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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN ECONOMIC MOBILIZATION

9 January 1953

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Mr. Edward L. Bernays, Counselor on Public Relations, was born in Austria, Vienna, 22 November 1891. He received his B.S. degree from Cornell University in 1912. He is regarded as America's outstanding counsel on public relations, a profession he was instrumental in creating and naming. In partnership with his wife, Doris E. Fleischman, he has had a long and diversified practice as public relations counsel since 1919. Recently he has just been adjunct professor of public relations at New York University and visiting professor of public relations at the University of Hawaii. During World War I at the Paris Peace Conference, he served with the U. S. Committee on Public Information. Subsequently, he worked with the War Department on the reemployment of ex-servicemen in 1919, was assistant commissioner for the U. S. Department of Commerce at the Paris Exposition in 1925. He was a member of President Hoover's Emergency Committee for Employment in 1930-1931, and of the New York State Committee on Discrimination in Employment in 1942. Since 1942 he has been a member of the National Public Relations Committee of the American Red Cross. Mr. Bernays is the author of "Crystallizing Public Opinion," "Propaganda," "Speak Up for Democracy," "Take Your Place at the Peace Table," and his most recent book is "Public Relations." He is a frequent contributor to leading magazines, newspapers, and social science journals. He has been awarded the palm of Officer of Public Instruction (French) in 1926, and the King Christian X Medal (Danish) in 1946. At present, he is a partner in his own firm.

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COLONEL BARTLETT: General Greeley, gentlemen, guests: Very soon Colonel Barnes will give you the Orientation lecture which introduces Unit 12, your final comprehensive course. But I think you already appreciate the complexity, magnitude, and number of problems which are involved in economic mobilization. In all of these problems there is one common element which determines the difference between what you'd like to do and what you actually can do. That common and limiting factor is public opinion.

We have asked our lecturer to discuss the role of public opinion, how the Government can influence and guide it, and the consequences of ignoring or selecting the wrong technique for dealing with it. Lincoln said, "You can't fool all of the people all of the time." For a successful mobilization you must have a well-informed public opinion solidly with you.

Mr. Bernays has lectured here on three previous occasions. You who have read his biography know that he is an author, an expert on the subject, and it's his business. His services in this field on behalf of the Government and the Red Cross are evidence of his knowledge. "Time" magazine calls him "United States Publicist Number One."

Mr. Bernays, it is a pleasure to welcome you again to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

MR. BERNAYS: Thank you, Colonel. Gentlemen: The more I went into the subject assigned to me, "Gaining Public Support for Economic Mobilization," the more I found it bound up with many other fields. Research led only to more study. I have read the available but sketchy literature. I have discussed the subject with knowledgeable members of the several services. I also, as I often do, sent a rough draft of my proposed talk to a number of experts asking for suggestions and corrections. But to protect these kind and helpful critics, let me say that the conclusions and proposals I shall make are my own.

I shall outline our present situation and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of current methods of trying to get public support. Then I shall make a few broad recommendations for your consideration. These recommendations are based on long experience in advising clients of diversified interests, including government, on problems of working with the public and enlisting public approval.

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First, with your permission, I shall broaden the subject, "Gaining Public Support for Economic Mobilization," to include public support for all major programs of mobilization. General Eisenhower several years ago said: "National security is a state of organized readiness to meet external aggression by a quick and effective mobilization of public opinion, trained men, proved weapons and essential industries integrated into the most effective instrument of armed defenses and reinforced by the support of every citizen in the measure and form necessary for the preservation of our way of life." Note that he said "integrated."

The General even then associated public opinion with every form of security, every kind of mobilization. Economic mobilization is not an isolated factor in mobilization; nor is public opinion concerning economic mobilization isolated, either. They are inextricably bound up with public attitudes towards the whole concept of mobilization for national strength.

