

INCIDENTAL PAPER

**Communicating With Intent:
The Department of Defense
and Strategic Communication**

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Preface

My own uncertainty about the development of Department of Defense (DoD) strategic communication organizations and processes was the catalyst for this research paper. As a Public Affairs officer, I took note when strategic communication emerged as a priority area earlier in this decade and wanted to know more about the intersection between it and other existing career fields.

I found the need is profound for better coordination of our communication efforts. I also found there is much effort throughout the DoD to meet these needs and to institute a culture change that values communication. Additionally, I found the DoD is limited in the effects it can generate in the strategic information domain: the U.S. government must improve its interagency system for coordinated communication if it is to fully realize the tremendous strengths of its diplomatic, information, military, and economic instruments of power.

My goal is for this paper to present a repository of views—taken from this snapshot in time—to help the reader better understand the DoD's efforts in the public information component of strategic communication.

This paper does not prescribe tactics to win tomorrow's battles for the hearts and minds in the Global War on Terror. Instead, it explains the need for a more vigorous and operational approach to communication and public information, and concomitantly, the pressing need to better organize, train, and equip our strategic communication professionals to more effectively advance this capability for long-term, strategic positive effects. I purposely focused this paper on the public communication component of strategic communication, but encourage others to take up the mantle for an in-depth look at other aspects of the mission area.

My sincere thanks to the many people who served as sounding boards, editors, and sources for this paper. I am tremendously grateful for the opportunity to serve as a National Defense Fellow at Harvard. This paper benefited greatly from (and I grew tremendously through) the rich discussions with the other fellows and faculty at the Kennedy School of Government's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Others who were key to this project include Lt. Col. Greg Julian, Brig. Gen. Erwin Lessel, Brig. Gen. Michelle Johnson, Captain David Wray, Colonel David Lapan, Colonel John Buckley, Colonel Alan Bynum, Ms. Noel Nolta, Ms. Farah Pandith, Major Ronald Watrous, Major Patrick Ryder, Ms. Margaret MacDonald, Mr. Tom Boyd, Mr. Michael Kelly, Mr. Matthew Borg, Mr. Robert Potter, and Ms. Rebecca Wriggle. I am grateful to all these people for their cooperation, interest, and willingness to help. Foremost, I am thankful for the enduring patience, support, and understanding of my wife and sons, especially as I researched and wrote this paper.

If this paper clarifies the DoD's strategic communication efforts and the criteria for future success, I count this project a success.

Executive Summary

The Department of Defense's (DoD's) development of strategic communication processes, a supporting organizational structure, and an institutional culture change began in earnest in 2006. The broad, operational view of communication presents many opportunities for the DoD; it also presents many areas demanding attention if the department is to realize its aim of positive strategic effects in the information and cognitive domains.

This paper examines the DoD's development of strategic communication, concentrating specifically on the implications, opportunities, and threats associated with the public information environment. The paper does not present a prescription for tactics to win near-term battles, but rather a review of current efforts to build strategic communication capacity and considerations that demand attention to advance this capability for long-term, strategic successes.

Recognition of public communication's importance is evident in the DoD's current efforts to build strategic communication processes. The effort cannot come soon enough. The Defense Science Board's (DSB's) 2004 review of the DoD's strategic communication capability states that public communication is "in crisis." Similarly, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review cited strategic communication as one of the five key areas that require DoD plans for focused development.

Increasingly, conflict takes place in a population's cognitive space, making sheer military might a lesser priority for victory in the Information Age. Use of the nation's hard power is inadequate as the sole—or even primary—means to address an insurgency. Instead, national decision makers must create a synergistic approach that emphasizes the country's soft power capabilities while drawing on complementary efforts of its hard power if necessary.

The public information environment is a key battleground in the modern information environment. Some military leaders have labeled the current operating conditions as Fourth Generation Warfare—a term that refers to an enemy that operates in a virtual realm and uses mass media cleverly, effectively making the media the terrain.

Personal electronic devices such as cell phones, digital cameras, video recorders, and various kinds of computers have created a new intersection between the individual and the mass media. The public can no longer be viewed as passive information consumers: the public now more than ever actively contributes to the information environment via World Wide Web sites, blogs, and text messaging, to name only a few.

