

Interactive Captive Audience Media Networking (ICAMN) and Soft Power Theory

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ABSTRACT

The advent of internet protocol based networking opens vast, new possibilities for projecting soft power into hostile or denied audiences around the world. This paper outlines one new application, Interactive Captive Audience Media Networking (ICAMN) and the soft power theory and methodology that underlie its use.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David J. Katz. West Point graduate, former Green Beret Captain and Silicon Valley start-up entrepreneur, David Katz formed Daracom to facilitate the strategic use of 21st century technologies to help clients effectively communicate with disconnected or non-technical individuals and communities throughout the world. Daracom's goal is to prepare user communities for new products or services, introducing or countering disruptive ideas and structures. Daracom strives for measurable, tangible and positive results in the lives of users. Mr. Katz previously founded Katco, Inc. a \$1.3B private markets strategic advisory firm. He served as Vice President of Product Development for Round1: Private Capital Marketplace. Most recently, Mr. Katz created a classified division for Luster National, Inc. and currently consults for a top global energy company. He holds a TS/SCI/TK with full scope poly.

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ICAMN

ICAMN is an interactive multimedia communication/information on-demand system run through a personal assistant-confidant avatar, based on the end user's characteristics, idiom and culture (mirroring). ICAMN provides long-term one-to-one (one-cast), one-to-many (narrow-cast/broadcast), many-to-many (multi-cast), communications with key communicators or entire targeted populations.

ICAMN's Benefits

ICAMN allows for penetration of austere or hostile areas lacking cell systems, telephones or internet connectivity. It allows for penetration of populations unfamiliar with cell phones or their use. ICAMN provides complete control over media content and messaging. ICAMN provides for greatly improved segmentation of the local audiences, allowing greater fidelity in the analysis of how to influence specific groups or individuals.

ICAMN offers novel HUMINT and PSYOP benefits to include: identification of elements, intentions, composition, strength, dispositions, tactics, equipment, and capabilities of enemy indigenous/foreign military and guerrilla forces. ICAMN projects informational and intellectually based soft power into tactical areas of operations through indigenous loci operating on pre-existing natural competitive forces within targeted societies. It can directly generate non-kinetic attacks and precipitate indigenous kinetic attacks. ICAMN can rapidly generate multiple independent humint sources within a population. ICAMN can run as an open, neutral, or false flag operation. ICAMN can be used to develop and deliver tailored, hyper-localized content to positive or negative effect. ICAMN can increase in intensity, interactivity, localization, and frequency within a single deployment. ICAMN can

transfer specific targeted expertise to indigenous constituencies, providing competitive advantages to these selected indigenous constituencies. ICAMN can assist in information synchronization to optimize effect.

ICAMN acts through indigenous loci expressing its effects in the predominance, range of control, depth and balance among a targeted society's pre-existing natural competitive forces: culture, religion, ethnicity, ideology, social and political organization, economics, logistics, trade and finance. ICAMN's mission is to develop, assist and/or motivate constituencies within an indigenous society as a result of affecting those natural competitive forces (Influence Operations). These constituencies can be either a vector for inoculation or infection and can provide a means to render that society combat ineffective.

Tactically, ICAMN can increase effects by increasing intensity, interactivity, localization, and frequency all within a single deployment over time. ICAMN can sequence across societal sectors highlighting and integrating increasingly greater competitive forces and constituencies within a targeted society, within a single deployment. Additionally, ICAMN can act independently developing Human Intelligence, Information Operations, Influence Operations, Psychological Operations, and supporting Kinetic Operations.

Deployment Configuration

A typical deployment would have the ICAMN forward system: satellite downlink with a GSM GPRS EDGE PBX, generator and battery in a vehicle-borne configuration connecting through stationary repeaters to terminal antennas which are deployed at the periphery of a targeted population. The vehicle-borne configuration allows for rapid deployment and, if under threat, quick disassembly and movement preserving system assets. ICAMN handsets may be

