

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

INFORMATION OPERATIONS TO COUNTER ISIL NARRATIVE

PURPOSE

Propose a two-part strategy to undermine ISIL's largest recruitment narrative, their claim as the legitimate Caliphate. ISIL has been extremely successful in a short period of time giving credence to their claim and a perceived display of Allah's will. Muslims around the world see this and are called to join. As long as ISIL is seen as a well-functioning and possible "second coming" of the Muslim religion, they will continue to identify with the organization.

US CAN DELIGITIMIZE ISIL'S CLAIM WITH A TWO PART IO STRATEGY

- Both internally and externally focused approach using Force Multipliers that feed off of each other
- Utilizes current ops done well (actioning/striking targets) and views use of cyber in a new way

STRATEGY PART 1, TRUST: Grassroots campaign to undermine ISIL influence on potential recruits

- Desired Outcome
 - Undermine trust in ISIL via message easily translated across many languages and cultures which unites their opponents with emotional and viral appeal: "ISIL Lies"
 - Expose their lies about continued expansion, generous entitlements for recruits, high quality of life for members, and providing a sanctuary welcoming all Muslims
 - Provide defector perspective which can add credibility to "ISIL Lies" message
 - Create solemn social media deliverables tailored towards potential recruits
 - Share #ISILies Video storyboard via Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Vines, etc.
 - This grassroots campaign would allow populations to disseminate the message via the media tools most effective in their local areas
 - Redirect trust to local communities
 - Reach out to credible Sunni Muslim influencers to lend their voices to this movement
 - Promote group inclusion of ostracized members from within their community
 - Empower individuals to resist ISIL influence
 - Plant message of hope/resistance in refugees returning to areas susceptible to ISIL rule
- Target Audience:
 - Potential recruits who must be dissuaded from joining with ISIL LIES counter-narrative
 - Those who provide social capital: Religious leaders, community members, families, schools
 - Resource providers: Alternatives, keep resource internal for community use and growth

STRATEGY PART 2, FEAR: Black Propaganda targeting vulnerabilities and fears within organization

- Internally focused: Target is ISIL members to produce both internal conflict and external results. By focusing ISIL on internal issues, they become less outwardly focused towards goals
- Identifies natural fissures that exist within decentralized organizations and exploits those fissures by driving wedges in the form of fear, mistrust, and paranoia
- As a decentralized organization, ISIL is vulnerable in communications. Much of ISIL communication is done through electronic means
 - Lines of communications cannot be stopped (real Lessoned Learned) but can be flooded/poisoned
 - Communications can be intercepted, altered, blocked, leaked, planted or otherwise manipulated to disrupt the narrative and cause internal tensions
 - Stories of women killing ISIL fighters (fear), true or created, and exasperating effects of counter ISIL operations
 - Stories of informants (paranoia) reinforced with coordinated strikes (current ops) to confirm
 - Rumors of ISIL leadership misconduct (mistrust); questioning leadership/key member's alignment with actual teachings; Inserting slights between tribes/groups
 - Highlighting arguments and examples from Strategy 1

HOW STRATEGY 1 & 2 FEED OFF EACH OTHER AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT OPS

- Strategy 1 uses logical and emotional arguments already displayed by the majority of the Muslim community delegitimizes ISIL's narrative of a true Caliphate
- Strategy 2 creates tension within the organization, tensions that can be highlighted and re-attacked in strategy 1. Strategy 2 takes advantage of arguments made in Strategy 1 to become more effective
- Strategy 2 works in conjunction with current operations to produce secondary effects to make strategy 2 more effective

WHY THIS PROPOSAL IS BETTER THEN CURRENT INFORMATION OPERATIONS APPROACH

- The White Propaganda approach of KLEs and Leaflet Drops have proven unsuccessful in Afghanistan. The approach is defeated as soon as it begins because the source of the message is obvious
- The West is unable to convince a group of people of one thing if that same group of people is susceptible to being convince that the West is the enemy

CONCLUSION

We need not spend so much time fighting the enemy if the enemy is busy fighting itself. Undermining the ISIL narrative and creating infighting by digital means will both communicate to the rest of the Muslim world that ISIL is not as unified as it seems, nor is it a legitimate Caliphate. Pushing our message through the mouths of the Muslim community rather than from the megaphone of the US Armed Forces will strengthen the impact of our message.