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ENVELOPE

(b)(3):10 USC 424

HEADER

P
021639Z MAR 01
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):10 USC 424
TO (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC / (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUCXONI/ONI WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RHFJUSC/US CUSTOMS SERVICE WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

RUCQVAB/USCINCSOC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

RUWSMXI/USCINCTrans (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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FM (b)(3):10 USC 424

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RUFGAID/USCINCEUR (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RUCQAAA/USCINCCENT (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RUEATIA/CIA WASHDC

RUETIAA/DIRNSA FORT GEORGE G MEADE MD

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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RUCXONI/ONI WASHINGTON DC

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BT

CONTROLS

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(b)(3):10 USC 424

IS SECTION 01

OF 02

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SERIAL:

(b)(3):10 USC 424

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) ISRAEL (IS).

(b)(3):10 USC 424

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SUBJECT:

(b)(1); (b)(3);10 USC 424; Sec. 1.4(c)

(U)

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 20010228.

(b)(3);10 USC 424

(b)(1); Sec. 1.4(c)

SUMMARY: (C)

STRUCTURE AND ROLES

OF HIS ORGANIZATION IN AL-AQSA INTIFADA. RECOGNIZES PALESTINIAN ADVANTAGES IN MEDIA WAR AND ATTEMPTING TO COUNTERACT BY ENSURING ISRAELI SIDE OF STORY IS HEARD.

TEXT: 1. (C)

(b)(1); Sec. 1.4(c)

THE BRIEFINGS WERE ON THE ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND ROLES OF THE SPOKESPERSON DIVISION AND THE CHALLENGES IT FACES IN THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA.

(b)(1); Sec. 1.4(c)

THE

MEDIA IS A FACTOR ON THE BATTLEFIELD THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED BY MILITARY PLANNERS PRIOR TO OPERATIONS. HE SAID IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE THE MEDIA TODAY AND THAT THE MEDIA IS NOT ONLY AN OBSERVER BUT AT TIMES CAN ALSO BE AN ACTOR THAT INFLUENCES DECISION MAKERS. IN "NORMAL, PEACEFUL" TIMES IN ISRAEL, HE SAID THERE ARE ABOUT 400 FOREIGN NEWS REPORTERS IN THE COUNTRY. DURING TIMES OF CRISIS - LIKE THE PRESENT - THIS NUMBER SWELLS TO ABOUT 2000. ADDITIONALLY, THERE ARE ABOUT 1000 DOMESTIC NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES AND 14 LOCAL RADIO STATIONS WITHIN ISRAEL. HE NOTED THAT WITHIN A FEW WEEKS A NEW ISRAELI TELEVISION CHANNEL MODELED AFTER CNN WILL BEGIN BROADCASTING.

(b)(1); Sec. 1.4(c)

(b)(1); Sec. 1.4(c)

"THIS WILL PUT US IN A LOT OF TROUBLE BECAUSE OF THE INTENSITY OF THE QUESTIONS THEY ASK." HE SAID ISRAEL IS SOUGHT AFTER BY JOURNALISTS BECAUSE OF ITS EASY ACCESS TO POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS; THE DEMOCRATIC AND LIBERAL NATURE OF ITS SOCIETY; FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN ISRAEL ("WE CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING"); THE GENERALLY COMFORTABLE LEVEL OF LIFESTYLE IN THE

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COUNTRY; AND THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE WORLD'S LEADING STORIES ARE TO BE FOUND IN ISRAEL. SINCE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE IDF TO BLOCK OR CENSOR INFORMATION,

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

THE IDF MUST THEREFORE ENABLE OPEN ACCESS AND ENSURE THE STORY INCLUDES THEIR PERSPECTIVE. HE SAID EMPHATICALLY, "THERE IS NO VACUUM IN THE MEDIA - EMPTY AIR WILL BE IMMEDIATELY FILLED."

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

HE SAID, IS TO "SHOW THE HUMAN FACE OF THE IDF".

