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# **Influence Operations II**

## **Annex to CF PSYOPS Materials and Recommendations**

by:

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## Abstract

This report is an extension to a previous literature review completed by Adams, Sartori and Waldherr (2007). This review explored the scientific, military and academic literature relevant to influence and persuasion. Stemming from this review, the current project was initiated in order to provide a more usable guide for Canadian Forces PSYOPS practitioners.

This report has 5 sections. The first provides a general overview of the area of influence and persuasion. The second section provides pragmatic advice related to conducting a target audience analysis. The third section explores characteristics of persuasive messages. This section explores techniques for creating influential messages, and notes the importance of understanding the prospective strength of a persuasive message in order to properly tailor it to the target audience. The fourth section presents several specific compliance techniques and provides both their theoretical underpinnings, as well as how to implement them in a PSYOPS context. The fifth and final section presents a series of recommendations addressing issues of information management, as well as offering a range of recommendations for future efforts that would further assist PSYOPS personnel to develop maximally persuasive messages.



## Résumé

Le présent rapport s'inscrit dans le prolongement d'une analyse documentaire antérieure effectuée par Adams, Sartori et Waldherr (2007). Il s'agit d'un examen de la littérature scientifique, militaire et didactique se rapportant à l'influence et à la persuasion. Le projet actuel, qui découle de cet examen, a été entrepris afin d'offrir un guide plus utilisable aux spécialistes des OPSPSY des Forces canadiennes.

Le rapport compte cinq sections. La première donne un aperçu général du domaine de l'influence et de la persuasion. La deuxième section prodigue des conseils pragmatiques sur la conduite d'une analyse de l'audience-cible. La troisième examine les caractéristiques des messages persuasifs. Elle traite des techniques employées pour créer des messages influents et souligne l'importance de comprendre la force potentielle d'un message persuasif pour adapter convenablement ce dernier à l'audience-cible. La quatrième section présente plusieurs techniques de conformité spécifiques et indique à la fois leurs fondements théoriques et la façon de les mettre en œuvre dans un contexte d'OPSPSY. La cinquième et dernière section présente une série de recommandations portant sur des questions de gestion de l'information et offre également diverses recommandations en vue de futurs travaux qui aideront davantage le personnel des OPSPSY à élaborer des messages le plus persuasifs possible.

## Executive Summary

This report is an extension to a previous literature review completed by Adams, Sartori and Waldherr (2007). This review explored the scientific, military and academic literature relevant to influence and persuasion. Stemming from this review, the current project was initiated in order to provide a more usable guide for Canadian Forces Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) practitioners.

This report has 5 sections. The first provides a general overview of the area of influence and persuasion. This section discusses the process of persuasion, and provides an example of how this process can either succeed or fail. The second section provides pragmatic advice related to conducting a target audience analysis (TAA). This requires identifying the characteristics of the broad target audience, and refining this audience on several dimensions (e.g., ensuring the highest possible level of homogeneity). Assessing the ability of target audience members to show the desired behavioural change is also critical. Understanding the relevant attitudes, beliefs and values of the target audience is also a critical part of the TAA that is currently underemphasized in the PSYOPS literature. This section concludes with an analysis of the best route to persuasion, based on the state and vulnerabilities of the target audience. In general, it is argued that whether the target audience member is likely to do deep or shallow processing should play a key role in how persuasive messages are tailored. The third section explores characteristics of persuasive messages. This section explores techniques for creating influential messages dependent on the ability and motivation of the target audience, and notes the importance of understanding the prospective strength of a persuasive message in order to properly tailor it to the target audience. This section also presents the six key principles of persuasion (e.g., Cialdini, 2001), and describes their theoretical underpinnings and why they are effective, as well as providing implementation examples. The fourth section presents several specific compliance techniques and provides both their theoretical underpinnings, as well as how to implement them in a PSYOPS context. These techniques include several well-established techniques (e.g., foot-in-the-door, that's not all technique), and provide implementation advice as well as PSYOPS examples. The fifth and final section presents a series of recommendations addressing issues of information management, as well as offering a range of recommendations for future efforts that would further assist PSYOPS personnel to develop maximally persuasive messages.



## Sommaire

Le présent rapport s'inscrit dans le prolongement d'une analyse documentaire antérieure effectuée par Adams, Sartori et Waldherr (2007). Il s'agit d'un examen de la littérature scientifique, militaire et didactique se rapportant à l'influence et à la persuasion. Le projet actuel, qui découle de cet examen, a été entrepris afin d'offrir un guide plus utilisable aux spécialistes des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY) des Forces canadiennes.

Le rapport compte cinq sections. La première donne un aperçu général du domaine de l'influence et de la persuasion. Elle traite du processus de la persuasion et présente un exemple de la façon dont ce processus peut réussir ou échouer. La deuxième section prodigue des conseils pragmatiques sur la conduite d'une analyse de l'audience-cible (AAC). Il faut déterminer les caractéristiques de l'audience-cible en général, puis préciser cette dernière sous plusieurs aspects (p. ex., assurer le niveau d'homogénéité le plus élevé possible). Il est également crucial d'évaluer la capacité des membres de l'audience-cible de manifester le changement de comportement souhaité. De plus, le fait de comprendre les attitudes, les croyances et les valeurs pertinentes de l'audience-cible constitue un élément essentiel de l'AAC auquel la littérature sur les OPSPSY n'accorde pas assez d'importance à l'heure actuelle. Cette section se termine par une analyse du meilleur chemin de la persuasion, d'après l'état et les points vulnérables de l'audience-cible. En général, on affirme que la probabilité selon laquelle le membre de l'audience-cible assimilera profondément ou superficiellement le message devrait jouer un rôle clé dans la façon dont les messages persuasifs sont adaptés. La troisième section examine les caractéristiques des messages persuasifs. Elle traite des techniques employées pour créer des messages influents qui dépendent de la capacité et de la motivation de l'audience-cible, et souligne l'importance de comprendre la force potentielle d'un message persuasif pour adapter convenablement ce dernier à l'audience-cible. Cette section présente également les six grands principes de la persuasion (p. ex., Cialdini, 2001), décrit leurs fondements théoriques et explique pourquoi ils sont efficaces. Elle donne aussi des exemples de mise en œuvre. La quatrième section présente plusieurs techniques de conformité spécifiques et indique à la fois leurs fondements théoriques et la façon de les mettre en œuvre dans un contexte d'OPSPSY. Ces techniques englobent plusieurs techniques bien établies (p. ex., la technique du pied-dans-la-porte ou du ce-n'est-pas-tout), et fournissent des conseils de mise en œuvre ainsi que des exemples d'OPSPSY. La cinquième et dernière section présente une série de recommandations portant sur des questions de gestion de l'information et offre également diverses recommandations en vue de futurs travaux qui aideront davantage le personnel des OPSPSY à élaborer des messages le plus persuasifs possible.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Objective of PSYOPS Handbook

This report stems from a continuing program of research aimed at understanding influence within a military context. This report is intended to provide guidance to PSYOPS practitioners with a range of skills and experience. The goal of this guide is to provide accessible information about to know how to implement influence and persuasion principles “on the ground” while simultaneously providing references to the theoretical aspects of these principles.

## 1.2 Influence and Persuasion

Designing persuasive messages requires a number of elements. One common rule of thumb used in consumer advertising uses the acronym A-I-D-A, arguing that persuasive messages need to grab attention (grabbing headline), interest (capture and hold target audience (TA) interest), desire (make them want something) and action (move them to behave in a particular way).<sup>1</sup>

The process of persuasion is commonly defined (e.g., McGuire, 1978) to have a number of critical elements, including:

Status	Definition
Reception	The audience must be received by the target audience (TA)
Attention	The argument must engage the TA's attention
Comprehension	TA must process the argument in the way intended
Personal Relevance	TA must see the argument to be personally relevant
Personally Credible or Acceptable	TA must judge the argument to be valid and to require an acceptable level of change
Attitudinal, motivational or behavioural change	TA must be motivated to change in accordance with argument intent

The success of a persuasive message is dependent on the TA getting the necessary information, giving it time and attention, comprehending it, seeing it as relevant, and accepting the main premise of the argument. If these things happen, the message may be persuasive and may motivate the desired action or behaviour. Of course, a persuasive message could fail at any one of these stages. The following table provides concrete examples of failure or success of a persuasive message at each of these stages.

**Hypothetical PSYOPS Message:** An article was placed in a local newspaper describing the difficult process of working to rebuild Afghanistan and specifically profiles a member of a non-governmental organization

<sup>1</sup> Downloaded from [http://www.persuasiontoolbox.com/persuasive\\_writing\\_strategies.html](http://www.persuasiontoolbox.com/persuasive_writing_strategies.html).

(NGO) who attempted to make a difference by informing the authorities about Taliban fighters that were attempting to stop aid efforts.

**Table 1. Process of influence example – failure and success conditions**

Status	Definition	Failure Condition	Success Condition
Reception	TA must be exposed to argument	TA does not read the newspaper with a persuasive argument even though he typically would	TA reads the newspaper and is exposed to the argument
Attention	The argument must engage the TA's attention	TA reads the newspaper but skims over the persuasive argument	TA reads the newspaper and pays particular attention to the PSYOPS appeal
Comprehension	TA must process the argument in the way intended	TA reads the persuasive argument in the newspaper but interprets this argument to be in support of the Taliban rather than against the Taliban.	TA reads the persuasive argument in the newspaper and interprets it to be against the Taliban.
Personal Relevance	TA must see the argument to be personally relevant	TA reads the argument but does not see it applying to himself, rather as applying to foreign workers only.	TA reads the argument and sees it to be relevant to him or her
Personally Credible or Acceptable	TA must judge the argument to be valid and to require an acceptable level of change	TA reads the argument but sees it as not coming from a credible source, or as not containing valid information	TA reads the argument and sees it as coming from a credible source, or as containing valid information
Attitudinal, motivational or behavioural change	TA must be motivated to change in accordance with argument intent	TA does not change behaviour, attitudes or goals	TA changes behaviour, attitudes or goals

As this example shows, then, the success of a persuasive attempt is dependent on a number of hurdles, ranging from argument reception to comprehension to promoting successful behavioural change. This is one of the reasons why the process of developing a persuasive argument must consider many different elements.

## 2. Target Audience Analysis

This section considers the process of target audience analysis (TAA).<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1 Select and refine the target audience

The first stage of TAA analysis requires clear identification of the target group and a detailed definition of its specific features. This is a critical decision, and the exact features of the target group need to be defined in detail. The current guide argues that the target audience analysis seeks to understand which TA will be most effective in accomplishing the desired behavioral or attitudinal response.

#### Step 1 - Identify the broad target audience.

**Table 2. Types of target audiences**

Type	Definitions	Examples
Demographic sets	Shared demographic characteristics	Geographic area (region, district, town or province), gender, age, ethnicity, tribe, socioeconomic status, occupation, religion, education, political affiliation
Groups or organizations	Characterized by common interests, common goals and purpose and are typically exposed to common sources of information	Social, religious or political groups, unions, professional associations
Leaders	People in positions of power and authority who have the ability to persuade followers	Tribal leaders, political leaders
Key Communicators	People who are trusted and relied on for information by the TA	Family members, members of important social groups

#### Step 2 – Identify the primary vs. secondary target audience members.

The primary actors, or ultimate target audiences, are the people that will perform the desired behaviour. Secondary actors are the “individuals or groups that have the ability to directly or indirectly influence the behaviour of the primary actors” (U.S. PSYOPS, 2007, p. 2-4). This is an important distinction because secondary actors can be used as intermediate target audiences since they have the ability to promote the goals of the PSYOPS initiative indirectly. Once primary and secondary targets are defined, the TA should be further refined as shown in Step 3.