The new technologies also give individuals, groups, and (in some regards) nations enormous capability to organize and influence various audiences. Likewise, the public media, citizens, and international organizations can directly affect the success or failure of military

operations through their influential effect on U.S., allied, and adversary public support. Despite their effects on operations, the editorial freedom of these public information elements is protected and guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and therefore protected from U.S. government control.

To bring success in the modern operating environment, policy, diplomatic, and military operations must include consideration of public information and integration of the efforts of the resources that deliver it. As the DSB states in its 2004 report, strategic communication will be less effective if managed separately, since it cannot build support for policies that audiences view negatively. Simply put, consideration of communication and its effects must be integrated into operational planning, decision-making, and execution cycles, not considered as an afterthought.

Just as the operating environment has changed from the cold war era, so must the methods and tactics of communication and the organizational constructs that facilitate them. During the cold war U.S. communication techniques focused on influencing the ideology of communist populations; the intended effect of the consistently repeated message was deterrence. However, the communication challenge in the Global War on Terror is to reach a massive, global audience—one that includes many members who are united by common religious beliefs—to change negative perceptions and beliefs regarding Western values.

Indeed, the intent of the U.S. government's efforts in strategic communication is to transcend the information instrument of national power by synchronizing and integrating efforts between all instruments of power: diplomatic, information, military and economic. There must be harmony between the instruments of power to realize their full potential and the DoD's current efforts in strategic communication are designed to provide a process to coordinate efforts to achieve desired effects.

Therefore, strategic communication development efforts must take place at the enterprise level: every public information resource must be developed with a consideration of its strategic communication role. Simultaneously, a massive culture shift must occur to counteract the tribal instincts of those who manage varied information resources—instincts that have them focused on funding and career-field-specific issues instead of on enhanced coordination to achieve the enterprise's communication goals. A culture shift also must occur within the leadership hierarchy of each service, the DoD as a whole, and the U.S. government to value public communication, provide access to decision-making and planning efforts, support efforts in this area with new training programs, and clearly articulate the enterprise goals and objectives. Without such changes, current efforts to communicate strategically likely will fail.

A fine balance must be achieved to ensure strategic communication efforts are well coordinated without creating a sluggish bureaucratic structure. A top-heavy, cumbersome bureaucratic process built to control and perfect information is not compatible with the modern information environment, characterized in part by its rapid flow of information. Although centralized control and decentralized execution have great merit in most military operations, the

DoD needs to be careful to avoid destroying its strategic communication process with the very bureaucracy it is building to create it. While the strategic goals and priorities delivered through the strategic communication process may serve as guideposts for the desired outcome, information tactics and communication strategies at the tactical and operational levels must be agile and creative. Our adversaries in the Global War on Terror are adept at using new technologies to communicate for their own benefit and have organized themselves to ensure the ability to maneuver rapidly in this modern battlespace.

The DoD’s perspective on strategic communication has evolved to a much broader interpretation since the Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap was signed in September 2006. The broader, operational view of the DoD’s desired strategic communication process goes far beyond the basic communication construct of “sender – message – receiver” to interpret every DoD action or statement as a form of communication. This new approach is intended to establish a strategic communication process in which all DoD strategy, planning, and operational decisions are made.

However, DoD strategic communication efforts currently often leave leaders in need of guidance. One possible reason for the cacophony of discordant messages—in addition to the sheer volume of information—is the lack of a clear, articulate strategy from the national leadership. Without this, the leaders of each department, agency, and office are left to decide what is important. In most cases the answer is to use the organization’s communication efforts to advance its own interests.

The absence of a DoD enterprise approach is a significant limiting factor for the DoD’s success in strategic communication. At face value, the services’ interdependence of roles and missions makes it easy for the individual military services to support the DoD’s strategic mission goals: victory is a shared claim. However, at a deeper level, the services are in constant competition with each other for limited budgetary authority, recruits and development of roles, missions, and their associated weapons systems. To this end, the services must out-communicate one another—successfully telling their stories to Congress, the American people, and their own forces.

