefing and Lessons* (London: Kluwer Law International, 1995), p. 174.

Control Unit attempted to set up an independent media outside of the control of any political party, attempting to tame a wildly irresponsible and propagandist Khmer-language press. This unit was mildly successful and its triumphs primarily upheld the work of the Production Unit. Finally, the Analysis/Assessment Unit monitored and interpreted the local media – flagging stories that they deemed significant – and traveled around the country to gauge the opinions of Cambodians about political party and UNTAC information efforts.[28] Because the work of the Analysis/Assessment Unit played a supporting role to the other two units, this section will focus on the Control and Production Units.

Info/Ed faced a plethora of hindrances from the Cambodian media, mostly rooted in the socialist policies of the 1980s. The Paris Agreement stipulated that UNTAC would have direct control over information in the country – that is, it had the power to approve local press reports and political party propaganda before they were published. In practice, however, Info/Ed did not gain complete control over the media, because the division had few methods to enforce its mandate, and because the decade-long dominance of party interests in the press gave scarce wiggling room to Info/Ed.

Throughout the 1980s in Cambodia the party-run media was ensconced in the one-party socialist system and did not appear to be budging after UNTAC's operations commenced, mostly because of the deep divisions and stubborn mistrust between factions. From 1979 to 1992 the Phnom Penh government directly oversaw the news media in the capital, and the tripartite resistance countered with its own propaganda radio broadcasts and bulletins from Thailand and the Thai-Cambodian border. Even though aggressive censorship was rare in Phnom Penh, the Central

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[28] Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia', p. 180.

Committee of the CPP met every week with editors to discuss their goals and align them with the media. Editors also submitted sensitive political materials for approval by the Central Committee. For example, in 1990 a radio station asked the Committee whether it could begin broadcasting music by Sinn Sisamouth, a popular singer sometimes referred to as the Elvis Presley of Cambodia, because of his association with the anti-socialist regimes of the 1960s and early 1970s.

The stagnation of media freedoms also arose from the surfeit of foreign donor aid from communist countries. The SOC-dominated press had become economically and politically dependent on Vietnam and Soviet bloc states. Many journalists belonged to a Soviet-funded press association in the capital, and Vietnam regularly sent experts to train Cambodian reporters and editors. Plans were also in place to start a state news agency, Sapordomean Kampuchea (SPK), which would be the result of funding from various Soviet-bloc countries, though the station halted its broadcasts after the Soviet Union dissipated.

Even though Soviet influence on most of Cambodia had faded by the time UNTAC started, the former donor still made a lasting impact on the structure and laws of the media. The SOC continued to use the media as a party mouthpiece despite stipulations in the Paris Peace Agreement that separated the state and party. It accomplished this goal through three key actions. In 1991, the SOC reshuffled much of its staff between the Commission for Education and Propaganda and various ministries, to maintain influence over the country's information once Info/Ed assumed power. It also created a new Ministry of Information that oversaw the media, but its head, Dith Munty, retained his chairmanship of the Central Committee to ensure the CPP would retain direct control of the press. The National Assembly also passed a new media law in April that, despite the criticism of smaller parties, gave the SOC the power to severely restrict the

media. As a result, the SOC media had a strong editorial leaning in favor of the CPP, causing Cambodians to cast doubt on the power of Info/Ed to assume control over the government's information apparatus.[29]

VI-A   The Production Unit: Espousing average Cambodians

The raucous media situation threw many roadblocks in front of the election, because few people could make politically informed decisions without access to impartial and truthful information. Judy Ledgerwood, an information officer in the Production Unit, more importantly noted, "Cambodians knew very well that they had a choice [to vote]; the question in their minds was whether or not they could vote their conscience without retaliation." Info/Ed's strategy, she added, was to champion the average Cambodian's ability to comprehend their range of choices in the election.[30] This mindset formed the basis of the Production Unit, where the division achieved the bulk of its successes.

Like in most post-conflict countries, few Cambodians in the countryside had access to television, and the literacy rate was low, making print media unviable. Radios were cheap and abundant and were therefore the most effective way to reach the population. The Production Unit started its own radio station, Radio UNTAC, which later turned out to be one of UNTAC's main triumphs. Every week Radio UNTAC aired round-table discussions between political parties, giving each one an equal access to discuss their policies and give a "right of response" to other parties. This ensured that all the parties could reach the population before the election in a transparent and fair

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[29] *Ibid.,* 178-179.