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<sup>2</sup> The information that follows is intended to be aligned with the CF PSYOPS Chapter 3 – Target Audience Analysis.

**Step 3 – Refine the target audience in terms of the following dimensions:**

**Table 3. Target audience dimensions**

Target audience dimension	Definitions	Relevant questions
<b>Homogeneity</b> - Influence efforts that target more than a single person must aim at identifying the most homogeneous and coherent group possible.	The key question when thinking about how exactly to delineate a target audience involves assessing the extent to which the TA is the same on critical dimensions. The more similar the prior beliefs, attitudes and behaviours within this group, the easier it will be to effectively target PSYOPS efforts.	Do they have the same or similar goals? Are there any obvious sub-divisions that could split the TA into multiple groups that could process the argument differently? For example, one element of the group may have very different goals than the group as a whole. If this is the case, this could hinder PSYOPS efforts. Do they see themselves as belonging in the same group?
<b>Experiencing similar conditions</b> – In addition to being as similar as possible in terms of values and beliefs, it is also ideal that the TA is situated in a common context.	This means experiencing the same pressures, having the same challenges. This similarity will help to ensure that their response to the persuasive attempt will be as similar as possible. In some cases, the conditions that TA members experience will create vulnerabilities that make them more susceptible to persuasive arguments.	Do all members of the group have the same access to the basics of life?  Do they have the same external supports and challenges?
<b>Ability to achieve the supporting psychological objective (SPO)</b> – Another critical consideration is the extent to which the target audience is capable of responding to the probable line of persuasion in order to achieve the specific desired behaviour.	This consideration refers to <u>long-term</u> rather than short-term issues (e.g., assuming that reception and comprehension of the argument have occurred) that might prevent action in relation to the persuasive argument once it is received Note that this is distinct from motivation or ability to process the argument.	Do all group members have the physical ability to achieve the SPO?  Is their behaviour constrained by other group members or conditions?

**Step 4 – Refine the target audience in terms of the target behaviour (SPO):**

- What element of the target audience is most likely to engage in the target behaviour?
- What part of the TA directly or indirectly influences primary actors?

**Table 4. Target audience examples**

Promotion of girls attending school	Poorly selected target audience	Well selected target audience
The TA must be a homogeneous group	Parents from a poor village where there is no school. (Failure of criteria 3: no ability to achieve the SPO).	Parents of children currently attending school.
Members of the TA must experience similar conditions		
The TA must retain the ability to achieve the SPO		
Promotion of voting behaviour	Poorly selected target audience	Well selected target audience
The TA must be a homogeneous group	The audience includes both people who have voted in the past and those who never voted. (Failure of criteria 1: group is heterogeneous).	TA is people who are of voting age, have never voted before and who have means to go and vote. They should also live near a voting location or have access to transportation.
Members of the TA must experience similar conditions		
The TA must retain the ability to achieve the SPO		
Persuading an “at-risk” village without adequate resources to move to a safer location	Poorly selected target audience	Well selected target audience
The TA must be a homogeneous group	Village residents are targeted as a single target audience, regardless of socio-economic classes and access to resources. (Failure of criteria 2: group is not subjected to similar conditions).	In this case, focusing on villager who can afford to move their entire family to a different location. This means the village must have access to food and shelter at the new location. The villagers also must have the means to move to a different village.
Members of the TA must experience similar conditions		
The TA must retain the ability to achieve the SPO		

## 2.2 Assess ability of the TA to show desired behavioural change<sup>3</sup>

The next stage involves considering the ability of the TA to show the desired behavioural change, this is referred to as the ‘effectiveness’ criteria in the target audiences analyses worksheet.

**Table 5. Target audience ability to show change**

Step 1: What is the target behaviour? Assume the behaviour is voting in the next local election for community leaders.		
Relevant Issues	Definitions	Examples or comments
Ensure that the target behaviour is clearly defined.	What does the behaviour look like? What does it include, and what does it not include? What other behaviours might be confused with the target behaviour, and how is the target behaviour different from these behaviours?	This does not include physically going to the polling station without voting. This does not include voting about other local issues.
It must be possible to count the	If the behaviour cannot be counted, it may	Behaviours such as voting, for example, are discrete and observable. Behaviour such as

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. PSYOPS manual calls this “effectiveness” of the target audience. However, in our opinion, this terminology could easily be confused with the effectiveness of the persuasive message. We have renamed this factor as the ability of the target audience to show change.

<b>Step 1: What is the target behaviour? Assume the behaviour is voting in the next local election for community leaders.</b>		
Relevant Issues	Definitions	Examples or comments
target behaviour.	not be properly defined.	“showing support for a particular political party” would be difficult to count unless further defined in terms of observable voting behaviour.
How entrenched or familiar is the behaviour? Has the TA performed the behaviour before?	People tend to do what they know. If the target behaviour is a common one that has been performed before, it will be easier to promote through PSYOPS efforts.	It will be easier to get people who have voted in the past to do so.
What other behaviours is the target behaviour consistent or inconsistent with?	As people tend to be “creatures of habit” other behaviours that co-occur with the target behaviour may be used to promote the desired behaviour	People who participate in local, low level governance (town meetings, etc.) are also more likely to vote.
How consistent is the target behaviour with existing attitudes of the TA?	Behaviours that are consistent with existing attitudes will be the most easy to create or reinforce.	People who believe strongly in the importance of democracy may be more likely to vote
<b>Step 2: Personal factors influencing whether the target audience is able to show the desired behaviour?</b>		
Does target have time to show the desired behaviour?  Does the target have the motivation to show the desired behaviour?	For example, is the target behaviour congruent with the target’s current goals?	People struggling to get the basics of life may not have the energy and motivation to vote.
<b>Step 3: Social factors influencing whether the target audience is able to show the desired behaviour?</b>		
Is the behaviour under the sole control of the target audience? What other people must be involved for the TA to do this behaviour?	Some behaviours can only be shown in conjunction with other people. Target behaviours that are dependent on other people are more difficult to ensure.	Would relevant others (e.g., friends and family) approve or disapprove of the TA voting?
<b>Step 4: What other external conditions are necessary for the TA to perform the behaviour? What are the possible restrictions on the TA with respect to this behaviour?</b>		
What physical conditions might influence ability to display behaviour?	Might include access to key goods or services	For example, having a polling station would be a critical antecedent to promoting voting through PSYOPS efforts  Promoting the TA to exercise its voting right is only possible if elections are held.
What environmental conditions (e.g., weather) might influence ability to display behaviour?	Extreme weather can influence both the probability of the target audience receiving the persuasive argument, as well as that of them being able to act on it	For example, if polling stations are 100 kilometres away, the target audience may not act on the behaviour of voting, even if persuaded to do so.
What other conditions might influence ability to display behaviour?	These could include legal, political or economy issues.	For example, target behaviour adoption may be restricted by another condition (e.g., local leader opposing the election) limit the behaviour by physically stopping TA at the polls.



**Impact of the Target Behaviour on Achievement of the SPO** – At this stage, it is also important to assess the impact of the target changing his behaviour on the overall SPO? The key issue is whether the SPO would be achieved if the persuasive argument were effective. Some SPOs, for example may require all targets to change their behaviour to be fully realized (e.g., stopping planting of IEDs on local roads).

## 2.3 Analyses of TAs conditions

At this step, it is critical to examine the conditions that the TA is currently experiencing to fully understand what types of persuasive arguments are likely to be most effective. These conditions are issues or events that affect the TA over which the TA has little control.<sup>4</sup> These conditions are such that the TA is likely to be affected by them (either negatively or positively), and cannot easily circumvent them. These conditions can be either external or internal.

External Conditions – External conditions can be defined as pre-existing situations or events (typically over which the TA has little or no personal control) that could change how people think, feel and behave.

**Table 6. Examples of external conditions**

Pre-existing condition	Effect on thoughts, feelings or motivation	Effect on behaviour
Three bombings have occurred in public buildings over the last week.	TA is afraid to enter any public buildings	TA is likely to remain at home
Huge storms have wiped out public broadcasting ability and most conventional lines of communication.	TA is restless and in search of information about what's happening in their community and beyond	TA is physically moving around more in order to gather information
Food supplies have been cut off by rebels, and people in a local village (TA) have run out of food and supplies	TA is hungry and angry	TA is less likely to be amenable to listening to persuasive argument

Understanding the target audiences' external conditions is important because these conditions influence both their current behaviour, and will also likely impact on their responses to persuasive efforts (i.e., the probability of receiving the argument, processing it, and/or being changed as the result of it).

It is then necessary to assess the extent to which each pre-existing condition might influence (either positively or negatively) achievement of the SPO. In some cases, pre-existing conditions could assist achievement of the SPO. For example, if the SPO is that the TA would see billboards containing a PSYOPS argument, increased mobility as the result of a damaging storm could assist achievement of the SPO.

- If the pre-existing condition is likely to impact negatively on persuasion efforts, are there any ways to make the condition less influential?

<sup>4</sup> These are called stimulus, orientation or behaviour in Chapter 3 of the PSYOPS materials.

- If the pre-existing condition is likely to impact positively on persuasion efforts, are there any ways to further enhance or to exploit the impact of the pre-existing condition?
- How do these pre-existing conditions impact on the ability of the target to receive, attend to, understand and/or process the target argument carefully?

**Internal Conditions** – The TAs’ attitudes, values and beliefs could affect the ability of the target to perform the desired behaviour. Exerting influence requires some understanding of the attitudes of target audience members.<sup>5</sup> Attitudes can be defined as “consistent, learned tendencies to respond in a particular way to a given object, person or situation (adapted from US PSYOPS, 2007, 2-9)”. Attitudes can be used to predict behaviour. Values are typically broader than attitudes, and relate to “conceptions of ultimate right and wrong”. Beliefs are “convictions about what is true or false, based on experiences, perceptions, public opinion, supporting evidence, authorities or faith.” (US PSYOPS , 2007, 2-9).

Importantly, attitudes come from several different psychological processes. Some attitudes are primarily cognitive in nature, and are based on the accumulation of concrete knowledge and beliefs. One’s attitude toward political parties, for example, could have a cognitive base if it stems from rational judgements about the pros and cons of every possible political party. Other attitudes may have more of an emotional or affective base. For example, one’s attitude toward family members may be primarily influenced not just by their objective qualities, but by emotional attachment to these family members. The underlying basis of an attitude is important because this basis can affect the persuasiveness of a targeted argument (Fabrigar and Petty, 1999, Martin, Hewstone and Martin, 2007). For example, if a specific attitude has a primarily cognitive base, the persuasive argument created is likely to be more effective if it uses a cognitive approach (e.g., facts and figures, strong arguments, etc). Similarly influence efforts aiming to affect attitudes with a highly emotional base would generally be most effective if they used emotional appeals (e.g., glittering generalities, or appeals that use emotion to influence core values).