The desired end state for the DoD’s work is to build a strategic communication process that will help to integrate and synchronize the department’s efforts and prepare it to collaborate in the interagency and coalition strategic communication processes. To reach that state, the team charged with leading development of the DoD’s strategic communication strategy envisions a process that helps the United States achieve desired strategic effects, either independently or in cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations, nations, and nongovernmental organizations.

Leadership must understand, however, that specific, intended strategic communication effects may be difficult to attain and that unintended second- and third-order effects are possible,

especially in the near term. Effective communication strategies will bring near-term results and successes, but patience, persistence, and messages consistent with actions are requisite for communication to achieve its intended strategic effects. Often, the outcomes of strategic efforts are beyond the horizon: the efforts are generational in nature, with their results years in the future.

Strategic communication is not the silver bullet, but it does present the potential for a more tightly focused informational contribution to the strength of the other instruments of national power to achieve national strategies.

The primary methodology used for this paper was personal interviews with people either engaged in the DoD's development of strategic communication processes, or able to give perspective from another part of the U.S. government. The paper also relies heavily on published information from the academic and open press environments.

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Chapter One

Introduction

My life is my message.

—Mahatma Gandhi

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of major communist states soon afterwards had many effects on the geopolitical landscape, global economics and national priorities. Democracy's victory and its predicted peace dividend brought an afterglow made more intense by the economic boom of the 1990s. The United States, it seemed, could do no wrong.

Successful methods and institutions—cold war icons—were considered to be unnecessary and retardants of modern advancement. The need to build trust and support for the United States among other nations seemed passé. As a result, governmental reorganizations were undertaken that drastically reduced the U.S. government's ability to reach foreign audiences. One such change resulted in the Department of State (DoS) absorbing the United States Information Agency (USIA), the venerable information champion of the cold war.¹ Concurrently, globalization of the world's economic landscape seemed to have vaulted to position as the most important means to build key—strategic—relationships.²

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were a startling awakening to a changed world—one in which the United States felt misunderstood politically and socially by other nations and ethnic and religious groups with which it had not maintained an open flow of information. Communicating with key audiences in the United States and abroad suddenly became a vital component of the nation's strategy as it launched a new long war: the Global War on Terror.

Parallels between the cold war and the Global War on Terror are abundant. In both cases, effective communication stands out as the key component necessary to build public trust and support while simultaneously leveraging global influence and deterrence by the United States and its allies or strategic partners.

¹ William J. Clinton, "Presidential Decision Directive 68 – International Public Information" (Washington, D.C.: The White House, April 1999).

² Strobe Talbot, "Globalization and Diplomacy: A Practitioner's Perspective," *Foreign Policy* 108 (Autumn 1997), 68–83.

However, the Global War on Terror most certainly is not the cold war. The information domain has changed dramatically since the early 1990s, when the cold war ended. Today's global information environment is characterized by continuous real-time information proliferation: twenty-four-hour news cycles spurred on by advanced information and communication technologies. The modern information environment enables individuals, groups, and often nations to report—and verify or refute—information of varying authenticity and accuracy (which may include rumor, supposition, and, in some cases, outright disinformation), and offer either a supporting or countervailing opinion to the global news-consuming market. These changes allow audiences in the United States and throughout the world to receive real-time information from national leaders and military theaters of operations. The effect is simultaneous influence on domestic and international publics and their decision makers as they consume information—truthful and untruthful. This effect can translate into political pressure on national leaders and military commanders to change strategic goals, policies, guidance, objectives, and procedures that affect military missions. As historian and author Max Boot observed regarding the modern information environment, “Our actions don't only affect what we do in a theater, they also affect how we're perceived all over the world.”³

Global communication capabilities make news and information simultaneously available from the strategic to the tactical levels of military operations. New communication technologies and the expansion of international media alliances have affected the conduct of military operations to a degree equal to that of emerging weapons technologies.