(b)(3):10 USC 424

2. ~~(C)~~ DESCRIBING THE COMPOSITION OF THE SPOKESPERSON'S OFFICE, (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) IT IS COMPRISED OF 200 REGULAR OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS AND ABOUT 1200 RESERVISTS. THE LATTER NUMBER WILL SOON BE DECREASED TO ABOUT 800 OR 900. SLIGHTLY LESS THAN HALF OF THE REGULAR FORCES ARE IN THE THREE TERRITORIAL COMMANDS AND THE HOME FRONT COMMAND. THE REMAINDER OF THE TEL AVIV IS

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(U)

REGULAR TROOPS WORK IN THE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE AND PHOTO SHOP IN TEL AVIV. HE NOTED THAT MANY OF THE REGULAR FORCES ARE FEMALE SOLDIERS. MANY OF THE RESERVISTS ARE MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALISTS IN THEIR CIVILIAN CAREERS. (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) THE 2000 BUDGET FOR THE SPOKESPERSON'S OFFICE WAS NIS 2 MILLION (ABOUT 500,000 USD), BUT THAT IT WOULD BE INCREASED TO NIS 3 MILLION (ABOUT 750,000 USD) IN 2001. THESE NUMBERS DO NOT INCLUDE SALARIES OR COSTS OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS, BOTH OF WHICH ARE FUNDED OUT OF SEPARATE BUDGETS. ORGANIZATIONALLY, (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) AND FIVE BRANCHES, EACH HEADED BY EITHER A MAJOR OR A LIEUTENANT COLONEL. THESE ARE THE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING BRANCH; INFORMATION BRANCH; PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH; DOMESTIC MEDIA BRANCH; AND FOREIGN PRESS BRANCH.

3. ~~(C)~~ (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) HEAD OF THE FOREIGN PRESS BRANCH, PRESENTED A BRIEFING ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SPOKESPERSON'S DIVISION IN THE AL-AQSA

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INTIFADA. HE OPENED HIS COMMENTS BY SAYING THAT THE CONFLICT EXISTS ON TWO FRONTS - THE VIOLENCE ITSELF AND THE MEDIA. HE SAID THE PALESTINIAN STRATEGY CAN BE CHARACTERIZED AS VIOLENCE BEGETS COVERAGE, BEGETS VIOLENCE, BEGETS MORE COVERAGE, BEGETS LEGITIMACY FOR MORE VIOLENCE. (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) VIOLENCE IS PART OF A PLANNED PALESTINIAN STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE PALESTINIAN POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD, ERODE ISRAEL'S IMAGE, ERODE ISRAEL'S POSITION IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE CONFLICT. TURNING TO MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CONFLICT, HE NOTED A RECENT STUDY THAT FOUND THAT THE RATIO OF PICTURES OF THE PALESTINIAN SIDE TO PICTURES OF THE ISRAELI SIDE IN INTERNATIONAL PRESS COVERAGE IS 20:1. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR THIS WIDE DISPARITY, (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) AMONG WHICH IS THE MEDIA FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL STORY, I.E., THE PALESTINIAN INDIVIDUAL VERSUS THE ISRAELI ARMY. ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ (b)(3), 10 USC 424 IS FINAL SECTION OF 02 MOREOVER, EVERY PALESTINIAN CAN EXPLAIN THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY EASILY, WHILE THE ISRAELI SIDE IS MORE DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN. THE CHALLENGE OF THE SPOKESPERSON'S OFFICE THEN IS TO MAKE THE IDF SOLDIER MORE HUMAN. (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) HAD RECENTLY DIRECTED THAT FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY CREWS FROM THE IDF SPOKESPERSON'S DIVISION BE ASSIGNED TO EACH BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS. (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) THIS WILL ENABLE THEM BOTH TO HUMANIZE THE IMAGE OF THE IDF SOLDIER AND TO CAPTURE SUCH SCENES AS PALESTINIAN AMBULANCE CREWS DISTRIBUTING MOLOTOV COCKTAILS AND PALESTINIAN SCHOOL BUSES TAKING CHILDREN DIRECTLY FROM SCHOOL TO A RIOT.