In general, attitudes have a structure and dimensionality that is unique to the individual. Some of the most important dimensions of attitudes are:

**Table 7. Attitude dimensions**

Attitude dimension	Definition	Examples	Effect on influence attempts
Strength (e.g., Petty and Krosnick, 1995)	Attitudes can be either strong or weak. Strength is determined by many different dimensions, including the certainty that people have about their attitude, the extremity of the attitude, level of personal involvement	Some attitudes tend to be more accessible, are perceived to be more important etc.	Strong attitudes are more difficult to change
Complexity	The number of distinctions relevant to the object of an attitude	More complex attitudes have multiple facets. One’s view of the ideal car may be very complex (e.g., cost, gas mileage, appearance, power are all important), whereas one’s attitude toward paper towels may be relatively simple (e.g., only critical qualities are strength and absorbency)	Complex attitudes are more difficult to change

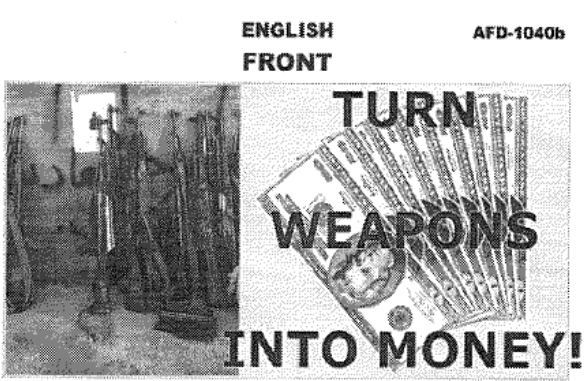
<sup>5</sup> For an excellent beginners’ introduction to attitudes, see McIntye (2008). For more advanced (but less accessible) perspectives, see Ajzen (2001) or Petty, Wegener and Fabrigar (1997).

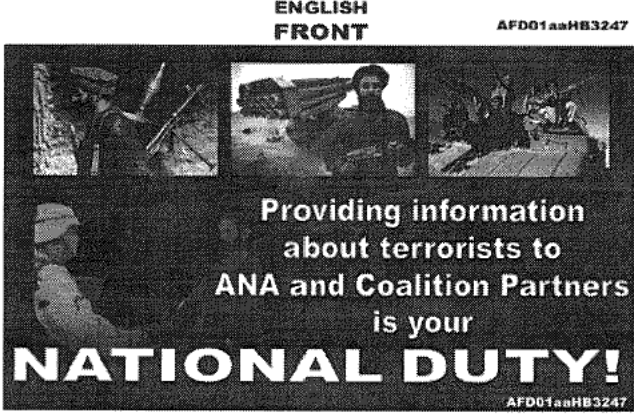
Attitude dimension	Definition	Examples	Effect on influence attempts
Importance	The extent to which the attitude is personally valued	One's attitudes toward religion may carry a high level of personal meaning and importance, whereas attitudes toward fast food would not generally have high personal importance.	Important attitudes are more difficult to change
Centrality	The extent to which an attitude is in the core of one's overall belief system	More central attitudes are closer to the core of how we define ourselves (e.g., religious attitudes/ beliefs are likely to be more central than attitudes toward pets).	More central attitudes are more difficult to change
Function	The purpose of one's attitude and the role that it serves in one's belief system	See table that follows	

From the perspective of PSYOPS, understanding the types of attitudes that people hold, and the qualities of these attitudes are critical to being able to change the attitudes. For example, some attitudes represent long-standing core values, and form an important part of one's "personhood". These attitudes, of course, will be more difficult to change, because they are more deeply embedded, and more firmly attached to other attitudes. Hence, any assault on one part of the attitude will be more difficult to overturn (e.g., Garst and Bodenhausen, 1996, Jacks and Devine, 2000)

Attitudes are also argued to serve several different functions, as shown in the following table (figures from Fabrigar and Porter, 2008).

**Table 8. The function of attitudes**

Function of attitude	Example of persuasive appeals that tap this function	PSYOPS example
Getting rewards and avoiding punishment	Appeals that promote the rewards of acting in a certain way (e.g., you will have a better life if you support this political party)	

Function of attitude	Example of persuasive appeals that tap this function	PSYOPS example
Expressing our core values	Appeals that promote consistency with important values (e.g., you will show that you care about democracy if you support this political party)	 <p>ENGLISH FRONT AFD01aaHB3247</p> <p>Providing information about terrorists to ANA and Coalition Partners is your NATIONAL DUTY!</p> <p>AFD01aaHB3247</p>
Building our connections with others	Appeals aimed at making us want to be consistent with others	You will be more respected by your peers if you support this political party.
Helping us to feel good about ourselves	Appeals aimed at protecting our desired self-image (e.g., you will feel better about yourself if you support this political party)	Be a good person and help your country

Understanding the function of TA attitudes is critical to tailoring persuasive arguments. Matching the persuasive approach to the underlying function that a given attitude serves will make it more effective. If, for example, a local citizen supports the Taliban because he does not believe in a democratic society as a core value (i.e., the attitude has a value expressive function), then efforts to lower support for the Taliban by talking about the costs of supporting the Taliban (utilitarian function) would tend to be less effective. In order to attempt to change behaviour that is supportive of the Taliban, it would be necessary to target the core value. However, it is important to note that core values are very difficult to change, and short-term efforts are not likely to be effective.

#### Assessing TA Attitudes:

A number of issues are important to assess. These include the following:

**Table 9. Assessing attitudes**

Issue	Relevant questions
What TA's attitudes are relevant to the problem at hand?	What attitudes are relevant to the SPO?
What is the strength of the existing relevant attitudes?	How are these attitudes related to important attitudes?
What are the bases of the existing attitudes?	Cognitive or affective?

Issue	Relevant questions
What functions do these attitudes serve?	Why does the TA hold this attitude? What does it give them that they might not want to give up?
Which attitudes are most critical to the TAs' core identity?	What attitudes are critical to how the TA defines themselves?

## 2.4 Analyses of TAs behaviour

### What is the target audience's current (undesirable) behaviour?

Undesirable behaviour could include:

**Table 10. Undesirable behaviours**

Types of undesirable behaviour	Example of undesirable behaviour
Current behaviour that is inconsistent with the desired behaviour	Locals attacking innocent civilians from another tribe when the desired behavior is promoting low rates of tribal violence
Failure to display desired behaviour	Locals being uninterested in voting in a local election

### What are the causes of the current (undesirable) behaviour AND the effects of this behaviour?

- External conditions – what are the situations and/or events that contribute to this behaviour?
- Internal conditions – what are the attitudes, beliefs and values that contribute to this behaviour?
- Factors to assess include economic, political, social/cultural, environmental/physical and military/security

### What are the effects of the current (undesirable) behaviour?

- Positive consequences
- Negative consequences - decrease the probability that behaviour will recur
- Secondary consequences – consequences of the behaviour on others

### Behaviour Modification Principles<sup>6</sup>

All behaviour has consequences. The effects that occur once behaviour is displayed will influence its future probability, as shown in Table 11.

<sup>6</sup> In our view, the behaviour modification principles discussed are well established, but incomplete. Further work needs to further elaborate different methods for changing behaviour.

**Table 11. Consequences of behaviour**

Behaviour followed by:	Example
Positive consequences – increase the probability that behaviour will recur	Winning at the slot machine makes one more likely to keep playing
Negative consequences – decrease the probability that behaviour will recur	Losing at the slot machine makes one less likely to go back the following day
Secondary consequences – consequences of the behaviour on others	

In general, people work to maximize their benefits and to minimize their risks and/or costs (e.g., Skinner, 1972)

So, to modify behaviour, change the reward/reinforcement contingencies to make the current behaviour less attractive (or rewarding) and/or make the desirable behaviour more rewarding.

**Table 12. Examples of behaviour**

SPO	Existing Condition	Approach to changing behaviour
Encourage TA to vote in local election	TA is afraid because of threats from local militia TA may avoid voting because of fear.	Work to publicly promote higher levels of security in order to decrease fear and to increase probability of voting
Stop TA from cooperating with Taliban	TA is being paid to provide information about coalition forces	Offer larger competing reward for reporting all contact with Taliban to coalition forces. This could lower the perceived attractiveness of cooperation at the lower price.

It is important to note that not all types of reinforcement are material or goods. We also get reinforced by other people for our behaviour (e.g., social approval).

## 2.5 Vulnerability of the target audience

In our view, the vulnerability and susceptibility of the target audience represent two sides of the same coin, with vulnerability related to the TA, and susceptibility related to the persuasive argument itself. Because the target is vulnerable, he or she is also susceptible to persuasive arguments that tap these areas.

The extent to which the target audience can be known and/or predicted makes them more vulnerable to persuasive arguments. The highest possible level of knowledge about the target audience is ideal because this knowledge can assist tailoring of the persuasive argument. A key issue in identifying vulnerability involves understanding both the external and internal states (e.g., assessing the attitudes, beliefs and ultimately the goals) of the target audience.

### Step 1: Identify the motivations and goals of the target audience

A common theory of motivation relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory argues that human needs are hierarchically organized, ranging from the most basic (e.g., food, shelter, need for security) to more complex (e.g., the need for self-expression and art).

**Table 13. Human goals**

Type	Specific	Effect
Basic Goals	food, shelter, need for security	failure to have these will make one more vulnerable to persuasive arguments
Higher Goals	money, power and control, need for self-expression, art, aesthetics etc  consistency of belief systems, coherence between attitudes, beliefs values and behaviours, ,need for meaning, need for acceptance of others	Who does the target audience aspire to be as a person?  What are the target audience members' goals?  What is important to the TA?

The major problem with Maslow, however, is that it presents a very constrained view of the many different motivations behind human behaviour.

Another way to think about human needs is in terms of their motivation and goals. Psychologists have argued that people are motivated in different ways. Some of the most prominent ways in which people are motivated include (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004):

- Maintaining positive relationships with other people
- Being accurate and consistent in light of available information
- Maintaining a positive and consistent self concept

People naturally vary in the importance of these motivations. Some people work to maintain a positive self-image and are less concerned about how others see them. Other people may be willing to change their self-image to conform with the views of others (conformity).

The persuasive arguments that should be used in a given situation should target the primary goal of the TA at that point. Examples are shown the following table.

**Table 14. Human motivations**

Motivation	Examples of how this motivation is expressed
Maintaining positive relationships with other people	This makes people more likely to see things as others see them in order to gain acceptance (Asch, 1955).
Being accurate and consistent in light of available information	This motivation is expressed in the activities that preserve consistency. Hence, if someone has already done a behaviour a certain way, they will likely redo it similarly. Otherwise, they may appear inconsistent.
Maintaining a positive and consistent self concept	People tend to protect themselves from negative or inconsistent information about who they are. For example, everyone thinks they are a good driver even though this is logically impossible (given road accident statistics)

It might also be important to define the urgency of the goal, in terms of critical, short-term, and long-term goals; these consideration may help to define the phasing or timeliness of the resulting psychological operations.

**Step 2: Identify the attitudes, beliefs and values of the target audience**

- Who does the target audience aspire to be as a person?
- What are the target audience members' goals?
- What are the target audience members' core values?