[30] Ledgerwood, 'UN Peacekeeping Missions: The Lessons from Cambodia', p. 4.

manner. During the vote count, Radio UNTAC reported the results live, adding to the legitimacy and transparency of the election.

In addition to its wide appeal, Radio UNTAC aired broad news coverage that reached large portions of the countryside, areas that previously were in range of only a handful of party-dominated radio programs. The quality and scope of Radio UNTAC's equipment allowed it to transcend these limitations. The total cost of the radio equipment at the studio, plus its installation and maintenance, was $3.1 million. UNTAC also set up three relay stations in Siem Reap, Stung Treng and Sihanoukville, ensuring that it reached even the remotest regions of the country. UNTAC distributed free radios to countryside Cambodians. Japan was the main donor for the project, handing over 348,000 radios, 849,000 batteries and 1,000 radio cassette recorders. Radio UNTAC became immensely popular within months, measured in the enormous number of letters to the station making comments and requesting songs.

Cambodians' excitement over Radio UNTAC was in part because it broadcasted diverse forms of music from around the world, rather than Cambodian songs that could be associated with sensitive political periods in Cambodian history. Broadcasting these pieces would undermine UNTAC's self-proclaimed neutrality. Zhou Shimei, the head of the program, later wrote, "Selection of music was very much left to the individual radio producer who very often would have to resort to whatever music tapes he/she had brought with him/her to Cambodia. The bias was obvious; one could always guess the nationality of the producer by the choice of music." One UNTAC information officer recalled seeing Cambodians enthused about the programming:

in once instance, she walked into a Buddhist pagoda, and found the monks listening to a Dave Brubeck jazz piece.[31]

The highly accessible programs showed Cambodians that the media could become a tool for democratic discussion and entertainment rather than propaganda. Radio UNTAC encouraged average people to submit their comments on the political situation, many of which were read on the air. Zhou noted that the station was bombarded with a potpourri of comments every week, and at the height of the election, it received 1,300 comments per day from listeners. In the previous decade, no authority had given Cambodians the power to express their opinions in such a straightforward, anonymous and publicly discursive manner.

The news reporting was also flat and neutral, covering the basics of events and not delving into political ideologies or analyses. Any language perceived as biased could be a detriment to the credibility of the operation. Radio UNTAC announcers referred to "the people" – a revolutionary-sounding term that could remind Cambodians of the Khmer Rouge genocide – as "the population."[32] However, while its language was neutral, Radio UNTAC still reported bluntly on human rights abuses and political intimidations, even go so far as to urge Cambodians to lie to intimidators about their voting plans – reasoning with them that their vote was secret anyway.[33] Firmness helped dispel the image of the UN as an impotent and blind organization, despite its inability to disarm all the factions. It further built the trust of Cambodians in the

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[31] Mei Zhou, *Radio UNTAC of Cambodia: Winning Ears, Hearts, and Minds*. (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1994).

[32] Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia', p. 187.

[33] Caroline Hughes. *UNTAC in Cambodia: The Impact on Human Rights* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1996).

election and the peace process, because it reported in the face of propaganda campaigns from party-run radio stations that portrayed UNTAC as incompetent.

The Production Unit espoused other projects to educate Cambodians about voting. It created and distributed a variety of Khmer-language videos, posters, information leaflets, flyers, banners, billboards and advertisements that were displayed in public. They repeatedly bombarded the public with messages claiming that UNTAC was a neutral force among the factions, and that Cambodians could trust UNTAC to keep their votes secret. One poster, for example, dispelled rumors that electronic chips had been planted on voting cards, which could be broadcasted to political parties so they could get revenge.[34]

When violence did occur, however, the information campaign did not give all Cambodians a sense of solace. Judy Ledgerwood recounts watching as UNTAC personnel dug up the body of a civil servant from a local government office. He was badly burned and appeared to have been tortured shortly before he died. A local villager told her that he was attacked because, as a vocal member of FUNCINPEC, a nearby SOC office could not trust him to hold political secrets about a legally questionable land sale. When Ledgerwood asked why he had been so brave to join FUNCINPEC, he responded bitterly that UNTAC said it would maintain a "neutral political environment."[35]

These problems reached a climax right after the election. During the counting period, Radio UNTAC broadcasted news that FUNCINPEC maintained a firm lead over the CPP. Officials

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[34] Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia', 186-190.