For example, Operation Iraqi Freedom's (OIF's) embedded reporter program placed roughly 700 journalists with military units from the outset of the operation. Those journalists employed a thickening web of communications infrastructure to deliver visuals, audio, and first-hand insights to a worldwide audience. Reporters' access to the operation was as unimpeded as the release of their products, except for agreed-upon rules to safeguard operational security; media delivered news from the operation without military sanitization or manipulation. This unfettered information flow gained credibility as the ground truth and is credited with reducing the potential for Iraqi misinformation targeted simultaneously at the indigenous and international populations—misinformation that likely would have undermined public support for the operation.⁴

³ Max Boot, “War Made New: Technology, Warfare and the Course of History 1500–Today,” “On Point with Tom Ashbrook,” broadcast by NPR's WBUR 30 October 2006, [On-line]. URL: http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2006/10/20061030_b_main.asp Accessed 15 November 2006.

⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, September 2004), [On-line]. URL: http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2004-09-Strategic_Communication.pdf Accessed 12 January 2008. Additional information comes from the author's participation on CJCS/PA Operation Iraqi Freedom planning team, September 2003.

Just as the operating environment has changed from the cold war era, so must the methods and tactics of communication and the organizational constructs that facilitate them. During the cold war U.S. strategy was focused on containment of communism while sustaining democracy. The communication techniques were focused on influencing the ideology of communist populations; the intended effect of the consistently repeated message was deterrence. However, the communication challenge in the Global War on Terror is to reach a massive, global audience—one that includes many members who are united in common religious beliefs—to change the negative perceptions and beliefs regarding Western values.

Recognition of public communication’s importance is evident in the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) current efforts to build strategic communication processes. The effort cannot come soon enough. The Defense Science Board’s 2004 review of the DoD’s strategic communication capability states it is “in crisis.”⁵ Similarly, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review cites strategic communication as one of the five key areas that require DoD plans for focused development.⁶

1.1 The Concept of Strategic Communication

The question “What is strategic communication?” can elicit nearly as many answers as the number of people asking the question. Differing perspectives of the concept are common among public relations professionals, marketing staffs, strategic planners, and government agencies.

The DoD roadmap for strategic communication defines the concept as:

focused governmental processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.⁷

1.1.1 A Global Perspective

The DoD’s perspective on strategic communication has evolved, however, to a much broader interpretation since the Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap was signed in September 2006. The broader, operational view of the DoD’s desired strategic communication process goes far beyond the basic communication construct of “sender – message – receiver” to

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C. 6 February 2006, 13; [Online]. URL: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/QDR20060203.pdf> Accessed 12 January 2008.

⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, “2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap” Washington, D.C., 25 September 2006, 3.

interpret every DoD action or statement as a form of communication. This new approach is designed to establish a strategic communication process in which all DoD strategy, planning, and operational decisions are made.⁸ **Figure 1-1** depicts the DoD's integration of its varied lines of operation, or capabilities, through its strategic communication process.