Attitudes with the following qualities are likely to be the easiest to change during persuasive attempts:

**Table 15. Attitudes that are easiest to change**

Vulnerable attitudes	Examples	General pattern
Weak or less central attitudes	Some attitudes are strong (e.g., love for one's children) and some are less strong (e.g., liking cheeseburgers).	In general, weaker attitudes exert less impact on behaviour, are less accessible, and are easier to change
Attitudes that have multiple "sides"	Attitudes toward a given object can be complex, such as both liking (because it's good for us) and hating (because it takes effort) physical exercise	Attitudes with multiple sides are easier to change by working to highlight the negative aspects, and gradually discounting the positive parts of the attitude
Attitudes that implicate conflicting roles or identities (e.g., Nelson and Garst, 2005)	Attitudes sometimes implicate multiple roles (e.g., coaching one's child at soccer). In this case, the coach might have strong attitudes about the importance of playing the best player, while wanting his own child to have the most time)	Again, when attitudes are in conflict within two roles, these attitudes are more easily attacked by highlighting the negatives and discounting positives

### Step 3: Demographic characteristics of the TA

**Many different demographic characteristics of the TA are relevant. These include:**

- Gender
- Religion
- Age
- Education level
- Socioeconomic status
- Occupation

### Step 4: Intersection of attitudes and values with demographic characteristics

(e.g. people from X tribe have had a long history with a particular issue)

### Step 5: Symbols and graphics that are relevant to the TA

- Must be easily recognizable
- Must have meaning for the TA
- Must convey or support the argument



## 2.6 Susceptibility of the target audience to the persuasive argument

As noted earlier, the vulnerabilities of the target audience also represent their susceptibility to the target argument. Three main factors are relevant. These include:

- Risks of engaging in target behaviour
- Rewards for engaging in target behaviour
- Consistency with attitudes, values and beliefs

These 3 issues often work in tandem to influence whether or not a persuasive argument will be effective. For example, simply “upping” the reward of engaging in a specific behaviour may be enough to promote the behaviour in some cases. However, for many people, if the target behaviour is inconsistent with their desired attitudes and values, it will be harder to change behaviour. The problem is that individuals are likely to be uniquely affected by risks and rewards, because of their attitudes, beliefs and values, so a “one size fits all” approach will be ineffective.

## 2.7 Accessibility of the target audience and media used

Understanding how best to get the argument to the target audience requires consideration of the following issues:

- How does TA receive information currently?
- What are the most credible media and familiar formats
- What media are most practical for PSYOPS to use to access TA?

How a persuasive argument is delivered will also influence its persuasiveness. The table that follows shows the primary advantages and disadvantages of each of the following forms of argument transmission:

**Table 16. Pros and cons of media**

Modality	Advantage or Disadvantages
Face-to-face	More credible than less personal media leading to greater influence
	More cognitively rich than computer-mediated communications and more influential
	More effective in emotion-based influence (e.g., making promises or threats; Wilson, 2003) than computer-based media
Video or face-to-face	Allows receiver to perceive subject data such as tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions
	Allows receiver to compare him/herself with the source to determine whether compliance will result in social gains or not
Computer-based/Internet	Credibility attributed to site impacted by the credibility of the author/institution, design of interface, attractiveness of graphics, ease of use, links to and from the website
	The user's need for the information also impacts credibility. That is the greater the user's need for the information, the greater the credibility the user will attribute to the site
	Less effective for persuasion than face to face (Wilson, 2003)
	Print and television both more effective than internet (Dijkstra et al. 2005)
Anonymous Source	Source perceived to be less trustworthy, less competent, less persuasive, and less influential

Modality	Advantage or Disadvantages
	When social identity concerns are introduced (e.g., focus on getting a task done), anonymity can influence behaviour

## 2.8 Best route to persuasion based on TAA

The target audience analysis should culminate in a discrete and deliberate attempt to determine the best way to influence the TA. It is well established in research that there are 2 different ways to persuade people. One way is to use high quality, coherent arguments with strong supporting evidence to persuade them to accept the targeted argument. If the individual has the necessary resources, and is likely to process the persuasive argument, he is likely to do deep or systematic processing. Any change in attitudes and/or behaviour will be longer lasting, and will be easier to maintain.

If the individual is not able to devote the attention necessary to process the argument thoroughly, or if the TA is unmotivated to do so, the next best route to persuasion is through shallow processing. This form requires less effort and attention, and may sometimes even be automatic. Each of these forms of processing is described in more detail in the following table.

**Table 17. Deep vs. shallow processing**

TA likely to do:	Deep Processing	Shallow Processing
State of the TA, based on conditions, vulnerability and susceptibility	TA has the skills and resources necessary to do so and/or is motivated to process the persuasive argument.	TA does not have the skills and/or resources necessary to do deep processing and/or is not motivated to process the persuasive argument
How does this form of processing work?	The strength of the persuasive argument relies on its content, its ability to provide rational support for its assertions, and on the ability of the TA to process it systematically	The strength of the persuasive argument relies on its ability to persuade the TA using alternate or peripheral means (e.g., glittering generalities, testimonials, use of emotion, common ground, expert testimony) that do not rely on the logic and coherence of the argument
Pros and cons	Deep processing leads to attitudes which will be more resistant. However, it is difficult both to achieve a strong argument and to ensure that the TA analyses it in depth, therefore it is harder to elicit attitude change using deep processing.	Effective at generating the desired response if the TA is not carefully processing the argument, however the behaviour may fade following deeper analysis by the TA.
Ideal conditions for use	When main argument is expected to be strong, and/or the TA is likely to be able and motivated to process carefully, or can be made to submit the argument to deep processing.	TA is likely to be unable or unmotivated to process the argument carefully, shallow processing can achieve persuasion when main argument is weaker (e.g., few supporting arguments or evidence, not logical or coherent)

In the end, the decision about how to target a persuasive argument will need to consider what really motivates the individual, and the opportunity that the target audience will have to process the persuasive argument.

This decision is critical, because it will determine what route to persuasion is likely to be most effective. In turn, knowing the optimal route to persuasion will affect the appeals, techniques and



influence principles that should dominate when presenting the argument. It is important to note that these forms of processing are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Actually, both are normally present in attempts to influence; however, one form will typically dominate in most situations. Knowing what you have and knowing what you don't have is key; working with the argument to strengthen it will increase its effectiveness to deep processors while shrouding the argument in an alternate appeal will render it more effective for shallow processors.

### 3. Persuasive PSYOPS Arguments

As noted, there are two main routes to persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Wood, 2000). The goal of most persuasive arguments is to get people to process the argument carefully, to think about it, and to elaborate on it. This is called deep (or systematic) processing. When these arguments are carefully attended to by the TA, they will typically be more persuasive.

The other way to be persuasive is to use shallow or peripheral techniques to enhance the persuasiveness of the arguments. These techniques are intended to assist persuasion when strong and logical arguments are not available, or when the target audience is not able to process these arguments. For example, using an expert to present a persuasive argument may strengthen its appeal. These techniques are intended to give the persuasive argument more credibility. These techniques promote shallow (or peripheral) processing (rather than systematic processing).

The following sections describe how to create persuasive arguments that are geared to whether the target audience is using deep or shallow processing to understand these arguments.

#### 3.1 Develop the argument concept

At the early stages, it is important to identify the broad concept content. This does not necessarily mean the final refined argument, but the broad type of information that needs to be conveyed and the supporting arguments that might aid the persuasive power of the argument.

Considerations at this point include:

- What is the broad argument that needs to be conveyed?
- What is the persuasive argument trying to get the target to do? (e.g., change behaviour, attitudes, or motivation)
- What is the ultimate goal of the argument?
- Given the ultimate goal, what units of information are critical to the argument? What must be communicated?
- Arguments are comprised of both explicit content (what you say) and implicit content (how you say it).

Explicit content contains the information that the argument provides. This information may be written text, symbols, or audio and video.

These multiple units of information must all give either overlapping or at least consistent arguments. Beyond the bits of information, the argument also contains implicit information beyond the meaning of the argument that may persuade the target audience to accept the argument. This additional meaning can be promoted through narrative, symbolism, and the use of other supporting features, as shown in Table 18.

**Table 18. Different aspects of arguments**

Essential Features	Supporting Features
Words and language	Audio (e.g., music)
Symbols and images	Use of space
Actions	Colour

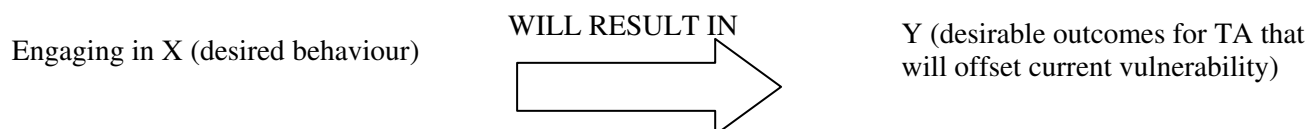
Essential Features	Supporting Features
	Font Length Flow Style Tone

### 3.2 Develop the main argument

Once the overall concept of the argument is clear, the main argument can be created. The main argument presents the reason that the TA should behave in the desired way. It tells the TA:

- WHAT behaviour they should perform
- WHY they should perform it (based on one or more vulnerabilities)
- HOW it will benefit them if they do perform the behaviour

To create the main argument, link the desired behaviour with one or more of the vulnerabilities. General format (US PSYOPS, 2007, p. 2-24) is:



**Target vulnerability: Lacking food and shelter**

**Target susceptibility: Will be more likely to be persuaded by arguments promising better food/shelter.**

WHAT behaviour they should perform	WHY they should perform it (based on vulnerabilities)	HOW they will benefit if they perform the behaviour
Not supporting the Taliban	Supporting the Taliban has led to the current conditions. Only stopping support will promote improvement in access to food and shelter	More equal distribution of community resources, hence better food and shelter and less TA vulnerability

**Target vulnerability: Strong personal values about the importance of democracy**

**Target susceptibility: Will be more persuaded by arguments that link personal values with target behaviour.**

WHAT behaviour they should perform	WHY they should perform it (based on vulnerabilities)	HOW they will benefit if they perform the behaviour
Encouraging voting behaviour	By voting you will be making a strong statement about the importance of democracy.	By voting, you will strengthen your community, because all communities rely on the democratic process

### 3.3 Develop supporting arguments

Supporting arguments are intended to strengthen the power of the main argument. Considerations when designing persuasive arguments include:

- Does the main argument have supporting arguments?
- How many supporting arguments are there?
- Is there evidence to support the assertions of the argument?
- How concrete is the evidence that supports the argument?
- Is the evidence likely to resonate with the target?
- Has the target personally experienced the evidence? Been indirectly exposed to the evidence?
- Does the evidence point toward a consistent conclusion? (Corroborating evidence)?
- How credible are the people reporting the evidence (i.e., the source) in the eyes of the target?
- Would a fair and unbiased person within the target’s domain of influence agree that the evidence presented supports the argument’s assertions?

**Table 19. Example of strong vs. weak argument**

Overall argument theme and/or goal	Stronger argument	Weaker argument
Taliban is a problem	The Taliban is not working in the best interest of Afghans. They have burned schools and violated basic human rights.	The Taliban is not doing what they have promised.

### 3.4 Assessing argument strength

Even at this early stage, it is critical to step back and to assess the probable strength of the persuasive argument as a whole (that is, main argument and supporting arguments). It is important to note that not every persuasive argument can be strong. For example, sometimes the aim is to get people to do things that are not logical and/or in their best interests (e.g., tobacco companies trying to market products shown to be very damaging to public health). Influence agents need to be aware of whether or not they have a strong and legitimate argument that they are trying to refine and present to the target audience. This preliminary assessment of argument strength should guide which appeals, techniques and persuasion principles should be used.