This over-all unresolved problem of public support is so acute today that a number of essential activities have been delayed for fear the public might disapprove of them or fail to support them. Only recently the secretary of one of the services pointed out to me that public and congressional ignorance of a certain situation was adversely affecting our national security program.

Now we all know that public opinion is an important consideration in all types of mobilization. Public opinion is never expendable. It often helps shape major policies. As many of you have already discovered, favorable public opinion is essential to any program of mobilization in peace and in wartime.

The reasons for this are rooted in our national traditions and history. At the risk of repeating the obvious, let me quote Abraham Lincoln, who said: "With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed." Our power as a nation lies in the freedom, the vitality, and the strength of our convictions. Men who make up their own minds are stronger and more self-reliant than men whose opinions are forced upon them.

But voluntary public opinion, our kind of public opinion, cannot be mobilized as smoothly as can men, money, and materials. The kind of public opinion we need does not grow spontaneously. People are conditioned to their beliefs, attitudes, and actions by the society they live in, by what they read, see, and hear. Their opinion about the armed forces and other phases of mobilization derives from these elements.

It is especially difficult to rally public opinion in peacetime. We do not even know whether it is, indeed, peacetime we are in today.

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Whatever it is, we know our Government cannot by-pass or manufacture mass public opinion as totalitarian governments do. Even if we did, or could, roll opinion out on an assembly line, it would not be the kind of public opinion we want. That kind of induced public opinion is subject to dangerous deflation in the hot light of truth. It is shattered by disillusionment. Just remember what happened in Nazi Germany. Mobilization in the United States, to be effective, must have the voluntary support of public opinion.

To attempt to coerce public opinion now or in the future would be a drastic deviation from the spiritual ideals of our Republic. It would destroy the liberties we are fighting for. It would lead to totalitarianism.

We are agreed that effective mobilization of diplomatic, military, psychological, and economic forces demands the strong backing of public opinion. The morale of the armed forces must be backed by the morale of all the people.

Let us comment on economic mobilization for a moment--the subject of our major interest to show how vital it is in that field. The attitude of workers and managers depends in part on the climate of public opinion in which it functions. When the public is apathetic, workers and managers react by slowing their pace. This delays production. When the public shares the patriotic enthusiasm of workers and managers in the making of war supplies, it helps to limit inefficiency, absenteeism, wastage of material--all injurious to building strength. General morale helps relationships between management and men, for in an effort like ours, a mutuality of interest is vital to success. The civilian population is willing to save essential materials. This in turn helps to hold down a rise in prices. Without public opinion to support it, without the good will of the public and of Congress, it would be impossible to secure money appropriations necessary to economic mobilization.

The morale of all the services in this economic mobilization is increased by fair, complete, and skillful presentation of facts to the public and of effective persuasion.

There are reasons why we underestimate the value of public good will for mobilization of all kinds. But these reasons do not eliminate the danger from undervaluing the power of the public's good will.

Here are two important such reasons.

1. As a people and as government, we place undue emphasis on things as opposed to ideas. We still believe a big gun can do more damage than a revolutionary idea. This is not necessarily so. For instance, we

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neglect psychological warfare as an important instrument of foreign policy, and we neglect public support at home for foreign policy. We do not appreciate how much Communists have used ideas to advance their cause, just as the Nazis did.

2. Historically, before 1914 we had little concern with worldwide military affairs. We felt safe with thousands of miles of water on both sides of us. The military services constituted only a small self-contained unit in the total United States population. But now that our interests are worldwide and danger threatens, the total population is closely related to the military. We pay taxes to support the services. Our own sons are the military. We demand a share in running our show.

But while the public feels it has power, it is quite aware that it lacks information necessary for intelligent action. On the other hand, top people in government and in the services have little appreciation of the value of public good will. And they appear to have little knowledge of how to cope with it, direct it, or develop it.

They are often unaware that favorable public opinion is brought about through frank discussion of issues by the people. They are oblivious to the fact that the people are unwilling to accept official authority unless they are told why. Our officials do not recognize that public relations of the armed forces is a two-way activity. It should modify its own policies and practices at the same time that it attempts to shape public attitudes.