[35] Judy Ledgerwood, 'Patterns of CPP Political Repression and Violence During the UNTAC Period' in Steven Heder and Judy Ledgerwood (eds.), *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under United Nations Peace-keeping* (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1996) 114-133.

from the CPP complained that Info/Ed had released the results prematurely and in a manner biased to the other parties. Soon after an anonymous phone caller, and then a hand-written letter, said that the Radio UNTAC headquarters would be militarily attacked. UNTAC forces showed up to defend the post, but the attack never materialized. The situation, whether legitimate or a prank, did not reassure election workers and many Cambodians that the potential for civil war re-erupting had calmed down even after the voting was completed.[36]

Radio UNTAC stopped broadcasting in September 1993. But the station's listener-friendly, nonpartisan and flat format has provided the seeds of several Khmer-language advocacy radio programs today. When I was a consultant at Voice of Democracy Radio (VOD) in Phnom Penh in 2009, I noticed that the "round-table discussions" seemingly styled after those of Radio UNTAC had become ubiquitous across Cambodia as a standard format for several weekly radio shows. VOD's two larger competitors, Radio Free Asia (RFA) and Voice of America (VOA), had similar formats, although they were generally the same in every country where they broadcasted. When I asked the director, Pa Nguon Teang, about this correlation, he explained to me that as a young adult Radio UNTAC inspired him to create these democratic advocacy shows.[37]

IV-B. The Control Unit: Sweeping Intervention

The Control Unit exercised the Paris Agreement's mandate for control and supervision of the Cambodian media, using "information intervention" to tame the biased and defamatory Cambodian press. It was not as successful as the Production Unit – the unit that primarily drove

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[36] Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia', 186-190.

[37] Interview with Pa Nguon Teang, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. 4 Apr. 2009.

the high election turn-out – but rather played a support role to the work of Production. Overall it managed to gain a moderately strong hold on the Cambodian media and imparted it with better, although not international, journalistic standards. It also helped create a proliferation of independent press institutions in Cambodia that numbers more than 200 today.[38] The Control Unit did this by consulting local media outlets, urging them to implement reporting guidelines, and most importantly reading complaints aloud on the air to embarrass them and force them into cleaning up their coverage.

In the first few months of UNTAC, the Control Unit's attempts to conduct information intervention were mediocre, amounting to band-aid solutions to deep-seated problems. Its first solution was to draft a new media law, which later became a "Media Charter" – consisting of unenforceable guidelines – to counteract the new SOC media law. The Control Unit regularly issued the guidelines to Cambodian journalists at press clubs and conferences. It was not until 1993, the year of the election, that the Control Unit stepped up its information intervention campaign by using more assertive tactics against political parties.

Marston recalled that by that year, political parties increasingly aired defamatory and unfair news reports without first passing the information to Info/Ed for approval. Tim Carney started a campaign of written complaints to those groups, often read out loud on Radio UNTAC. The strategy worked temporarily in calming the fiery accusations, but in the end they had little effect because, unlike other divisions, Info/Ed could not back up its statements with force. Additionally, whenever Info/Ed ordered FUNCINPEC to stop broadcasting defamatory content, the party complained that UNTAC did not stop the SOC doing the same – so it continued broadcasting

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[38] Eng, 'Creating Local-Level Stability and Empowerment in Cambodia', p. 123.

those stories. The back-and-forth media spats escalated and the Control Unit appeared powerless to stop them.