4. (C) (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) THE PALESTINIANS HAVE SEVERAL BUILT-IN ADVANTAGES. ACCORDING TO HIM, THEY INITIATE A VIOLENT INCIDENT AND THEN ALERT THE MEDIA WITH MOCK DESPAIR ABOUT THE SAME INCIDENT. MOREOVER, THEIR UNDERDOG STATUS NATURALLY ELICITS MORE SYMPATHY. HE SAID THE PALESTINIANS ARE NOT HELD TO THE SAME STANDARDS OF ACCURACY AS THE ISRAELIS - "ANY STORY THAT SELLS IS A GOOD STORY". FINALLY, HE SAID THE PALESTINIANS CONTINUALLY AND SUCCESSFULLY USE THE TACTICS OF INCITEMENT AND DELEGITIMIZATION OF ISRAEL. HE CITED THE PA'S ALLEGATIONS OF IDF USE OF "POISONOUS GAS" AND "DEPLETED URANIUM" MUNITIONS. (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c) IT DOES NOT MATTER THAT THE CHARGES ARE RIDICULOUS, BECAUSE THE IDF CANNOT PROVE A NEGATIVE. HE CONTRASTED THE WIDE COVERAGE GIVEN THE PALESTINIAN ALLEGATIONS WITH THE PALTRY ATTENDANCE AND SPARSE MEDIA ATTENTION

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GIVEN THE IDF'S PRESS BRIEFING TO COUNTER THE CHARGES.
5. (C) [redacted] ISRAEL IS IN THE POSITION OF
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SERIAL: (U) [redacted]

COUNTRY: (U) ISRAEL (IS).

[redacted]

SUBJECT: [redacted]

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(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

"GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT". IN THE CURRENT
CONFLICT, THE IDF IS PRIMARILY IN A REACTIVE MODE AND
HAS TO JUSTIFY EVERY ACTION TAKEN. THE IDF, [redacted]

[redacted] IS CONSTANTLY IN THE POSITION OF DENYING
ALLEGATIONS OR CLARIFYING EVENTS. HE SAID THAT WHILE
JOURNALISTS ASSUME THE WORST OF ISRAEL, THEY BEHAVE
WITH EXTREME DEFERENCE TO THE PA IN ORDER TO PROTECT
THEIR ACCESS TO THE PALESTINIAN AREAS. [redacted]

[redacted] THE ENTIRE CONFLICT AS A GRAND
MEDIA "SHOW", IN WHICH THE PALESTINIANS ARE DIRECTOR,
PRODUCER, SCRIPTWRITER, AND LEAD ACTOR IN THE ROLE OF
PROTAGONIST. "MAYBE IN THE NEXT MOVIE WE'LL GET A
BETTER ROLE, BUT I'M NOT SURE THIS MOVIE IS OVER YET."

6. (C) [redacted] NEXT GAVE A SHORT
BRIEFING ON THE IDF'S INTERNET WEB SITE. PRIOR TO THE
OUTBREAK OF THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA, THE WEEKLY NUMBER OF
HITS ON THE SITE WAS 7642. IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE
CONFLICT THE NUMBER WAS ONLY 7122, BUT THEN SWELLED TO
15,964 IN THE SECOND WEEK, 97,931 IN THE THIRD WEEK,
AND 130,680 IN THE FOURTH WEEK. [redacted] THE
NUMBER OF WEEKLY HITS HAS NOW STABILIZED AT AROUND
50,000. THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF WEEKLY HITS - ABOUT 3500
- ORIGINATE FROM SAUDI ARABIA, WITH A SLIGHTLY LOWER
NUMBER FROM IRAN. ABOUT 400 COME FROM JORDAN.

[redacted]

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