Other reasons why public relations does not have its proper values:

American military men traditionally have not had to deal with public opinion. They have worked in a system of authority and rules. Civilians in control in the Defense and other departments have often been lawyers who were dominated by precedent. They have not been greatly concerned with public opinion, either. Consequently, the public relations aspect of defense is usually regarded as somewhat of a nuisance, except where it has helped present favorable news of individuals or helped to win an appropriation for a program.

Public relations is often discussed by men who don't know what it is. There is a feeling that it is something tricky and it is too bad to have to use it.

There is another reason for the weakness of armed forces public relations. It is generally believed in the armed forces that an officer who is good at one thing is good at another. A general who is a genius at command must obviously excel in everything else. First-class military officers have been placed in command in the field of public relations who have had absolutely no public relations experience. This is like

placing a polo player at the head of a medical division. A man may be placed in command of a public relations bureau because he was a good general in the field, or sometimes, because he was not. Public relations men in the armed forces who are skilled, and whose experience covers a long period of training, are often not advanced to positions of authority in that field because advancement is not based on public relations criteria, but on standards of command or longevity of service. Public relations is not treated in terms of its power to build morale or help win a war. It is treated as a seminecessary nuisance.

The over-all public relations of the armed forces is seriously limited and handicapped by lack of a basic long-time policy. This fundamental long-time public relations policy of the Department of Defense should be laid down after conclusive deliberations by a planning body. Today, regrettably, there is no such long-term public relations policy to guide public relations activities. The policy of the Defense Department, rather, reflects the ideas of the then current Secretary of Defense rather than a basic policy. One Secretary of Defense is sure the Department's public relations should revolve around unification. Another may stress two or three ideas, such as universal military training and a reserve program for munitions and manpower; he may exclude all other considerations. Another emphasizes production. Each emphasizes what he believes is uniquely important. There is no broad over-all public relations concept into which special needs can fit.

Another reason for the neglect of sound public relations in military matters is that too often public relations is measured quantitatively, that is, in terms of publicity, in terms of numbers of lines of space. There is a certain anti-intellectualism in the refusal to recognize that modern society has become a most complex structure, that behavior patterns of the public are the result of group and individual causes, that the social sciences, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, are important in developing understanding in our present-day society. There is reluctance to work with public opinion as seriously as we work on tangible elements.

Another difficulty is this. The public relations men in the Department of Defense are often frustrated because they have to change the attitudes they had in private life. In private industry they geared public relations and publicity to making more money. In the Defense Department, they have difficulty in adjusting their point of view to realize that success by the same standards might mean failure, because it would increase taxes and arouse criticism.

Above all, there is the general fear by the public that public relations is synonymous with attempts at thought control.

Possibly I can make my point by sketching the present relationship between the military and public opinion.

The public at large thinks the war effort is centered in the Defense Department and looks to this Department for reassurance and security. Yet, the Defense Department has no clear-cut definition of its public relations responsibilities nor of the activities necessary to carry out its public relations functions. For example, does the Department believe that public relations activity is a function of adjustment with the public? Or that it is persuasion aimed at winning over public opinion? Or that it should merely disseminate news and information? Because it is illegal for the Department to attempt to persuade the public--there is a law against propagandizing--the Department plays safe by issuing what it calls news.

This whole problem of deciding what is information and what is news is not easy to solve. It is undoubtedly true that information is issued today because of its persuasive powers rather than by any other criterion. Those in a position to know state there would be little incentive for serious public relations effort unless persuasion were the real goal.

The public relations activities of the three services function almost entirely independently of one another, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff maintaining a loose direction over them. As with the Defense Department, so, too, the individual service have no frank, clear-cut definition of their public relations objectives. Each service approaches its problems of public opinion individually and tries to build up as much public good will as possible mainly to improve the morale of its own department, and to meet its own objectives in relation to the public and Congress. Army, Navy, Air Force--each one acts public relations-wise almost as if it were a self-contained entity.