It wasn't until early 1993 that the Cambodian media began to transform into a more plural and independent institution. In the months before the election, SOC media outlets became increasingly critical of Radio UNTAC for its perceived bias against them. Radio UNTAC regularly reported on human rights abuses that were attributed to figures within the CPP. The first qualm came during an UNTAC-enforced ban on all political reporting throughout the four days before the election. On the first day of the ban, *Koh Santepheap*, a CPP-leaning newspaper, published a false and damaging front-page report about FUNCINPEC. Timothy Carney read his complaint about the defamation on the air on Radio UNTAC. In response the newspaper published increasingly critical articles about the UN. The UN also fined two high-ranking SOC political figures, Prince Norodom Chakrapong and Khim Bo, for violations of the electoral law.[39]

In the end, however, the reading aloud of complaints, straightforward reporting on human rights violations, and popularity of Radio UNTAC forced Cambodian outlets to clean up their reporting. Marston later recalled the pressuring effect of the Control Unit, writing that "the fact that the media knew UNTAC was likely to complain about certain things probably limited abuses, if it did not eliminate them." After Radio UNTAC stopped broadcasting, Radio FUNCINPEC became the most popular station in Cambodia because of its live format and quality of music; SOC radio stations followed this model, taking on politically neutral names and focusing on entertainment rather than editorial slant. Marston notes that since the Control Unit finished its mandate, Cambodian media outlets have increasingly been attempting to implement new

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[39] Marston, 'Neutrality and the Negotiation of an Information Order in Cambodia', pp. 180-186.

approaches on neutrality. After the formation of the new Constitution and the re-coronation of Prince Sihanouk to king, media companies moved away from presenting individual political views to emphasizing their loyalty to the royal family. The broadcast media rarely ventured into controversial reports, though the print media often did (and felt the wrath of several government clampdowns on speech freedoms throughout the 1990s).[40]

VII. UN Information Operations Today. "Allergic" to Information?

Nearly 20 years later, the UN has inadequately applied the lessons of UNTAC's Info/Ed Division, though their efforts appear to be improving. Information divisions in peacekeeping operations today still face shortages of equipment, planning, training and personnel, and are often improvised and unprepared to deal with bureaucratic resistance from UN offices in New York and Geneva. Peacekeeping forces currently in countries such as Somalia have done little to engage local broadcasting environments to shape public opinions regarding African Union (AU) activities there. In 1996, only three years after UNTAC, the UN scholar Michael Doyle even said that the UN was "allergic" to information.[41]

Lindley attributes this reluctance to five factors. First, offices in New York often don't want to commit to large and potentially expensive campaigns that they still often view as "just PR." This keeps training efforts scant, with few specialists knowledgeable about setting up information offices, as well as planning logistics, budgeting and procurement for information programs.

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[40] Marston, 'Cambodian News Media in the UNTAC Period,' in Steven Heder and Judy Ledgerwood (eds.), *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under United Nations Peace-keeping* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 218-219.

[41] Quoted in Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', pp. 611.

Secondly, the UN does not have many standard operating procedures for running information campaigns, though it has published an increasing number of documents on this field in the past decade. Thirdly, the procurement and transfer of information equipment is inefficient, because it goes through two different UN entities with poor shipping procedures. In Liberia in 2003, for example, information officers could not find their main transmitter for seven weeks, because it was sitting at the port. Fourth, the large physical distance between a fielded peacekeeping mission in a host country, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Public Information (DPI) in New York, creates bureaucratic hindrances, such as a lack of focus from top officials in supporting information operations in peacekeeping missions.[42]

These shortages in funding, training and personnel lead to more serious problems when information interventions are played out on the ground. Without equipment, information officers can only reach certain portions of the population, and thus cannot inform all target populations about the UN's mandate, or dispel rumors from hate media. The lack of good cultural awareness training causes broadcasted and printed messages to be awkwardly worded, irrelevant or condescending towards local people. The lack of clear standard operating procedures means that information officers and spokesmen sometimes must improvise their efforts on tight deadlines and unclear expectations from their supervisors. One UN information consultant based in Phnom Penh told me that communications departments in the UN Development Program (UNDP) in Cambodia today remain "severely overworked."[43]

The fifth and possibly most significant problem facing information operations in peacekeeping deal with consent by host nations, who are often wary of the UN stripping down their

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[42] *Ibid*., 617-620.