Making this preliminary assessment will require consideration of all the critical steps to this point, including the conditions of the target audience, the vulnerability and susceptibility of the target audience.

The judgement of the strength of the main argument should be based on a rational analysis at the start. This should include the following:

- Probability that the TA will comprehend the argument as intended
- Number of supporting arguments
- Concrete evidence presented in supporting arguments
- Evidence that target can personally verify through experience
- Are the assertions of the persuasive argument logical and coherent?
- Is the argument likely to be understood by the target audience in the way intended?
- If mixed modalities (e.g., text, visual), do all of the units of information give the same argument?

The next judgement must be a more intuitive one. To what extent will the argument resonate with the target audience? Will it capture their attention? Will they process it as intended? Do they have the resources necessary to do so?

### 3.5 Best route to persuasion combining argument strength and TA

At this stage, it is now important to combine what is known about the persuasive argument (i.e., its strengths and weaknesses) with the information known about the target audience. The difficult decision to make at this point is the best way to persuade the target audience.

**Table 20. Argument strength and TA matrix**

State of the TA	Expected strength of the persuasive argument	
	Strong argument	Weak argument
Motivated and able (deep processing expected)	Strong argument, capable and motivated TA – Best case scenario  Arguments can be more complex, because targets are able to process carefully	Weak argument, capable and motivated TA  Need to be careful here, because they will be looking close, but if the argument is weak, and they will know it. This is where glittering appeals, experts (i.e., anything that make the argument appear more credible may be helpful) may be required
Unmotivated and/or unable (shallow processing expected)	Strong argument, incapable and/or unmotivated TA – Even if there is a good argument, the TA may not be able or motivated to process it. must supplement strong argument with techniques that require little effort and/or attention	Weak argument, incapable and/or unmotivated TA – must expect shallow processing and use alternate routes to persuasion. In this case, whatever shallow techniques can be used to give either direct or indirect legitimacy to the argument are necessary. Worst case scenario

It is important to note that these two types of processing are not entirely discrete, and that with any specific situation, both types of processing are likely to occur. In designing persuasive arguments, then, the key is knowing which form of processing is likely to dominate, but to create arguments that “pull” for both types in order to cover all possible routes to persuasion

#### 3.5.1 Techniques to use when TA likely to do deep processing

Techniques are general principles that should be used when attempting to create persuasive arguments. These techniques do not wholly constrain or determine the actual content of the argument and do not determine the appeal (argument themes) used.

The table that follows shows several rules of thumb that can be used to make persuasive arguments that the target audience is likely to attend to carefully more effective:

**Table 21. Techniques when TA is likely to use deep processing**


Characteristics of Effective Persuasive Arguments	Theoretical Explanation	Salient Example from Popular Media	Examples of PSYOPS implementation
Short and sweet (Simplification)	On average, simple arguments will be more effective than complex arguments (as brief as possible but profound is the goal)	Just do it (NIKE). Fight fear, fight chaos (Canadian Forces).	Your village belongs to you and your tribe. Resist the Taliban. Make the fear stop. Vote in the election.
Call to action	Motivate a change - Effective arguments make a call for the desired action and tell the target exactly what they need to do (target behaviour).	Commit to save your 20% (Energy Saving Trust)	If you care about your children's future, then vote!
Shock value	Getting attention - Arguments that provide high contrast (e.g., are unexpected) will be more persuasive	Diamond Shreddies - unexpected that the advertiser thinks it's "new and improved"	The Taliban is working..... ....to destroy <u>your</u> quality of life The first part violates expectations by being positive – the second part drives the core argument home
Provide facts and figures	Arguments that are strong (e.g., logical, coherent and giving convincing evidence) are more persuasive	ING Direct ads	Arguments about how many people have been negatively affected by Taliban
Tell me a story	Argument that "tell a story" (i.e., narratives) are more effective – (e.g., sympathetic character facing complication, leading to successful outcome)	Workplace anti-smoking campaign with second hand smoker Heather Crowe telling her tale	Creating a progressive campaign that shows the quality of life of a local citizen who performed the desired behaviour
Weigh in (presenting the other side)	Two-sided arguments (that present and then refute the alternative argument) are more persuasive than one-sided arguments	Political attack arguments – Harper's use of "NOT A LEADER" against Dion	The Taliban says they represent your best interests. If this is true, why is your quality of life worse than it's ever been?
Emotional impact (could be either deep or surface processing)	Arguments that promote thinking <u>and</u> feeling are more effective than either alone	Church of Latter Day Saints campaigns promoting family values  World Vision ads with starving children and families	Narratives that tap emotion by describing hardship facing similar people  Ads that show the negative impacts of ethnic violence from the perspective of a devastated survivor



### 3.5.2 Techniques to use when TA likely to do shallow processing

Table XX shows several rules of thumb that can be used to make persuasive arguments that receive only limited attention from the target audience:

**Table 22. Techniques when TA is likely to use shallow processing**

Characteristics of Effective Persuasive Arguments	Theoretical Explanation	Salient Example from Popular Media	Examples of PSYOPS implementation
Glittering generalities	Emotionally charged words that portray highly valued concepts and beliefs in the absence of fact or reason (e.g., honour, glory, love of country or home)	Political arguments	Arguments promoting the need to behave in a certain way to promote freedom or democracy
Under the radar	If an argument is inherently weak (e.g., lacking evidence or coherence), use easy arguments that enable jumping to quick conclusions	Cigarette ads	Arguments that make a quick (and unestablished) link between 2 issues (e.g., if you care, then vote)
Emotional impact (could be either deep or surface processing)	Arguments that promote thinking <u>and</u> feeling are more effective than either alone	Church of Latter Day Saints campaigns promoting family values  World Vision ads with starving children and families	Narratives that tap emotion by describing hardship facing similar people  Ads that show the negative impacts of ethnic violence from the perspective of a devastated survivor
It's all about you	Arguments that match target's own interests will be more persuasive	"We do it all for you." McDonald's ad campaign	Arguments that emphasize personal benefits of working to promote democracy
Avoid too much of a good thing	Some repetition of arguments is good. But if argument is not personally relevant to TA, may become annoying if too much repetition. If so, might have the opposite effect	Sleep Country Canada ads Hearing the ads on every radio station every morning may become annoying	
Mystery	Arguments that are gradually revealed (stories that unfold). Arguments that create a sense of suspense (i.e., to make the listener want to know more) are more effective	Bell Canada "ER" campaign in 2008  	Arguments that progressively signal the introduction of a new social program

Characteristics of Effective Persuasive Arguments	Theoretical Explanation	Salient Example from Popular Media	Examples of PSYOPS implementation
Make them smile	We like things that we associate with what makes us happy.	Tide commercial associating using their product with warm summer days  Diamond Shreddies	Arguments that use humour or are intended to give positive information
Instill some fear	Low to moderate levels of fear increases processing of persuasive arguments	Workplace safety ads showing injuries:  “There really are no accidents”	Arguments that highlight the negative consequences of specific actions (e.g., failing to respect basic human rights could promote arrests)
Authority and/or expert testimony	Arguments that use authority symbols are more persuasive.	Expert spokesperson arguments	Arguments provided by local tribe leaders, acknowledged experts etc.
Transference	Attempt to shift responsibility or blame from one object to another	Political attack ads	Arguments suggesting that the Taliban is responsible for the poor quality of life, not coalition forces
Name-calling	Attempt to negatively label target to make it less acceptable to the TA	Harper’s attacks on Dion during the 2008 election	Let’s call the Taliban what they are: hoodlums
Plain folks or common man	Arguments that portray the source of a persuasive argument as similar to the target audience	Barack Obama emphasizing his humble roots, even though wealthy and powerful  George W. Bush and his “folksy” persona	Coalition forces want what you want

Of course, not all of these characteristics can be included in a given persuasive argument. The key is focusing on the overall argument concept, and deciding which of these characteristics can be integrated into a persuasive argument.

### 3.6 Appeals (Argument Themes)

Appeals relate to the actual content of the argument, and contain key argument themes. Even though the theme could be manifested in a number of ways, the key is that the content of the argument is determined by the appeal.

**Table 23. Appeals (argument themes)**

Name of the appeal	Elements of the appeal	Why it works	PSYOPS example
Least of evils	Present the target behaviour as the best option available in the midst of more undesirable options	People are motivated to choose the best option because they want to be accurate. Most effective when combined with deep processing	If you don’t support coalition forces, you are supporting the Taliban.

Name of the appeal	Elements of the appeal	Why it works	PSYOPS example
Inevitability	Present future events as being unavoidable	Inevitability makes concrete assertions of what might happen (logical and rational), and typically relies on fear of harm (emotional appeal). Most effective when combined with deep processing	It's just a matter of time before the Taliban ruins your village
Self-interest (gain/loss)	Focuses on potential benefits or losses relevant to the target audience	Relies on human motivation to seek gains and avoid risks. Most effective when combined with deep processing	Think about what you have to lose if you don't vote
Legitimacy	Consists of appeals to higher sources: Authority – laws, regulation Reverence – highly valued entities (e.g. Pope or Dali Lama Tradition – what has always been done Loyalty – to valued groups (e.g., friends, family)	Legitimacy appeals rely either on shared authority as the result of common systems or institutions (authority and tradition), or on shared values and attitudes (reverence and loyalty)	Coalition forces have been asked by the rest of the world to help you. Give them your support.
Ingroup / outgroup	Emphasizes differences between people in one's own group and people in other groups (e.g., differences among tribes)	Relies on commonality, the need to be consistent with relevant others	You're either a part of the problem or a part of the solution
Bandwagon	The more similar the person displaying the behaviour to the target, the better. Focus on the similarities between the argument person and the target. People tend to like others who are similar to them. Pulls for seeing oneself as a member of a larger group, and needing to conform to that group's actions	Relies on commonality, the need to be consistent with relevant others	Join with your tribe members to make life better for everyone
Nostalgia	Emphasizes days gone by, either positively (i.e., remember when things were better) or negatively (i.e., your life is worse than it used to be)	Relies on shared memories of the past, commonality	Remember the high quality of life you had before the Taliban?

### 3.7 Primary principles of influence

Within the field of persuasion, the work of Dr. Robert Cialdini represents the most established and empirically-based research and theory available to persuasion practitioners in an accessible form (e.g., Cialdini, 2001). This section describes six key principles of persuasion as advanced in his work.