But for fear of possible accusation by Congress or by the public of trying to propagandize, or to sell their program to the people, each department masks its propaganda by calling it news and information. Yet despite the label, they continually try to persuade the public. As, for instance, when they ask the public to back them on appropriations.

The rivalry of the services for public good will sets up competition and building up one service with the public and Congress at the expense of another. New weapons are touted, accomplishments exaggerated, in the strategy of rivalry. Abuses by one service lead to abuses by another.

Without clear-cut definition of public relations policy, the Defense Department and the services are greatly handicapped. The public and Congress alike are wary of special pleading under the guise of news. The public may suffer, too, for Congress might withhold necessary support. The service which does a good selling job of propaganda camouflaged as news, to the public and to Congress, is likely to get what it wants. As a result, the Nation may get lopsided military defenses instead of a balanced defense that is best for the country as a whole.

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We are, of course, thoroughly afraid of government thought control as practiced by Communists, Fascists, and Nazis. Consequently, we have wisely erected barriers against thought control. This meshes in with our traditional fear of big government, big business, big labor. We like our system of checks and balances, of multiple control in most governmental activities. This is to prevent abuse by centralized power.

But in our crisis situation we must face the situation clearly. We need to redefine the public relations aspects of mobilization boldly, as we have redefined civil liberties. In civil liberties, you may recall, we have reached the conclusion that license should not be given to those who aim to destroy liberty. It took a long time to make this decision. We have little time to decide how to mobilize public opinion on behalf of national security while remaining within the safeguards of our democratic system.

We must find a way simultaneously to gain public support for our diplomatic, military, economic, and psychological forces. In mobilization we cannot treat any individual factor by itself.

No single department can handle the problem of gaining public support for defense mobilization. All the departments and services must cooperate.

As a layman I am obviously not going to try to give you a pat solution. To give you a specific constructive program, I would have to make an extended study that would involve research of your internal setup and procedures. But, there is enough available data for me to suggest some new approaches to an effective handling of your problem.

Possibly some of them may be suggestive to you as policy makers and may lead to a re-examination of the entire organization of your public relations, its policy, strategy, and tactics. This examination I feel convinced would result in reshuffling the allocation of responsibilities and functions.

The problem of a possible reorientation of certain aspects of the system along new lines has already been much discussed and has received widespread publicity. General Eisenhower's speech in Baltimore in September promised a top civilian commission to study the operation of the department. Dr. Vannevar Bush, in "Collier's," recently discussed the military planning structure and the functions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

My recommendations do not deal with these matters, but rather with the relationships of public opinion to mobilization.

It might be advisable to place direction of the efforts to get public support for all mobilization in the office of the President and his staff.

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This would be a logical extension of his obligation to lead the country. The public expects activities of leadership from him. He can present to the public factual evidence that will be accepted as truthful on the basis of his authority. He can reason with the public. He can try to persuade the public to a course of action. As President he speaks for the entire country, not only for one party or one department or one service. The President symbolizes national unity. All communications facilities are available to him for the important job of education and persuasion. In a minor way, he is already doing these things. I propose that his persuasion activity be strengthened and enlarged.

Under this setup the Defense Department and the three services would limit their public relations activities to issuing news and information to the public. There is still some misunderstanding of the impact of news and information on the public. News and information has little persuasive power. News is important in keeping interested publics informed. Straight news is an obligation of the Department and services to the public. Such information should be clearly objective and straightforward. There would be no need under this proposed plan to disguise persuasion as news. However, the Defense Department, in another function of its public relations program, should continue to carry forward its joint orientation conferences. These are important. They give facts and point of view to opinion molders and national leaders, and bring them up to date regarding projects and programs of the Defense Department.

In these precarious times it is unwise to camouflage highly important persuasion, to pretend that it is news or factual information. Both persuasive and informative efforts are necessary. Both must be honestly labeled.