[43] Interview with UN consultant who wished not to be named, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. 20 Jan. 2009.

sovereignty through propaganda. By UN doctrine, a peacekeeping force cannot be deployed without consent. For host nations, the prospect of the UN taking over and completely re-administering the flow of information – like in Cambodia – raises fears that they are actually being spied on. In many post-conflict countries, initiatives containing the word "information" carry this sort of connotation. Some newly established governments in Africa have even resisted basic UN fact-finding missions in the 1990s and 2000s.[44]

Increasingly, the messy reality on the ground requires peacekeepers to infringe on and sometimes consciously violate the core principles of consent, impartiality, and minimum use of force – especially in multidimensional peacekeeping operations that involve "remaking" countries.[45] In the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2009, UN peacekeepers and government forces conducted pre-emptive offensive military operations against Rwandan Hutu-led militias.[46] In Somalia, an AU peacekeeping mission known as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is seeking new rules of engagement that would allow it to more actively pursue al-Shabab, an insurgent group backed by al-Qaeda.[47] These are not easy tasks, and attaining public support through aggressive information intervention campaigns will be essential to success of these operations.

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[44] Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', pp. 620.

[45] Interview with Karl Farris, former head of Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, July 26, 2010.

[46] Human Rights Watch, '*You Will Be Punished': Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo*, http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87142/section/1, accessed July 15, 2010.

[47] Voice of America, 'Somalia's Backers Pledge More Support to Defeat Militants,' http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/africa/US-Official-More-Troops-Needed-in-Somalia-99244734.html, accessed on July 26, 2010.

In 2010, militant groups in Somalia have stepped up the intensity and sophistication of their media campaigns, requiring swift and overpowering information intervention by peacekeepers that has yet to be seen. An al-Shabab statement posted on Jihadist web forums on July 26, 2010 affirmed that "the media war waged by the *mujahideen* [militants] is now amidst one of the fiercest battles and most important in [the] war against the infidel Zio-Crusade."[48] Throughout 2010 militant Islamist forces have regularly attacked radio stations and seized equipment in Somalia, probably in attempts to shut down non-Islamist broadcasts and strengthen their own press-propaganda mouthpieces.[49]

In July 2010, Al-Shabab opened a television and radio station called al-Kataib, which releases broadcasts both on Internet forums and video websites, and through local radio and television outlets. In English and Arabic it broadcasts in gruesome depictions of Islamic militants "winning" battles against AU peacekeepers and, sometimes, dragging their charred bodies through the streets. The coverage appears to be attempting to convince foreign militants from other African and Middle Eastern countries to join al-Shabab, to urge for extensive guerrilla assaults and bombings in neighboring AU countries such as Uganda, and to warn foreign powers of the consequences of their involvement in Somalia. Indeed, in the online statement, the group said the objective of the news channel was "to teach, to inform, and to incite."[50]

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[48] SITE Intel Group, *Shabaab Creates Second Media Arm,* https://www.siteintelgroup.com/_layouts/SiteIntel/ApplicationPages/Document.aspx?ID=26679, accessed July 29, 2010

[49] 'Four injured in Somali radio station attacks', *Agence France-Presse*, 17 January 2010. Also AllVoices.com, 'Somalia: Al-Shabab seize Somaliweyn FM radio station', 21 May 2010.

[50] *Shabab Creates Second Media Arm*, accessed July 29, 2010.

The AU's proposed rules of engagement for Somalia should recognize the importance of a wide-reaching and nonpartisan information campaign that would deflect al-Shabab hate media. UNTAC provides an ideal information intervention model, because the population demographics and conflict environment in Somalia merit a similar strategy to that of UNTAC in Cambodia: the mass distribution of and reliance on radios to reach poor populations; flat and fair broadcasts that give voice to all non-hateful parties and report frankly on abuses by all sides; and the fostering of an independent media that can continue these objectives after the AU leaves. The main difference is that peacekeepers do not have a mandate to conduct elections in Somalia, so their efforts would not involve advertising the "secret ballot" to Somalis.