overtly and/or covertly (open, neutral flag, false flag) distributed to natural constituencies within a targeted society. Disaffected constituencies and constituencies rendered subordinate within a jihadist dominated society are potential targets. A satellite linked Media Network Operations Center (Media NOC) provides multiple channels of content, encapsulation and heuristics in voice, video and data for push or pull distribution over the system. These components of soft power projection will be detailed in the General Soft Power Theory section of the paper. Using information captured from the handset, a satellite linked digital Call Center (CC) will utilize HUMINT specialists, PSYOP specialists and linguists as well as a variety of software packages including voice identification and personal categorization software to determine age, gender, level of education, cultural background, language, regional accent, tribal/clan/khel affiliation of the end user. Using image and voice capture, either overtly or clandestinely, from the handset, the Call Center can use facial and voice alteration software to create an avatar overlay on the end user's image creating a hybrid close to the end users' personal physical profile. Using identification and categorization information captured through use, the Call Center completes the avatar overlay with a verbal and cultural profile similar in characteristic to the end user (mirror effect).

This Call Center generated avatar is the users personal assistant-confidant who assists the user in all aspects of device use. This human assisted interface guides the user past his or her technical limitations, establishes and conducts a continuous dialog with the user and assists with the delivery and use of Intellectual Property (IP) based products and services. ICAMN is a multi-directional communications infrastructure which can deliver information, entertainment, and a variety of intellectual property through this personal assistant-confidant who (using a mirror effect) looks like the end user, talks like, has cultural assumptions like and an understanding of daily issues in sympathy with the end user. The Call Center operator/avatar established, encourages and manages the dialog between the system and the end user. Over time, the database of interactions, idiom, explicit and implicit value judgments communicated by the end user provides for deeper understanding and delivery of positive measurable value in his/her daily life. Use becomes increasingly localized, personalized and interactive with higher frequency of use and more intensity of effect as the system discovers, defines and addresses

the end users' needs, wants and desires. Device use increases as tailored, specific measurable value is delivered to the end user. This supports continuous improvement in hyper-localization of content, encapsulation and heuristics. Ultimately, end users can become overt/covert nodes for information collection and delivery, transmission, dissemination, diffusion or transference of content, encapsulation, and heuristics through channels to generate results supporting US policy.

DEPLOYMENT SCENARIOS

Scenario 1: Independent Unsupported Operations: Humint & Influence Operations

In support of an intelligence agency's strategic humint objectives, multiple ICAMN forward systems are deployed in Galmudug, Somalia around targeted populations of Habr Gidr clans with the intent to shape their perceptions so that they align with the Transitional Government in Puntland. Using only local nationals under a fictitious business, ICAMN is set up in a wide area 3G GSM GPRS EDGE network configuration with handsets distributed to targeted constituencies among the clans. Delivering weather forecasts, hydrology and agriculture expertise with culturally appropriate entertainment, constituencies are motivated toward deeper use. With deeper use, information is collected and targeted intelligence is produced. Habr Gidr constituencies' perceptions are shaped through a variety of means. They align with the Transitional Government.

Scenario 2: Supported Special Operations: Humint and Kinetic Operations

In support of US Special Operations tactical operations, ICAMN is forward deployed and co-located with the Special Operators and elements of ANA and ANP in Kunar, Afghanistan. ANA distributes handsets to identified natural constituencies possibly including tribal leaders, as well as disaffected minorities. The Special Operations team in conjunction with the Media NOC and Call Center develop hyper-localized interactive content generating specific intelligence in support of their mission. A whisper campaign is initiated through end users, portraying foreign jihadists as carriers of infectious sterility. Additionally, a Pashunwali

nativist campaign is started. The net effect is to isolate and identify foreigners in the area of operations. Using the generated intelligence, the Special Operations team discovers and sets up ambush sites on weapons caches.

Scenario 3: Supported Conventional Operations: Humint & Influence Operations

A conventional US task force commander wants to establish direct communications with local tribes outside the wire. Additionally, the commander wants to shape their perceptions and have a means of measuring effect, variance, and channel-content viability on a number of information initiatives. ICAMN is deployed into the tactical area of operations in a semi-permanent 3G GSM GPRS EDGE network configuration facilitating direct and cultural communications between the task force and the local nationals.

GENERAL SOFT POWER THEORY

How does ICAMN achieve its effects? A complete answer requires a modest review of Daracom's soft power theorems and methodologies.