Effecting a centralized control under the Office of the President will not be an easy matter, because very often outside civilian bodies talk for the individual services--the Navy League, the Air Force Association, and the like. But eliminating the special pleading of the services will be salutary in gaining a high level of cooperation of all elements in Defense and Security. But effective control can be limited through the budgetary control of expenditures in the hands of the President and the Congress.

The National Security Council (NSC) which functions under the President of the United States can assist him in the policy planning of these activities--an over-all program to get public support for our diplomatic, military, and economic mobilization programs treated as a unit. The NSC should, I suggest, be strengthened to fulfill its duties, which are described officially as follows: "to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power, in the interest of national security, for the purpose of making recommendations to the President; and

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to consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security, and to make recommendations to the President." (From U. S. Government Organization Manual, 1952-1953, p. 64.)

The NSC has already been organized for strategic planning in matters of national defense. We propose that these activities be expanded.

At present, the NSC is made up of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board. In addition to this, the following are authorized to attend meetings: the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of Defense Mobilization, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Special Assistant to the President, and the Special Consultant to the President. But regrettably, these men are engaged in operational activities that demand a major part of their time. The NSC should have a full-time staff of men who have requisite knowledge and experience.

I am convinced that the NSC, under the President, should be empowered to formulate over-all plans to maintain public support for mobilization--economic, military, psychological, and diplomatic--and the office of the President should assume the task of carrying out these plans, that is, persuading the public to support mobilization in all its aspects. And that the Defense Department and the services restrict their efforts to news and information.

QUESTION: You recommended that the President exercise the persuasive power and that the services be objective. Do you think that is practicable? Will it be possible to get the services out of the persuasion business when their own personal interests are so closely allied to the people and particularly the Congress?

MR. BERNAYS: The question you raise is one I thought a lot about before I made the recommendation. I discussed the question with a number of knowledgeable men in the services and out. A school of thought headed by Henry Luce maintains that there can be what is called objective journalism; that is, it is possible to take news as defined by Walter Lipmann--"Any overt act that juts out of routine circumstance"--and project that news on an objective basis.

I recognize that it is not possible to follow such type of criterion completely because by the very process of selectivity it governs what you put out and what you don't put out, you are using a certain amount of persuasion. You are using what somebody once called "selective truth." Selective truth may well be not only propaganda but distortion. However, I think that if this type of plan is carried out practically, any person who has what I call skill, experience, and aptitude would recognize in a very short time by the definitions we have set up whether a specific department is carrying out persuasion or what I call straight objective news.

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We have found, for instance, that in the courts, which are an important aspect of our society, these criteria do govern the situation. Straight news is not considered contempt of court. News that is slanted to affect the court, the jurors, or the climate of opinion is regarded as contempt of court.

If this were set up as a basic policy and there were some little board of disinterested individuals who were also expert, one could very definitely maintain broad criteria of news value as opposed to propaganda or persuasive values. If the people who are in the position of judging know the difference and--I would say there are any number who do; Colonel David Page here knows the difference; General Gisburgh knows--if there is sufficient control at the top, there will not be the division.

You know what occurs in wartime. In wartime it is possible by voluntary cooperation to bring about censorship in a way. It is called voluntary censorship. Well, here you haven't got voluntary cooperation; here you have a line of command and instruction, and it would be very easy to maintain the course that one sets at the beginning as to the differences between news and propaganda.

QUESTION: Let us go back to this same question of cooperation of public relations people at the White House level. Don't you think that since people are human beings, after a certain length of time at that level there would be a terrific amount of propaganda going out telling the good old American public all about the President of the United States? You will recall a few years ago Secretary Johnson had quite a public relations staff.

MR. BERNAYS: Let me start in with certain premises. Premise number one is that I have long since given up the hope for the perfect world because I don't think there is any; second, in any situation of this kind, it would seem to me that you have to choose which is the better of two situations and you choose the one which, as somebody once said about the stock market, being on balance is going to give you the better result.