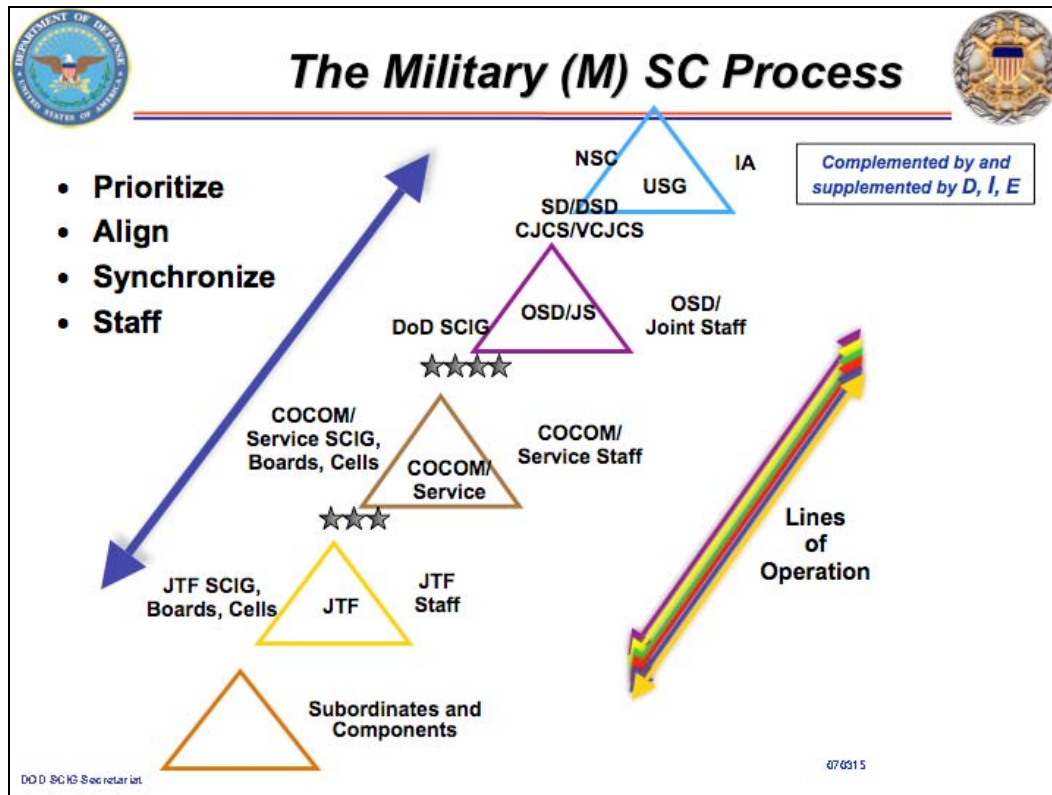


Figure 1-1
DoD's Strategic Communication Process⁹

From the DoD perspective, including all departmental operations in the strategic communication process will help to ensure a consistent application of U.S. government policy to actions and statements. The linkage of actions with statements in support of policy is vitally important, because when statements and actions are not synchronized, or are not consistent with policy, a “say-do gap” is created that degrades efforts and adversely affects credibility of the military and, ultimately, the nation.¹⁰

⁸ Telephone interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 27 March 2007.

⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, Strategic Communication Concept of Operations Briefing, 15 March 2007.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Indeed, the intent of the U.S. government’s efforts in strategic communication is to transcend the information instrument of national power by synchronizing and integrating efforts among all instruments of power: diplomatic, information, military, and economic. There must be harmony between the instruments of power to realize their full potential and the DoD’s current efforts in strategic communication are designed to provide a process to coordinate efforts to achieve desired effects.¹¹

There is overlap of effort between U.S. government departments and agencies to bring the instruments of power to bear for the nation. For instance, the DoD is not simply confined to the military instrument of power; it also has roles—supporting and leading—within the diplomatic, information, and economic realms. For example, the regional combatant commanders and their forces represent the United States to international leaders and populations, supporting U.S. diplomacy. Within the information domain, military presence exists in forms that range from space-based satellites to interpersonal communication. Lastly, enforcement of blockades and some types of sanctions are examples of military support to the nation’s economic instrument of power.

The desired end state for the DoD’s work to build a strategic communication process is that it will help to integrate and synchronize the department’s efforts and prepare it to collaborate in interagency and coalition strategic communication processes. To reach that state, the team charged with leading development of DoD strategic communication envisions a process that helps the United States achieve desired strategic effects, either independently or in cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations, nations, and nongovernmental organizations.¹²

1.1.2 The Public Communication Component

This paper focuses on the DoD’s efforts to develop the public communication component of its strategic communication process. Consideration is given to the capabilities, or information resources, the DoD can draw upon for strategic communication, the developmental needs of those resources, and what can reasonably be expected from them.

The DoD concept for strategic communication places a high priority on formal public information. The developing processes put information experts in the planning and decision-making cycles for operations to achieve desired effects.

Regardless of definition or perspective, the importance of effective public communication and relations—strategic communication—cannot be overstated. With proper prioritization and authority to integrate information planning and engagement into operations and other efforts,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

strategic communication can help build relationships with various publics—foreign and domestic—that improve the ability of the United States to meet its national objectives. Delivery of public information may result in increased public support of policy initiatives, procurement efforts and operational objectives. The targeted public may be internal to the organization, supporters, taxpayers, Congress, foreign populations, or adversaries. Just as varied is the perspective of the audiences: the vested interest may come because the publics benefit from, or are harmed by, the behavior of the DoD.¹³

Regardless of the nature of the public's association with an organization, the bedrock of public communication is the building of key partnerships based on relationships.¹⁴ This also is where the true value of the DoD's Public Affairs (PA) capabilities resides, since its people are charged with conducting the core of the department's public relations work. However, to be effective, the people charged with executing the public communication component of the DoD's strategic communication efforts must have the knowledge, skills and training necessary to allow them to understand the nuances of varied, global audiences. Investment must also be made to build understanding of new and emerging communication technologies, how different publics use them and what communication tactics should be employed for U.S. success.