**Table 24. Primary influence principles**

Principle and definition	How to implement	Why does it work	Implementation examples
<p>Principle of Reciprocity</p> <p>Giving to others makes them more likely to give back.</p>	<p>To exert influence, give without strings attached whenever possible</p> <p>This can be a number of things, including giving information, sharing resources, giving concessions, exerting any kind of effort for someone else</p>	<p>If you give freely to other people without explicitly requesting anything back, they are likely to feel pressured to do the same.</p> <p>If your giving is dependent on getting something back in return, this creates less pressure because it's more like a business exchange, and people are less obliged to give back if it's "just business"</p>	<p>Providing free food will encourage people to buy more (e.g., Costco samples)</p> <p>Within a gun disarmament program, it might be beneficial to give local villagers passing by a gift or cash. This could occur at the same site requesting them to bring in their weapons on subsequent days.</p> <p>Sharing secrets, offering "insider information" as a way of eliciting information from others</p>
<p>Principle of Consistency</p> <p>People try to be consistent with their previous behaviour (e.g., Festinger, 1957)</p>	<p>Three different strategies are relevant to using the consistency principle. To exert influence, promote commitment that is:</p> <p>Active (e.g., writing things down)</p> <p>Public (e.g., make sure other people see the commitment)</p> <p>Effortful (e.g., some hardship, energy enhances commitment)</p>	<p>Commitment works because people strive to be consistent and rational. Getting them to behave in the direction of the target behaviour (however small) will make them more likely to show the full behaviour because doing otherwise would make them seem inconsistent. This is particularly true if their original act was active, public and/or difficult in some way.</p> <p>To use this principle, it is important to avoid offering incentives – the behaviour must be freely chosen.</p>	<p>Break the behaviour down into multiple steps and get people to commit to the least threatening early step.</p> <p>For example, if working to promote voting behaviour, it might be advantageous to get people together to discuss the importance of voting in the days leading up to the election. This would make them more likely to actually vote, because to do otherwise would be inconsistent with previous actions of saying that voting was important.</p>
<p>Principle of Social Proof</p> <p>People tend to follow what other people do.</p>	<p>To promote persuasion, get lots of people (even confederates) displaying the target behaviour.</p>	<p>The behaviour of other people provides important information about what is acceptable and desirable, and can act as a guide for our own behaviour.</p> <p>This will be most effective when the behaviour is relatively simple.</p>	<p>Increase helping behaviour by showing people helping</p> <p>Showing videos of people voting in high numbers to promote more voting behaviour</p>

Principle and definition	How to implement	Why does it work	Implementation examples
<p>Principle of Liking</p> <p>People are influenced by what they like.</p>	<p>To promote influence, use:</p> <p>Attractive people or things</p> <p>Emphasize similarity and use compliments</p> <p>Use personal appeals</p>	<p>We like people or things that are more attractive</p> <p>We are more likely to believe people who are like us</p> <p>We like people who praise us</p> <p>We respond better to appeals that are specific to us.</p>	<p>Liking extends to things. Persuasive materials should be attractive and professional looking.</p> <p>Persuasive appeals should come from people who are similar and/or attractive</p>
<p>Principle of Scarcity</p> <p>People want things that are scarce (more than things that are not scarce).</p>	<p>To promote influence, make opportunities seem unique to a specific group (e.g., limited or privileged attendance), and/or time limited.</p>	<p>We want what we believe we cannot have. Things take on more value when they are less available.</p>	<p>In a local disarmament campaign, argue that only a limited number of weapons would be accepted (actually limit the number, but make it high).</p>
<p>Principle of Authority</p> <p>People are influenced by what they perceive as legitimate authorities.</p>	<p>To promote influence, use authoritative figures to promote the argument, experts, high credibility sources</p>	<p>We are more likely to yield to experts and/or people in power than people not in power.</p>	<p>In a local disarmament campaign, use village elders to instruct locals to turn in their weapons.</p>

### 3.8 Using sources to deliver persuasive arguments

A key technique typically used to bolster the effectiveness of persuasive arguments involves using sources to deliver the argument. This technique is especially prominent when the strength of the argument is low.

**Table 25. Using sources to deliver persuasive arguments**

Source Effects	How to Implement
<p>How does the source of a persuasive argument influence its effectiveness?</p> <p>In general:</p> <p>highly credible or expert sources promote more attitude change than low credibility sources</p> <p>more powerful sources are more persuasive</p> <p>more physically attractive sources are more persuasive</p>	<p>Within this domain, who does the target audience believe to be a credible or trustworthy source? This credibility is achieved through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) demonstrated success</li> <li>2) reputation</li> <li>3) overcoming adversity</li> <li>4) lineage</li> </ol>
<p>How are they effective?</p> <p>Having a credible/expert/trusted source is intended to promote less careful processing of persuasive arguments.</p>	<p>If the source is an expert, for example, there is less need to process a argument critically. So, using specific sources to relay a argument can take "pressure off" having to rely on the content of the argument to persuade people.</p>

<b>Source Effects</b>	<b>How to Implement</b>
<p>Use persuasive sources to deliver a argument when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target is unable or unmotivated to process argument carefully</li> <li>• Arguments are inherently weak</li> <li>• Target audience has positive prior attitudes about the target argument</li> <li>• Argument is complex or quantitative</li> </ul>	<p>Source credibility – expertise and trustworthiness</p> <p>Sources with less obvious motivation to persuade will be more effective – e.g. overhearing rather than being specifically targeted</p> <p>Turn around – adversaries argument will be less persuasive if targets informed of their forthcoming arguments</p> <p>Physical attractiveness helps when source not an expert</p> <p>Some evidence that high source credibility can diminish persuasion in some cases (when arguments are strong, it's better to be highly credible). when weak argument, better persuasion when low credibility</p> <p>Depends on perceived trustworthiness of source too – when highly trustworthy, less effortful acceptance. source credibility matters more when argument weak.</p>

## 4. Specific Compliance Techniques

Several compliance techniques prominent in the literature are relevant to PSYOPS contexts. For the most part, these compliance techniques have typically been researched at the individual rather than the broader group level, and rely on face-to-face interaction in their typical utilization. This chapter presents a number of compliance techniques prominent in the literature, and provides definitions of them, descriptions of how they work, and advice on implementing these techniques.

The compliance techniques reviewed include:

- Foot-in-the-door
- Low balling
- Disrupt then reframe
- Door-in-the-face (Rejection then retreat)
- That's not all
- Fear then relief

**Table 26. Foot-in-the-door technique**

Name of Technique:	Foot-in-the-door Technique
Overview of the Technique:	Initial (e.g., small request) proposal accepted by target is immediately followed by a less attractive proposal (e.g., larger request) that target finds difficult to resist because of the smaller previous concession. The key to this technique is getting people to perform some type of <u>action</u> , regardless what this action is. This action changes how they see themselves (self-image).
Context for Optimal Usage:	Need to be able to identify a small behaviour (highly likely to get agreement) and a target behaviour – see complications.
Steps to Implement the Technique:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify ultimate target behaviour</li> <li>2) Identify small concession that has a high probability of agreement – does not necessarily need to be linked with target behaviour – just requires action</li> <li>3) Present opportunity for small concession (and assess progress if possible)</li> <li>4) Seek large concession or ultimate target behaviour</li> </ol>
Complications:	Delay between the first request and the target request matters. Must not be too long. The size of the original request matters. It must not be too big, or it might alienate the TA
Historical Example of this Technique:	During the Korean War, American POWs held in camps run by Chinese Communists were highly likely to comply with their captors (e.g., inform on their fellow captives, report escape plots), and very few wholly avoided collaboration with the Chinese. To get the American POWs to collaborate with them, the Chinese started small and built big. They began by frequently asking POWs to make mildly anti-American or pro-Communist statements, such as “The US is not perfect” or “In a Communist country, unemployment is not a problem”. Once these minor requests were complied with, POWs were asked to make more substantive requests. For example, a POW who had just agreed that the US is not perfect would be asked to indicate a few ways that he felt it wasn’t perfect. He would then be asked to make a list of the “problems with America” and sign his name at the bottom of the page. Subsequently, he would be asked to read his list during a discussion group with other POWs. He might then be asked to write an essay about the problems and discuss them in greater detail. The Chinese might then broadcast his paper, identifying the POW as the author, on an anti-American radio broadcast beamed to the camp, other POW camps in North Korea, and American forces in South Korea. At this point, the POW would find himself to be a collaborator who had said these things without much coercion. Consequently, the POW would change his self-image to be in line with that of “collaborator”, which often led to more collaborative acts. (Cialdini, 1993, p. 70-71).
PSYOPS Example	This technique could be used by working incrementally to get people close to polling station in the days leading up the local election. For example, by offering freebies in the building across from the polling station in the preceding days, people may be more likely to return on successive days. On the day of the election, making “freebies” contingent on having entered the polling station may promote the desired behaviour.
Why Does It Work?:	People work to be consistent. Once they have made a small concession, resisting a large one could make them appear inconsistent. Moreover, when request is made in more public forum (e.g., face to face) we do not want to violate other’s expectations (e.g., the person asking for concessions), so social pressure plays a role too.
Research or More Information:	Freedman & Fraser, 1966; Rodafinos et al., 2005



**Table 27. Low-ball technique**

Name of Technique:	Low-Ball Technique
Overview of the Technique:	Target is requested to engage in a specific behaviour and receives an external incentive for doing so. Once the target has agreed to engage in the behaviour, change the request to make the behaviour more involved (e.g., costs more, requires more time). The key to this technique is getting people to agree to the initial request. This agreement (combined with the drive to be consistent) pressures them to commit to subsequent requests.
Context for Optimal Usage:	When the influence agent has desirable goods to exchange. Need to make the initial request attractive to the target in order to get agreement.
Steps to Implement the Technique:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify ultimate desired behaviour</li> <li>2) Identify a behaviour that is more attractive and less costly, so there is a high probability the target will agree to engage in the behaviour</li> <li>3) Have target commit to the more attractive and less costly version of the behaviour</li> <li>4) Change the request to the more costly and less attractive behaviour</li> </ol>
Complications:	Target must believe that acceptance to the original request was his own free choice
Historical Example of this Technique:	The classic example of the low ball technique is taken from a sales technique used at car dealerships. A salesperson induces a customer to make an <i>active decision</i> to buy a car by offering an extremely good price, such as offering \$2,000 below competitors' price. Once the customer has made the decision to buy the car, and might have even begun completing the forms, the salesperson then removes the price advantage and informs the customer that the price is, in fact, \$2,000 higher (e.g., salesperson checks with the boss, who does not allow the deal because it is too low). Yet, the customer is more likely to purchase the automobile after going through this process than had he been provided the full price from the beginning.
PSYOPS Examples	Getting initial agreement from local to provide intelligence information about insurgent activities, and then "upping" the amount and quality of the information in exchange for the same incentives. 'Have you ever come in contact with the Taliban?' could lead to 'Who are the local Taliban facilitators?'
Why Does It Work?:	<p>People want to be consistent. Once they have agreed to an attractive request, their self-image is changed in line with the request. Refuting the subsequent request would be inconsistent with their new self-image.</p> <p>Once a person has committed to a request, he starts to think of a number of ways in which that request is beneficial. When the initial request is revoked, he has already generated other ways in which the behaviour is attractive.</p>
Research or More Information:	Cialdini, 2001