Now it seems to me that if you treat the situation of balance, what do you have? You have a situation in which there are three services and a department. You have them working at a very high level of ingenuity, skill, aptitude, and experience to focus public interest and public attention, first on building morale within their department and, second, getting what they want.

Now it seems to me that you have to deal with that situation. You are dealing with a public that is not informed. You are dealing with a public which has 8.8 years of schooling. You are dealing with a public, 58 percent of whom have an intelligence quotient between 95 and 105. And you are also dealing with a situation in which the competitive advantage of any one service in what we might call "manipulating symbols" can very definitely bring about adverse effects in terms of national interest.

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We learned long ago that in dealing with any problem in public relations you have to treat it in terms of objectives and in terms of totality of the problem. If the objective of any public relations activity were to build up one service over and above another, I might lean toward a different solution. However, if the objective is the national interest, then, it seems to me, we have to argue and reason and deduce with that as the primary factor in the determination of a public relations policy.

Now let us get to the national interest. If the national interest is a strong America, and if the national interest requires powerful support of Americans for building our military, economic, diplomatic, and psychological strength, then it seems to me that a logical conclusion, even though it may not be the perfect solution, is to treat the problem of public support on a basis of the broad, integrated need rather than on the basis of any segmentary approach to it.

Let me give you an example from a corporation we work with, General Motors. In thinking of public support for General Motors, you can't possibly think of public support only in terms of public support to insure that the flow of steel gets to the General Motors plant. You can't think of public support only in terms of building up good will among the stockholders to support the company by purchase of General Motors cars. You can't possibly think of public support only in terms of obtaining the good will of 500,000 or 600,000 workers toward General Motors. You have to think of the problem as a total problem.

Now by the same token, it seems to me, in treating the program of national security, we have to start with the total rather than starting with the segment. If we start with the total, it seems to me that the only godhead symbol in the country, to borrow a phrase from the University of Chicago, is the President of the United States. My personal feeling is that the checks and balances that are inherent in the United States Government can deflate a President, as we have learned, just as they can deflate or inflate an individual service.

QUESTION: How do you propose to keep those gentlemen knowledgeable if they are divorced from all operation and separated from the services unless you create a new stratum in an already overstratified government.

MR. BERNAYS: Let me give you two answers to your question. The first answer is that if we start with the assumption, which I think is pretty well accepted, that in a crisis situation we need national planning at the top, then, we must logically conclude that there has to be some national planning group that integrates the various aspects of public opinion with defense or security in the same way that the Joint Chiefs of Staff presumably integrate the military aspects into a coordinated whole. That is the first answer to the question you raised. Now let me give you the second one.

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Over the last 50 years there has been a tremendous advance in the study of behavior, motivation, attitude, individual psychology, and what is called social psychology or group psychology. There are techniques available by which any outside group, let alone the NSC, can evaluate the hopes, the aspirations, the desires, the behavior patterns, the motivations, and the valid and invalid values of the American people. Those techniques are available to any group.

Let me give you an example. I was talking to somebody in the Treasury a few weeks ago. The Treasury retained the Groups Dynamics machinery of the University of Michigan to make a study for them on what the public might be expected to buy over the next two-year period in terms of such things as vacuum cleaners or refrigerators or United States Savings Bonds.

Those studies are not simply attitude polls such as George Gallup or Roper developed. Those studies are based on what is called depth analysis that tries to get to the very subconsciousness of individuals. There are techniques available today that enable the social psychologists who carry them out to evaluate what the considerations are in a housewife's mind, such as status values and so on, that make her buy a vacuum cleaner rather than a refrigerator.

Now NSC, with the facilities available in measuring the areas of apathy, of ignorance, of frustration, of aggression, of hope, of desire by such techniques as I have pointed out, would be in a position, assuming that there is an over-all security plan for this country that has been carefully worked out by the Security Council, to give each one of the functions its proper place in our united front. Such a body could also study the particular military distortions, apathies, or ignorances that today exist relative to these different values and which require adjustment.