Increasingly, conflict is in a population's cognitive space, making sheer military might a lesser priority for victory in the Information Age.¹⁵ Use of the nation's hard power is inadequate as the sole—or even primary—means – to address an insurgency. Instead, national decision makers must create a synergistic approach that emphasizes the country's soft power capabilities while drawing on complementary efforts of its hard power might if necessary.

To bring success in the modern operating environment, policy, diplomatic and military operations must include consideration of public information and integration of the efforts of the resources that deliver it. As the Defense Science Board states in its 2004 report, strategic communication will be less effective if managed separately since it cannot build support for policies viewed negatively by the audiences.¹⁶ Simply put, consideration of communication and its effects must be integrated into operational planning, decision-making and execution cycles, not considered as an afterthought.

Such culture shifts are not easy to attain. To be successful, the change within the DoD must have senior leaders' support illustrated by their involvement in communication efforts, their

¹³ James E. Grunig, "After 50 Years: The Value and Values of Public Relations," speech to The Institute for Public Relations, New York, N.Y., 9 November 2006.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Robert H. Scales, "Clausewitz and World War IV." *Armed Forces Journal*. July 2006 [On-line]. URL: <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/07/1866019/> Accessed 9 January 2008.

¹⁶ *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*.

direction to make and fund organizational and process changes where needed, and a commitment to continue the change beyond their tenure in the organization. Therefore, senior DoD leaders must institutionalize a culture that values and rewards persistent, authentic and open public communication. As it stands today, there is a distinct reticence to engage in the information battlespace. This approach severely marginalizes the nation's ability to effectively employ its information resources.

Leadership must also understand that specific, intended strategic communication effects may be difficult to attain and that unintended second- and third-order effects are possible, especially in the near term. Effective communication strategies will bring near-term results and successes, but patience, persistence and messages consistent with actions are requisite for communication's intended strategic effects. Many times, the outcomes of strategic efforts are beyond the horizon: the efforts are often generational in nature, with their results years in the future.

The DoD may not have the patience for beyond-the-horizon strategic communication. Continuity of the effort may be difficult to achieve in an environment made fluid by leadership changes, frequent workforce turnover due to military reassignments, shifting national security priorities, and varying budgets. When one adds administration change in the executive branch of government at least every eight years, typically resulting in shifts in strategic goals, policies, and priorities, the challenge to long-term strategic communication efforts becomes clearly apparent.

Any attempts at strategic communication require the integration of public information into the command and control structure and the operational cycle to ensure information resources activities are coordinated and support DoD strategy. Integration with command and control would also provide a conduit between information resources, senior leadership, and other DoD capabilities, helping to ensure the informational instrument of power is considered in policy and strategy decisions, integrated into planning functions, and directed in employment like other capabilities. The command and control focus must be on coordinating the information resources—the people and capabilities—and ensuring their interface with other operational capabilities. The focus must not be on control or management of the information. Attempts to

control and perfect information are incompatible with the DoD’s Principles of Information,¹⁷ and counterproductive in today’s ever-expanding information environment.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, “DOD Principles of Information,” in DOD Directive 5122.5, *Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA))*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 27 September 2000), 7, [Online]. URL: <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/512205p.pdf> Accessed 13 January 2008.

Chapter Two

Why Strategic Communication?

*More than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.
We are in a media battle, a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma
[community of Muslims].*

—Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda deputy

By many accounts, the United States is losing the information battle of the Global War on Terror.

The U.S. government's public communication deficit goes beyond the current struggle, however. Numerous people have publicly cited America's inability to tell its story effectively, both at home and abroad.