Theorem 1: Soft power acts through indigenous means expressing its effects in the predominance, range of control, depth and balance among the targeted society's natural competitive forces. If correctly applied, soft power develops constituencies within indigenous societies and through those constituencies can achieve effects similar to hard power projection: to compel, control, and/or destroy. The advantage of using indigenous means is they match other indigenous competitors' natural tactical advantages of local knowledge, language, religion, ethnicity and culture as well as provide strategic advantages of birth rate and permanence. Unlike its reputation for fecklessness, soft power, unconstrained by exogenous norms and mores, can be far more brutal and effective than hard power projection.

Theorem 2: Soft power can directly attack the motivating will of indigenous competitors by targeting their core principles, self perception and the social hypothesis facilitating their existence and actions within the targeted society. The social hypothesis is the relationship between the indigenous

competitors' core principles and the society's operative norms. Intangibles like motivating will, core principles and social hypotheses are soft assets of the jihadist and cannot be directly attacked through hard power or kinetic means. Killing a jihadist does not destroy the jihadist meme, which is a unit or element of cultural ideas, symbols or practices that gets transmitted from one mind to another through speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena. It merely kills one carrier of the meme. Because soft power can directly target soft assets, its application can be more effective, more efficient and can result in less indigenous reaction than projection of exogenous based hard power. This is chiefly because soft power can be directly targeted against these soft assets and projected through indigenous constituencies. Consequently, its application can be more direct, more linear, and with lower costs than indirect, kinetic means.

Theorem 3: Soft power projection offers unique avenues to the strategic offense. It can alter the balance of natural competitive forces within tribal societies, resulting in their reformulation. The fight is for control of the population, not terrain, not tactical engagements and not body count. US strategy must project power inside tribal societies in order to go on the strategic offense. Soft power allows for penetration of tribal societies by content projected through indigenous channels, heuristics and encapsulations. Indigenous carriers, by definition, can cross societal barriers with greater facility, less cost and compromise than exogenous carriers. Additionally, indigenous carriers preclude, to large measure, unintended consequences (reactionary backlash) associated with exogenous penetration of societal barriers.

Soft Power Spectrum

If one end of the power spectrum is hard strategic power, the other end of the spectrum is incorporeal, tactical soft power. Strategic power, either soft or hard, is the use of the results of tactical engagement in a coherent and comprehensive manner, in order to obtain a larger goal. Hence, tactical precedes strategic on the spectrum of power projection. Tactical soft power, occupying one end of the spectrum, should be the logical place to begin policy execution. Tactical soft power is versatile. It can be either physical in the form of diplomats, cash, or grain shipments, or intellectual in the form of memes, religion, or media. Soft power offers the capability to internally sequence

the methods used to penetrate indigenous targets from the intellectual to the physical. The correct application and sequencing of soft power can minimize reactionary backlash, ratchet up intensity in a consistent graduated fashion, prepare the informational and intellectual battlefield, and facilitate non-kinetic attacks both for their own returns and as a means of preparing for hard power projection. An advantage of starting with tactical soft power is that it offers the ability to escalate in intensity, focus and interactivity. As such, it offers a tool for US policy execution that is incremental and flexible.

Soft power's intent is to alter the predominance, range of control, depth and balance among that society's natural competitive forces. Its effects will elevate certain constituencies within an indigenous society and diminish others. These constituencies, the result of natural competitive forces within the indigenous society, are not proxy forces whose survival are dependent upon direct foreign support and intervention. Indigenous constituencies, based upon pre-existing natural competitors can be engines of societal reformulation away from militant Islam by inoculating that society against militant Islam or as a pathway for unleashing or amplifying forces antithetical to militant Islam. If natural competitors emerge, militant Islam must shift resources from expansion to internal policing, in order to maintain its preeminent position as societal motivator and organizing principle. The more militant Islam is forced into policing and population control against revitalized natural competitors, the more it will generate internal strife in those populations. Instead of fighting their neighbors, they're fighting each other.

Soft power is projected primarily through natural or traditional channels: person to person, one person to many, and/or established channels which may include roads and rails for physical content, print media, radio, cell phone, TV etc. for intellectual content. Channel capabilities: accuracy, precision, direct or indirect transmission, transference, dissemination, or diffusion, flow rate, density, range, speed, etc., will promote the use of particular content, encapsulations, and heuristics in certain channels and preclude others. For example, spreading the rumor that jihadists who attended a specific training camp unknowingly carry infectious sterility may, in some circumstances, best be conveyed through natural 'one to one' channels.

This provides concealed diffusion complicating detection and inoculation by insurgent forces.