Let me give you a couple of specific cases that may illustrate what I mean. I remember that in World War II one of my friends happened to feel that Seversky was quite a guy and that we didn't place enough emphasis as a people on air power. As a result of that, this young man took Seversky and gave the public what I call an oral and written message about Seversky and air power.

I think in retrospect, as we look at the situation now, air power received a visibility, much brighter than perhaps desirable relative to the broad pattern. I say, instead of letting a bright young man do that with Alexander Seversky, the NSC, in a time of crisis, could very definitely relate the aspirations of air power advocates to the master plan of our defense.

If the public fails to recognize the impact of psychological warfare, the necessity for public support of psychological warfare would be one of the main elements to stress.

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When we deal with a client in the field of commerce or industry, we first try to find out what the adjustment or maladjustment is between his goals and the public upon whose favor the achievement of those goals is dependent. Then, in working out a broad pattern of approach to the problem, we assay each one of those elements of public support in order to take up the distortions, the slacks, the overemphasis or the underemphasis in the public mind.

It seems to me that planning and evaluation of that type is one of the obligations of a body like the NSC. The situation you have today--this was told me by one of the Air Force people--is that if a particular service has connections or contacts with particular people in the mass a communications media, they may create a tremendous distortion as to the value of a certain type of plane which has been produced due to a competitive situation as between the services.

I can give you an example. I was over in Paris with Woodrow Wilson after World War I. Soon after the Paris Peace Conference, one of the able lieutenants of the French Army wrote a book which he called "Plutarch Lied." In this book, he indicated that the internecine warfare between the French Generals, between Clemenceau and Foch, and others was always greater than their united front against the common enemy, the Germans.

Now as I see our present situation in this country, one of the most important things to do is to get integration at the top. Such integration would naturally depend as much on gaining public support as it would on the relative strength of the various armed forces in terms of physics and mechanics of the situation.

QUESTION: Mr. Bernays, if I understood you correctly, you stated that the use of propaganda and persuasion was not legal. Would you elaborate a little bit on just in what way it is made illegal? Is it a matter of law?

MR. BERNAYS: I don't remember the exact year, but I have the year in my office, the Congress passed a law to the effect that no monies appropriated by the Congress were to be used to further the interest of any department. That law was passed because obviously the people and the Congress did not want to see the Government's money spent for gaining ends through propaganda that the people themselves did not evaluate on an objective basis. I think you will also find that law in several states. In other words, under our society or system we don't spend our money to get ourselves propagandized.

As a matter of fact, that thesis or that concept in law has been accepted to such an extent that there are at present pending before the Congress certain laws to make the advertising activity of business firms for certain political goals a nondeductible item for income tax purposes--an example of this type of advertisement is the full-page letter from the

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president of a tire company to his son against Truman and in favor of Eisenhower. At present such costs can be deducted because the law hasn't caught up with the situation. Those particular laws being proposed carry forward the principle that a democratic people do not spend money to propagandize themselves toward a course of action that may be contrary to what they want.

Now within our pattern, the one man who would not come under that ban, it seems to me, would be the President of the United States. He has a mandate from the people to advocate what he considers to be in the best interests of the total country. Everybody recognized the President's right and duty in that respect. So that between persuasion, being carried on illegally by several departments or being carried on by the godhead symbol who is charged with it, in terms of precedent, law and tradition, it seems to me there is no question that he should do it.

QUESTION: There is one point, sir, that occurs to me in what you have just been discussing. I don't think there is anybody who can seriously question--so far as over-all policies and competition between the services are concerned--it has to be controlled from the top; but, this whole matter of getting public support, isn't that too big to handle from one office? Just to take your General Motors analogy again, the fact that there is a General Motors and that they exercise some control over the competitive activities of the different companies doesn't prevent Pontiac from advertising and Buick from advertising, but they are very careful to see that the advertising doesn't cut in on the other fellow's territory so to speak.