In the DRC, where since 1999 the UN has run the Mission of the United Nations Organization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC, but renamed in 2010 to MONUSCO), information officers have promulgated campaigns similar to the UNTAC model. MONUC's Radio Okapi was one innovation that built on the Cambodia experience: as an independently-run radio station set up in 2002 by the UN and NGOs, it broadcasted music and news 24 hours a day and seven days a week.[51] Radio Okapi's main strength was that, like in Cambodia, it gave voice to average Congolese and their opinions. It urged rebels to disarm and allowed people residing in rebel-controlled zones to communicate with people in government-controlled zones. David Smith, MONUC's former chief of information, stated that the division was trying to "convince people that it's in their interest to lay down their arms and either be repatriated to their home country … or to find ways to join civil society and leave the war behind."[52] Today, after

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[51] Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', p. 616.

[52] *Radio Netherlands Media Network Dossiers: Peace Radio: Democratic Republic of Congo,* http://www.rnw.nl/realoradio/dossiers/html/congo-p.html, accessed February 2, 2010.

MONUC has completed its mandate, the station retains some of the most popular shows in the DRC.

However, MONUC's Public Information Division failed in one respect: it did not galvanize enough foreign media coverage towards UN views on controversial and ethically complicated decisions – most notably to gain support for MONUC's 2009 military offensive, Operation Kimia II, conducted alongside DRC and Rwandan government forces against rebels in the eastern part of the country. More widely speaking, the Congolese civil war has left more than 3 million people dead but has received scant mention in almost all international press outlets. Outside of radio, much of its campaign consisted of meager displays of pamphlets, brochures and posters distributed around the country, and three publications published weekly, bi-weekly and monthly.[53] Critics of the offensive, such as Human Rights Watch and some MONUC commanders, have voiced concerns that Kimia II was rushed, could have led to a potentially catastrophic human toll, and relied too heavily on a military solution for a problem that might be rooted social and political events. Compounding this criticism a senior MONUC commander told Human Rights Watch, "You're living in a fool's paradise if you think that we can solve [the eastern provinces problem] purely militarily."[54] The charges against the UN could have been better discussed and debated if MONUC had provided more extensive, quality informational materials to foreign and Congolese reporters and to NGOs.

Many current "informational solutions" are to be found in UNTAC. The Info/Ed operation demonstrated the power of information campaigns to swiftly mobilize a voting population and tame a renegade partisan press. Policymakers at UN headquarters and mission leaders should

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[53] Lindley, 'Untapped power? the status of UN information operations', p. 616.

[54] '*You Will Be Punished': Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo*', accessed July 15, 2010.

consider using the successful UNTAC template when planning future information campaigns for peacekeeping operations. The organizational structure should be divided into three units, one charged with distributing information (Production Unit), the second charged with intervening in information (Control Unit) and the final one tasked with evaluating the response to that information (Analysis/Assessment Unit). Like in UNTAC, all information operations must be well-targeted, well-funded, wide reaching and interventionalist. The abundance of resources allowed UNTAC's Info/Ed Division to contribute significantly to the major mission task which was to attain a fair and secret ballot in a difficult post-conflict environment. Other significant positive results achieved by UNTAC's very aggressive information program efforts were establishing an independent press, dispelling negative rumors about UNTAC and the election, and convincing people that they could vote.

Annex A—UNTAC Mandate

UNTAC was established by Security Council resolution 745 (1992) of 28 February 1992, to ensure the implementation of the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, signed in Paris on 23 October 1991.

Under the Agreements, the Supreme National Council of Cambodia (SNC) was "the unique legitimate body and source of authority in which, throughout the transitional period, the sovereignty, independence and unity of Cambodia are enshrined". SNC, which was made up of the four Cambodian factions, delegated to the United Nations "all powers necessary" to ensure the implementation of the Agreements.

The mandate given to UNTAC included aspects relating to human rights, the organization and conduct of free and fair general elections, military arrangements, civil administration, the maintenance of law and order, the repatriation and resettlement of the Cambodian refugees and displaced persons and the rehabilitation of essential Cambodian infrastructure during the transitional period.

Upon becoming operational on 15 March 1992, UNTAC absorbed the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC), which had been established immediately after the signing of the Agreements in October 1991. UNTAC's mandate ended in September 1993 with the promulgation of the Constitution for the Kingdom of Cambodia and the formation of the new Government.

Annex B   Map of Cambodia