Soft Power Components

Projecting soft power into a tactical area of operations requires four components: content, encapsulation, heuristics, and a channel. Content is something either physical or intellectual introduced into an indigenous society. Content may be physical in the form of grain shipments, cash, printing presses, etc or intellectual in the form of messaging through media, use of religion or memes, etc. Content achieves its result by altering the predominance, range, depth of control or balance among natural competitive forces within that society. Introducing the idea of a Pashtun cultural renaissance could, for example, create a wedge between nativist Pashtuns and Pashtun adherents of non-native absolutist Hanbali Islamic sects, such as Wahabism or Deobandism. Any cultural force which competes with militant Islam for societal adherence would stand as a threat to militant Islam's absolute preeminence, and therefore would require a diversion of resources from expansion to internal competition and control. Intellectual Property (IP) based content has the advantage of easily crossing borders to assist and induce natural constituencies to deliver results supporting US policy while incurring minimal logistical or political costs. Soft power can intensify wedge issues in a targeted society by amplifying differences between ethnic groups, promoting sacred rivalry between religious sects, or affiliating political movements and leaders with historical tribal disasters. Follow on hard power can utilize these wedge issues with arms shipments and Green Berets.

Content and Encapsulation

Content should be delivered through channels with optimum end effect. The process of harmonizing content characteristics to channel capabilities is called encapsulation. Encapsulation makes the delivery of content, through a channel, a planned and measurable process. Encapsulation may be physical such as employing indigenous escorts for a grain shipment, or intellectual like altering a well known nursery rhyme to carry a propaganda message. Encapsulation creates an expected value at delivery. Actual value at delivery's variance from expected value provides a measure for validating and verifying channel efficacy and content-channel viability. Does more than 50% of the grain reach its target? Do the nursery rhymes'

messages disseminate through the population unchanged? The variance between expected and actual may also reveal content-channel-constituency incompatibilities. For instance, a battery powered satellite connected facsimile machine given to illiterate tribesmen delivers precise, accurate content to a constituency that can't read. While generally slower or more circuitous than US logistics, utilizing indigenous channels does not require the expense or disruption of US presence and can strengthen the channel chosen and the encapsulation used.

Channels

An initial survey of natural, traditional and established channels and their respective capabilities is the first step in channel selection. Constituencies within the society may tend toward or prefer certain channels. Jihadists may opt for traditional one-person-to-many channels, such as imams preaching in mosques who encapsulate their content with sacred verification and guidance (heuristics): "True believers accept this content." "Those who don't are apostates." Merchants or traders may prefer singular, precise, high speed, established channels like cell phones. In fact, the availability and/or suppression of particular channels may provide clues as to the current array and balance of natural competitive forces within a society. The Taliban banning radios, for instance, can be construed as an admission that particular content-channel-constituency represents a strategic threat. Coherent tactical soft power projection requires that the effects and results of using different channels, encapsulations, heuristics and content support a singular strategic goal. Comprehensive tactical soft power projection precludes exception or omission of any effect or result in any channel to any constituency from the singular strategic goal.

Heuristics

Heuristics are the means through which targeted indigenous constituencies are guided to discover and believe the veracity and value of the introduced content. The presence of a revered local religious figure during a speech may serve to validate the contents' religious aspects and affiliation. The symbol of a local political party on physical supplies can verify content ownership from channel introduction to delivery regardless of true ownership. Encapsulating informational content with heuristics may sometimes involve placing metrics inside the content that are

intuitively understood within that society. In many cases, these metrics are derived from mythology, cultural history or shared assumptions, widely used and implicitly understood parables or particular biases. Content specifically structured to show strong similarity to the targeted tribe's creation myth, for example, can imbue that content with fundamental cultural value and verification. Heuristics also includes observable metrics, both positive and negative. Misrepresenting jihadists' common skin rashes as a fatal infectious disease uses observable phenomena associated with high perceived survival risk resulting in, most probably, reduced contact between those jihadists and local tribes. In this case, the intent of heuristic placement is to verify content by associating a shared cultural assumption (avoid fatal diseases in order to survive) to observable phenomena (skin rashes). Heuristics are as varied as content, but both are measured against the desired end effect their delivery is intended to produce.