Now there is a very big field of activity in public relations that has to be done at the local level it seems to me. If you are acquiring land, for example, to build a new reservation, somebody has to talk to the local people there and explain the reason for condemning that land. The President can't handle that sort of thing. There has to be some sort of decentralization. I wonder if you would care to explain that?

MR. BERNAYS: I am glad you raised that question. When you are dealing with the people of the United States, you are dealing with a tremendous mass of people who vary in age, cultural patterns, education, racial attitudes, religious backgrounds, and so on. However, the interesting thing is that with the communications systems that exist, if you launch ideas that are potent in rallying people to your point of view, you will find the carrying power of the idea has very little relationship either to the number of men that carry it forward or even to the amount of money that was spent in manpower or means to carry it forward.

Let me elucidate this a little bit further. In other words, it is the climate of opinion that is the important element, and that climate of opinion has very little relationship to the number of men or the money that is spent on things.

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I can give you some examples from my own experience. Before World War I, in 1917, a number of men in New York were tremendously concerned about the Germans moving into France and they started Plattsburg, much against the will or the public opinion that was prevalent at that time. But once started the Plattsburg idea, encouraged in turn by a few preparedness parades in key cities, changed the climate of public opinion toward our war effort at that time. In other words, you had a situation in which you got a change-over of public opinion not dependent on personnel but on effectively handling certain basic ideas that appealed to the American public.

Or take, for instance, such a dynamic step as the pronouncement of Wilson's 14 Points at the Metropolitan Opera House--14 points that were carefully worked out by Walter Lippmann and some of the younger men like Charlie Mears who is now editor of the "Times," and the old "Geographic Association." Those 14 points had a tremendous effect all over the world and all they depended upon was the effectiveness and intelligence with which Mr. Wilson proposed and propounded them in the Metropolitan Opera House one day.

Or if you take such a pronouncement as the Four Freedoms which had a vitalizing effect all over the world, you will get what I mean when I talk of developing public support for a concept or an idea.

Those results do not depend upon the mimeograph machine, the number of fellows who peddle pictures, or the number of men who get out releases. They depend rather to a certain extent upon a recognition of facts that the Russians have accepted. The Russians today recognize that so-called propaganda or persuasion is something to implement their national policy. When Mr. Stalin in a Christmas Day release refers to a people who want peace, it is a piece of propaganda or impropaganda; and you have the sort of thing that I mean.

I am not saying that the Army, the Navy, or the Air Force should not have what might be called liaison offices in local communities where they need to make adjustments. After all, to adjust with the people is a function of any phase of government. What I am saying is that by and large, it seems to me, there should be removed from the present situation an internecine, competitive struggle for public support for goals and for objectives that have not been made part of the total mobilization program.

Again I can give you the type of thing I mean in another field. We have today in this country the belief that foreign policy is something that we consciously do relative to foreign countries and that therefore all activities relating to foreign policy rest in the State Department.

Now I happen to know from working with the Indian Government for some time that the American attitude most adversely affecting India's opinion of us is our attitude toward negroes. So in this instance the

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matter of foreign policy most vital in winning over a culturist country is really our domestic policy. The propaganda impact of the United States on India, I would say, has been greatly heightened, not by an Office of Information or by the public relations activities of any one of the departments, but by the fact that there were no lynchings in the United States last year.

In dealing with the matter of gaining public support for all of the mobilization efforts, I would try to deal with it from the viewpoint that George Brandes, the philosopher, once expressed when he said: "It is useless to send armies against ideas." I would look for ideas that have vitality rather than looking for bright young men who can run mimeograph machines.

COLONEL BARNES: Mr. Bernays, our time is running over. On behalf of the Commandant, the staff, and student body, I thank you for this fine analysis and for the thought and preparation you have put into it.

(11 Mar 1953--250)S/sgb

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