**Table 28. Disrupt then reframe technique**

Name of Technique:	Disrupt then Reframe Technique
Overview of the Technique:	Proposal presented to target contains an unexpected element in the conversation that subtly confuses target ("disrupt"). Target is then provided with persuasive appeal ("reframe") while still actively working to make sense of the unexpected element. The key to this technique is to have the disruption immediately followed by the reframe.
Context for Optimal Usage:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disruption must be subtle and cannot change the focus of the interaction.</li> <li>- Reframe can be blatant</li> <li>- Disruption must precede reframe</li> </ul>
Steps to Implement the Technique:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify ultimate target behaviour</li> <li>2) Subtly confuse target by introducing an unexpected element into the conversation (the "disruption") when requesting the behaviour</li> <li>3) Immediately follow up with a persuasive appeal (call to action) while the individual is still actively working to make sense of the unexpected element (the "reframing")</li> </ol>
Complications:	Delay between disrupt and the reframe matters. Must not be too long
Research Example of this Technique:	A researcher went door to door selling Christmas cards. People were asked to buy Christmas cards, and were quickly told that these cards cost 300 pennies (rather than the more typical \$3.00). This was the attempt at disruption. Immediately (2 sec) after this unusual request, the influence agent reframed the request, saying "that's \$3.00. It's a bargain" (the reframe). Twice as many cards were sold using the disrupt-then-reframe technique than when the appeal was simply for \$3.00 cards or an appeal promoting \$3.00 cards that were a bargain.
PSYOPS Examples	A PSYOPS operator engages a local powerbroker (village elder) and request that he encourage his fellow villagers to participate in representative parliamentary democracy (intimidating words), then reframes as explaining that all they need to do is vote for the person they wish to represent them (simple words).
Why Does It Work?:	When requested to do something, people often feel a simultaneous approach (i.e., they might expect to benefit from the request) and an avoidance response (i.e., they might incur a cost). Avoidance responses require time to develop counter-arguments. Strategically using a disruption may interrupt the avoidance response (from "What is this person's goals and motives?" to "What is this person saying?"), and may make the target more susceptible to the persuasive reframing of the offer.
Research or More Information:	Davis & Knowles, 1999 Fennis, Das, & Pruyn, 2006

**Table 29. Door-in-the-face technique**

Name of Technique:	Door-in-the-face Technique
Overview of the Technique:	Initial (e.g., extreme request) proposal denied by target is immediately followed by a more attractive proposal (e.g., small request) that target finds difficult to deny.
Context for Optimal Usage:	<p>Need to be able to identify an initial request that is unlikely to be agreed to and a target behaviour that is a more reasonable “compromise”. However, initial request cannot be too extreme. Extremely large requests are perceived to be unrealistic and do not promote “returning the favour” when a smaller request is made.</p> <p>Target must perceive that the influence agent willingness to lessen the extreme request is actually a legitimate concession.</p> <p>There should only be a short time lapse between initial (extreme) request and the request that follows (actual or target request).</p>
Steps to Implement the Technique:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify ultimate target behaviour (this is the actual request)</li> <li>2) Identify unreasonable request that has a low probability of agreement</li> <li>3) Present unreasonable request</li> <li>4) Follow up with more reasonable request</li> </ol>
Complications:	Once subsequent request has been agreed to, the target no longer feels an obligation to agree to any further requests
Historical Example of this Technique:	NATO asking for a higher number of troops than they actually expect to get from a particular country and then settling for the smaller number offered by that country
PSYOPS Examples	PSYOPS personnel might implement this technique by asking parents to allow their children to attend school until they have completed a high school-level education. In fact the objective is to achieve basic literacy and the PSYOPS operator can easily allow himself to be ‘negotiated down’.
Why Does It Work?:	<p>Reciprocity norm. We feel that if people do something for us, we are obligated to do something for them. The requester is seen as making a concession to the target (or doing a favour) by changing the request to something more reasonable. The target then feels obligated to do something for the requester (i.e., agree to the new request).</p> <p>Contrast principle: the large request makes the small request appear even smaller.</p>
Research or More Information:	Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004

**Table 30. That's-not-all technique**

Name of Technique:	That's-not-all Technique
Overview of the Technique:	Present target with an initial request, followed by an almost immediate addition to the request that will either reduce the cost of compliance or increase the benefit of compliance (i.e., sweeten the deal).
Context for Optimal Usage:	Must add to the deal before the target has an opportunity to respond.  There should not be a large gap between the initial and the subsequent request. If there is too great a discrepancy between the two, the technique will not work.
Steps to Implement the Technique:	There are several different forms of the technique. They include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering a progressive discount.</li> <li>• Adding additional incentives within the same offer</li> <li>• Starting with a high cost request and then reducing it</li> </ul>
Complications:	There cannot be a time gap between the initial request and the more attractive request.
Historical Example of this Technique:	Infomercial campaigns (e.g., Ginsu knives) use this strategy prominently, presenting the base product and progressively introducing more and more products for the same price
PSYOPS Examples	Making a persuasive appeal for local villagers to move to a safer location, by disclosing one of the small benefits (i.e., better access to water), followed by better food sources, followed by cash incentives offered to any family that moves
Why Does It Work?:	Reciprocity norm. We feel that if people do something for us, we are obligated to do something for them. The requester is seen as making a concession for the target by sweetening the deal and the target then feels obligated to do something for the persuader.
Research or More Information:	Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004  Burger et al., 1999

**Table 31. Fear then relief technique**

Name of Technique:	Fear then Relief Technique
Overview of the Technique:	Place target in a potentially negative situation (e.g., anxious, apprehension), then provide quick relief from the negative situation and immediately present the request.
Context for Optimal Usage:	Must have the anxiety followed by the relief.
Steps to Implement the Technique:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify target behaviour</li> <li>2) Induce anxious state in target</li> <li>3) Relieve target of anxious state</li> <li>4) Immediately present target with request</li> </ol>
Complications:	Must have the relief. It does not work if people remain in the negative mood.
Historical Example of this Technique:	People who were illegally parked returned to their car to find one of four things: 1. a summons to the police station under the windshield of their car, 2. an advertisement for a non-existent hair care product under the windshield of their car (that looked like it could have been a parking ticket from a distance), 3 an advertisement for a non-existent hair care product taped to the door of their car, or 4. had nothing attached to their car. All participants were then approached and asked to complete a 15 minute survey. Participants who had the advertisement under the windshield (fear then relief technique) were twice as likely to take part in the study (the desired behaviour) than those who had the ad taped to their door or had nothing on their car (control groups), and were seven times more likely to comply than participants who found a summons to attend the police station (anxiety alone).
PSYOPS Examples	A force might initially be taking aggressive stance toward a village by posturing itself to conduct a cordon & search operation (anxiety source), then provide an 'alternate' solution by requesting that the villagers turn in their weapons voluntarily (desired behaviour) in order to avoid the search of their homes (relief).
Why Does It Work?:	After people are relieved of anxiety provoking situations, they react in a relatively mindless manner making them more them more likely to comply with a subsequent request.
Research or More Information:	Dolinski and Nawrat, 1998

**Summary of Compliance Techniques:** As a whole, then, the compliance techniques considered in this section represent the most popular and well researched techniques available in the relevant literature. It is important to note that these techniques have been explored in relatively constrained contexts, and do not appear to have been empirically validated in the complex environments in which PSYOPS efforts are typically undertaken. Nonetheless, further understanding of these techniques adds substantively to the arsenal of PSYOPS experts and should not be dismissed.

## 5. Recommendations for Supporting CF PSYOPS

The following section presents recommendations directed at both information management (e.g., of the practitioner manual) and other goals that may assist CF PSYOPS efforts.

### 5.1 Information management guidelines

Given previous conversations with PSYOPS personnel, we assume that this “practitioners guide” will likely not exist as a usable standalone document, but that the parts of it that are deemed usable will simply be integrated into the existing PSYOPS techniques, tactics and procedures (e.g., Chapter 3, related to Target Audience analysis).

The practitioner manual was designed to be compatible with the materials most likely to be used by PSYOPS personnel, in particular Chapter 3 related to Target Audience Analysis.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1: Assess the usability of the practitioners guide**

Discuss the draft version of the practitioners’ guide with the PSYOPS personnel and get their feedback on the usability of this guide. This discussion should focus on the following issues:

- Broad structure of the manual – does it meet the needs of PSYOPS personnel?
- Language of the manual – is it maximally accessible to PSYOPS personnel?
- Provision of references for further reading
- Use of tables – are they effective?
- Quality and usefulness of the examples
- Is the manual equally helpful to both experienced and inexperienced personnel?
- Extent to which the manual can be easily integrated into existing PSYOPS TTPs.

In the longer term, the value of this guide will be determined by the perceived (and actual) usability of this guide by the full range of PSYOPS personnel, both inexperienced and experienced.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2: Systematic updating of the practitioners guide**

Given the speed with which the scientific and academic literature is progressing, and the concurrent changes as PSYOPS practices progress, it will be important to ensure that there is at least intermittent attention to updating the practitioner’s guide. It would be ideal to identify a means by which a yearly evaluation of the recency and relevance of the emerging practitioner guide could be analysed and updated as necessary. Rather than costly having to “catch up” with the literature on a yearly basis, it might be prudent to devise a means by which the relevant literature could be identified with as little effort as possible in order to stay current and abreast of the emerging literature. This could involve using automated mailers that search journal (and other relevant document) contents regularly. This stage, then, would involve continual gathering of all relevant information.

Once information is gathered, it would be important to identify with some systematic means by which the emerging information could be simplified and framed in user-friendly and

pragmatic terms. Any particularly relevant materials should be “tagged” for immediate coverage and brought to the attention of PSYOPS personnel.

Once simplified and/or reframed, this information would then need to be parlayed to the PSYOPS cell for integration into their TTPs and other relevant materials. As noted later in these recommendations, it will also be critical to ensure the highest possible level of incorporation of new information into the PSYOPS training system as well.

## 5.2 Recommendations for additional handbook development

Most of the recommendations that follow relate to areas that did not receive adequate attention or coverage in production of the practitioners’ handbook due to time constraints. More elaboration in the following areas would improve the quality and usefulness of the handbook.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: Further development of the persuasive techniques and appeals/argument themes and primary persuasion principles (Sections 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7).** It might be helpful to have time to take each of these sections one step further, and to attempt to link them more closely with the outcome of the target audience analysis. Depending on the vulnerabilities identified in the TAA and the probable condition of the TAA at the time of the persuasive appeal, some of the persuasion techniques are simply more logical. For example, when strong personal values (that run against the target behaviour) dominate the TAA’s views, and when the TAA is likely not going to be motivated, using persuasion techniques such as “under the radar” and “glittering generalities” would be likely to be more effective than trying to use logical arguments (such as “facts and figures”). As nothing similar exists in the US PSYOPS materials, it might be helpful to create a matrix that shows some of the most logical choices given the known information arising from the TAA, and from consideration of the potential strength of the argument. In addition, a more varied set of appeals (argument themes) with examples might also be helpful. As noted earlier, the current techniques have value, however, they seem selective and fail to address many other equally valid approaches that could be used to promote persuasion.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: Further elaboration of sections related to attitudes, values and beliefs, in relation to the TAA, and to the effectiveness of persuasion attempts (Section 2.3).** Relative to previous versions, the 2007 U.S. PSYOPS manual makes a good start at better depicting the role of attitudes and values in understanding the TAA. This handbook has aimed to further extend some of the information about attitudes (e.g., addressing the function of attitudes). However, in our view, this area remains quite underdeveloped, and does not currently capture the complexity of the knowledge about attitudes currently available in the psychology literature. This is unfortunate, because attitudes may play a crucial role in understanding how to persuade the target audience. Perhaps the most fruitful area and the area of most immediate need involves the ability of PSYOPS personnel to make a clear distinction between strong attitudes and weak attitudes.

Another issue to be explored in future efforts should be the relationship between attitudes and behaviours, or attitude-behaviour consistency. One relevant theory, for example, is the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), which argues that behaviours are affected by attitudes transformed into deliberate intentions, but are also influenced by subjective norms (i.e., perceptions about how relevant others support or do not support the behaviour). Subsequent versions of the Theory of Reasoned Actions (e.g., Ajzen, 1991) included the role of perceived behavioural control, that is, whether the individual saw himself as being capable of undertaking the target behaviour. An important extension of this issue relates to whether the TA would emit behaviour in a very deliberate way, or more spontaneously. When more

spontaneously, Fazio's MODE model (Fazio, 1990) of attitude-behaviour consistency may be relevant. This model argues that when forced to make spontaneous behavioural decisions, people are likely to "fall back" on their true underlying attitudes, rather than taking time to consider the pros and cons of a given action or behaviour.