US forces currently deploy intellectual property (IP) based content using established broadcast channels like TV, radio and newspapers, leaflet drops and distributing compact discs. These channels are mono-directional, content flows from the source to the consumer. Content, however incendiary, is passive. The message doesn't react to the consumer. In broadcast, encapsulation precision is limited to the lowest common denominator applicable to the entire audience. Passive content sent through established broadcast channels limits delivery to transmission, a single conveyance of a unitary block of information from the source to the consumer. There are other means of delivery. Dissemination is the sowing of content within an audience by phased delivery of its separate constituent parts. Diffusion is the migration of unitary content through an audience over time. Transference is the conveyance of understanding from the source to the consumer. Each delivery method offers distinct advantages and disadvantages.

Projecting IP based soft power into captive audiences like tribes in remote, austere or hazardous regions should involve interactive communications delivered through bi-directional or multi-directional channels. Broadcast is, in effect, shouting at a mass audience. This isn't the norm in pre-industrial tribal societies and therefore carries a high risk of being ignored. Conversations are, at a minimum, bi-directional and as a participant the message is harder to ignore. Conversations, moreover, allow the source to absorb consumer reaction and incrementally improve or re-

position heuristics and encapsulation delivering content with greater veracity and value. Narrowcast, one-to-few, or one-cast, one-to-one, allows for more precise encapsulations because the audience can be tightly defined. Precise encapsulations to a tightly defined audience support higher information density per delivery, because more content can be sent with less content-channel incompatibility. Innovations in cellular technology support new approaches to IP-based soft power projection. Approaches previously infeasible are now feasible. It is in the US's interest to actively adopt and deploy these soft power approaches. As discussed, one such application is Interactive Captive Audience Media Networking (ICAMN). This facilitates the rapid creation of US-indigenous narrowcast, one-cast and broadcast networks through the delivery of interactive media using voice, video, and data via private provisional cell phone networks. In the tactical area of operations, ICAMN's forward system consists of a rapidly deployable-dismantled satellite linked cell system, with ultra-low cost handsets and a pictographic/avatar human-assisted user interface mirrored to the end user. Outside of the tactical area of operations, in fact, anywhere in the world, ICAMN consists of Call Centers staffed by linguists and intelligence specialists and Media Network Operation Centers acquiring, repositioning or creating media, for push or pull across the network and across the globe.

ICAMN is just one new application that offers multiple avenues toward achieving US policy. From independent unsupported operations to fully supported integrated operations, ICAMN can collect human intelligence and influence indigenous constituencies. If for example, the US surreptitiously deploys ICAMN to targeted tribal populations delivering information with culturally appropriate consumer use, perceptions could be shaped through a variety of means and cumulative interactions. Supported constituencies could be assisted, while others diminished. Supported constituencies, chosen because their positions align with those favorable to US interests, could rise in prominence. For example, conveying weather, hydrology and agricultural expertise to one constituency would give them comparatively better crop yields, in turn supporting improved health, and higher population growth versus unsupported constituencies.

SUMMARY

The advent of internet protocol based communications opens vast new possibilities for projecting informational or intellectual property based soft power into hostile or denied audiences. ICAMN, and systems like it, can penetrate these audiences in independent unsupported operations, or in support of conventional or special operations. Projecting soft power into a tactical area of operations requires four components: content, encapsulation, heuristics, and a channel. Because ICAMN offers one-cast and narrowcast interactive communications with indigenous audiences, it can deliver more precise encapsulations, and more tightly defined content and heuristics, resulting in better segmentation of and higher information densities with the targeted audiences. This interactive approach is a foundational capability providing for incremental improvement in content, encapsulation and heuristics, resulting in lower content-channel incompatibilities, more precise and more effective messaging.

Daracom posits three theorems regarding soft power:

- 1: Soft power acts through indigenous means expressing its effects in the predominance, range of control, depth and balance among the targeted society's natural competitive forces.

- 2: Soft power can directly attack soft assets like the motivating will of indigenous competitors by directly attacking their core principals and social hypotheses operating within a targeted society.

- 3: Soft power offers unique avenues to the strategic offense and toward social control and reformulation of tribal societies.

Given innovations in communications technology, new informational or intellectual based soft power projection platforms like Interactive Captive Audience Media Networking (ICAMN) are possible and may represent a significant new means toward achieving US policy around the world. ICAMN's intent is to offer a magnitude of order reduction in cost and risk while increasing effective geostrategic reach.