**RECOMMENDATION 5: Add to the practitioners' handbook by creating a section related to counterPSYOPS issues.** Unfortunately, due to the need to focus on the most critical parts of the review, many issues relevant to counterPSYOPs could not be pursued. In the future, it would be helpful to have time to explore ways to promote resistance to persuasion (and how to overcome it). Relevant strategies include:

- Counterargument by discounting core of the persuasive argument
- Attacking the source of the argument
- Bolstering initial attitudes
- The role of forewarning in countering adversaries' arguments
- Promoting resistance to adversaries' arguments

**RECOMMENDATION 6: Add to the practitioners' handbook by creating a somewhat similar section related to majority and minority influence.** Although the previous literature review gave considerable coverage to majority and minority influence, time limitations made it impossible to address this issue in the practitioner handbook.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Add to the practitioners' handbook by taking more time to address the following issues, as identified by conversations with PSYOPS personnel:**

- Link the argument more clearly to the identified vulnerability
- Decompose arguments more fully to link to vulnerabilities
- Use the format used for compliance techniques for appeals
- Use the format used for compliance techniques for further elaborating on implementation of the 6 persuasion principles
- Add more information about what technique should be used for a specific argument, and provide examples that link to specific attitudes and features of the target audience (see Section 3.5)

### 5.3 Additional recommendations

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Promote a broader view of influence by extending the timeline to include both long-term and short-term change.** Given the longitudinal nature of current and probably many future operations, focusing solely on changing behaviour may miss some of the critical nuances within the future battlespace. This is the case for a number of reasons. First, some issues that influence campaigns would seek to address would not necessarily be conducive to the promotion of short-term behavioural change. It seems to make a distinction between short-term and longer term behavioural change. In such cases, working progressively and incrementally toward changing attitudes (with a view to changing behaviour in the longer term) may be much more realistic.

**RECOMMENDATION 8: Promote a broader view of influence to focus on changing behaviour, attitudes and motivation within the handbook.** This handbook follows the structure and tone of existing CF and US PSYOPS materials in focusing on behaviour as the



primary form of change sought during influence operations. There are many good reasons for focusing solely on behaviour. Behaviour is, of course, the most proximal indicator of attitudes, and there are certainly many cases in which TA behaviour is the only critical indicator (e.g., it doesn't matter what their attitude is toward voting in the local election, as long as they do vote). In this sense, behaviour is an objective indicator that is perhaps easier to objectify and to grasp. On the other hand, there are also many compelling reasons why training influence agents to focus on behaviour alone may not be adequate in the future battlespace. First, as many attitudes are broader than behaviours, understanding them provides a good window into what the TAA is likely to do in the future. For example, without understanding the attitudes of a given person or group, it may be difficult to anticipate all possible problematic behaviours. Using an influence campaign to get locals to stop planting IEDs in the road, for example, could simply lead to them engaging in an equally dangerous activity if the attitudes that underlie this behaviour are not understood. In short, focusing on the behaviour of the TA will help to provide information about WHAT they do, but does not necessarily help to understand WHY. If influence efforts can help to make subtle changes in the attitudes that underlie the behaviours, rather than just the behaviours, this would be the most effective route to persuasion.

**RECOMMENDATION 9: Promote consistency of PSYOPS training (i.e., at Peace Support Training Centre) and tools (e.g., practitioner guide).**

The practitioners' guide will only be helpful to the extent that PSYOPS personnel are able to make the leap between what they have been trained to do in their PSYOPS training at the Peace Support Training Centre and the tools that they actually use in the field. If these two define substantively different processes, or even if they describe the same processes but in different terminology, this could hinder effective conduct of PSYOPS. To guard against this, it might be helpful to explore means by which the usable content of the practitioners' guide could be "harmonized" with the approaches presented in PSYOPS training at PSTC. This consultation could include incorporation of some of the newer concepts and constructs into the PSYOPS course (e.g., deep vs. surface processing).

**RECOMMENDATION 10: Develop a usable database of ongoing influence theory and research.**

Given the speed with which literature is now accumulating, even highly motivated practitioners would be hard pressed to stay abreast of newly published theory and research relevant to the PSYOPS domain. Future work should work to establish a function by which new influence literature and research could be made accessible to CF personnel working to conduct PSYOPS. Although it is clear that the majority of the existing literature has not been conducted in the kind of environments faced by PSYOPS personnel, having a ready reservoir of information about influence might be helpful for "as needed" research about specific challenges faced in operations. Simply providing persuasion and influence articles, however, is not likely to be maximally helpful. What seems ideal is a searchable database of existing research, with its structure and content ideally being developed and refined with the end users (that is, CF personnel) in mind. This database should indicate the goals, measures, hypotheses and key findings of each study, as well as including a rating allowing more highly relevant research to "rise to the top". Such a database would hopefully provide a rich source of helpful information to influence personnel and researchers.

**RECOMMENDATION 11: Address issues of culture relevant to PSYOPS.**

One of the most prominent issues emerging from PSYOPS personnel as well as from the literature related to influence is the importance of understanding the nuances of culture in

order to create maximally effective persuasive arguments. PSYOPS personnel need to be cognizant of cultural differences. For example, even what makes an argument strong or valid in the view of people from North America could be very different in other cultures. To what extent are the assumptions about what makes a strong argument tenable within a given culture? What are the logical links that might currently be missing (e.g., in Western culture, we put value in being respectful about other people's religious choices, and social norms typically prevent us from putting pressure on people to convert them to our faith). In other cultures, this kind of behaviour might indicate concern for someone's well-being and future and/or afterlife.<sup>7</sup>

In the short term, as the CF has been involved in Afghanistan for some time, gathering together the vast expertise of PSYOPS personnel (and other CF personnel) about the nuances of culture within this unique operational context would be important. This could be done by conducting interviews with CF personnel with recent operational experience and essentially attempting to compile a cultural profile with respect to the probable attitudes, behaviours and motivations likely to impact on people within Afghani culture. This would probably require getting multiple perspectives in order to understand key differences in this culture that may not be immediately obvious.

**RECOMMENDATION 12: Creation of video, audio and/or print library database showing examples of different persuasion techniques in action to be used in training efforts or in the field.**

New PSYOPS personnel have much to learn as they become deployed and are expected to undertake PSYOPS activities. Many people learn best by viewing real-life examples rather than reading text. Hence, one way to promote their learning is by gathering together examples of persuasion principles in action. Copyright issues notwithstanding, video examples could easily be interlaced with text overlays that show the key elements of the principle, as described in the practitioners' handbook. Such examples would help to make less familiar terms more accessible and easier to understand.

**RECOMMENDATION 13: Creation of PSYOPS relevant measures.**

These would include measures of argument strength and overall PSYOPS effectiveness. The first would provide an initial measure of the argument strength of a persuasive argument. This would be intended to be used during argument development in order to determine the critical elements of the argument (given the target) and the most effective way to frame the persuasive argument. Measures of argument strength would allow influence personnel to pit several different versions of persuasive argument against each other to determine the most effective.

Secondly, a measure of argument effectiveness would work to quantify the impact of a persuasive argument once delivered. This tool could provide empirically based advice allowing PSYOPS personnel a systematic method by which they could quantify both the post-facto effectiveness of a persuasive argument.

Other critical tools include tools related to measuring existing TA attitudes. Knowing whether existing attitudes were changed by persuasive arguments is an important goal. Such tools have been developed in other areas (e.g., market research), and both direct and indirect measures of attitudes may be relevant.

**RECOMMENDATION 14: Consider additional relevant resources.**

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<sup>7</sup> This example from the experience of CF PSYOPS personnel.



As noted earlier, Dr. Robert Cialdini is perhaps the most prominent and highly respected researchers in the area of persuasion and attitude change. Fortunately, much of Cialdini's work is also highly accessible to practitioners with less familiarity with the more formal scientific and academic persuasion literature. Two important resources that are recommended as potential PSYOPS resources are training courses provided by Cialdini and colleagues (by their company called "Influence at Work", and books written by the same group.

"Influence at Work" offers a training course entitled "Principles of Persuasion", and is a 2-day workshop explaining how to implement the six key principles of persuasion advanced by Cialdini (see Section 1.3). This workshop is available at various times of the year in the United States and Canada. For further information, see <http://www.principlesofpersuasionworkshop.com/objectives.html>.

Other printed materials may also be helpful. For example, a recent book entitled "Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways To Be Persuasive" (Goldstein, Martin and Cialdini, 2008) provides very user-friendly and easily accessible accounts of key persuasion principles. This book (or excerpts from it) would be very appropriate for even personnel with very little experience with psychological constructs, and offers fairly easy to read accounts of persuasion concepts. Other book entitled "Influence: Science and Practice" (Cialdini, 2001) provides a somewhat less accessible but still valuable book that might be helpful for trainers.

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(U) This report is an extension to a previous literature review completed by Adams, Sartori and Waldherr (2007). This review explored the scientific, military and academic literature relevant to influence and persuasion. Stemming from this review, the current project was initiated in order to provide a more usable guide for Canadian Forces PSYOPS practitioners.

This report has 5 sections. The first provides a general overview of the area of influence and persuasion. The second section provides pragmatic advice related to conducting a target audience analysis. The third section explores characteristics of persuasive messages. This section explores techniques for creating influential messages, and notes the importance of understanding the prospective strength of a persuasive message in order to properly tailor it to the target audience. The fourth section presents several specific compliance techniques and provides both their theoretical underpinnings, as well as how to implement them in a PSYOPS context. The fifth and final section presents a series of recommendations addressing issues of information management, as well as offering a range of recommendations for future efforts that would further assist PSYOPS personnel to develop maximally persuasive messages.

(U) Le présent rapport s'inscrit dans le prolongement d'une analyse documentaire antérieure effectuée par Adams, Sartori et Waldherr (2007). Il s'agit d'un examen de la littérature scientifique, militaire et didactique se rapportant à l'influence et à la persuasion. Le projet actuel, qui découle de cet examen, a été entrepris afin d'offrir un guide plus utilisable aux spécialistes des OPSPSY des Forces canadiennes.

Le rapport compte cinq sections. La première donne un aperçu général du domaine de l'influence et de la persuasion. La deuxième section prodigue des conseils pragmatiques sur la conduite d'une analyse de l'audience-cible. La troisième examine les caractéristiques des messages persuasifs. Elle traite des techniques employées pour créer des messages influents et souligne l'importance de comprendre la force potentielle d'un message persuasif pour adapter convenablement ce dernier à l'audience-cible. La quatrième section présente plusieurs techniques de conformité spécifiques et indique à la fois leurs fondements théoriques et la façon de les mettre en œuvre dans un contexte d'OPSPSY. La cinquième et dernière section présente une série de recommandations portant sur des questions de gestion de l'information et offre également diverses recommandations en vue de futurs travaux qui aideront davantage le personnel des OPSPSY à élaborer des messages le plus persuasifs possible.

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(U) influence; persuasion; persuasive messages; PSYOPS

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