Independent surveys of various countries' populations show a declining opinion of the United States. Responses in twelve of the fifteen countries polled for The Pew Global Attitudes Project's 2006 survey indicated significant declines in support for America. The decline was marked when compared against results from the project's first survey in 2000, plunging by more than 50 percent in some populations.¹ Similarly, the 2007 BBC World Service Poll of 26,000 adults in twenty-five countries showed a 49 percent disapproval rating of the United States' influence in the world.²

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review cited the military's lack of organizational structure, training, equipment, and specialized skills needed to effectively analyze, plan, coordinate, and integrate the capabilities necessary to successfully promote America's interests.³ Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld graded the United States' efforts as "D or D+" in the "battle of ideas" waged as a part of the Global War on Terror.⁴ Although Secretary Rumsfeld's assessment was not focused solely on the military's efforts to communicate effectively, he amplified his point with recognition of the military's counterproductive tendency to give low priority to engagement with the public through the media.

¹ Pew Research Institute. "2006 Global Attitudes Poll," (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Institute, 13 June 2006), [On-line]. URL: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252> Accessed 14 November 2006.

² The BBC World Service Poll. "World View of United States Role Goes From Bad to Worse," (London: BBC World Service, 2006), [On-line]. URL: http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/bbcusop/?email=hbeasey@nps.edu Accessed 9 April 2007.

³ U.S. Department of Defense, "2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap," Washington, D.C., 25 September 2006.

⁴ Donald Rumsfeld, remarks at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 27 March 2006.

During the cold war, it often was acceptable for a government agency or senior leader to avoid interaction with public groups or the media in the name of national security. However, the world has changed; the demand and appetite for information have grown dramatically. Success within the information domain in the Global War on Terror—and most likely in every future conflict—demands engaged leaders who clearly articulate the country’s vision and goals. Failure to engage is to allow others to frame the issue solely from their point of view. Lack of engagement cedes the crucial information domain to current and potential adversaries while forgoing the advantages of building relations through communication with U.S. citizens, allies, and key partners.

The modern environment in which the DoD’s information resources operate is global in nature. The Global Information Environment (GIE)⁵ includes all individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, and distribute information. A significant subsystem of the GIE is the public information environment—the realm in which public communication operations occur. The public information environment includes all individuals, organizations, or systems that collect, process, and disseminate information for public consumption. It comprises many subsystems, ranging from interpersonal communication to international public information and mass media.⁶

The public information environment is a key battleground in the modern information environment. Some military leaders have labeled the current operating conditions as Fourth Generation Warfare, a term that refers to an enemy that operates in a virtual realm and uses mass media cleverly, effectively making the media the terrain.⁷

Personal electronic devices such as cell phones, digital cameras, video recorders, and various kinds of computers have created a new intersection between the individual and the mass media. The public can no longer be viewed as passive information consumers: now more than ever the public actively contributes to the information environment via World Wide Web sites, blogs, and text messaging, to name only a few.

The new technologies also give individuals, groups, and, in some regards, nations enormous capability to organize and influence various audiences. In April 2006, Nepal’s King Gyanendra ordered cell phone service cut after protesters used text messages to help assemble street protests

⁵ Air Force Doctrine Document 2-5.3, *Public Affairs Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, 24 June 2005), 3, [On-line]. URL: <http://www.iwar.org.uk/psyops/resources/us/afdd2-5-3.pdf> Accessed 13 January 2008.

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 13 February 2006), I-2, [On-line]. URL: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_13.pdf Accessed 13 January 2008.

⁷ Ron Martz, “Media New Front in War on Terrorism,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 23 August 2006, 11.

by tens of thousands of democracy advocates. When Philippines President Joseph Estrada was forced from office in 2001, he called the uprising against him a “coup de text,” because his detractors used cell phone networks to text message organizational instructions for protests.⁸

Likewise, the public media, citizens, and international organizations can directly affect the success or failure of military operations through their influential effect on U.S., allied, and adversary public support. Despite their effects on operations, the editorial perspectives of these public information elements are protected and guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and therefore protected from U.S. government control.

2.1 Fixing the Deficiency

Current efforts by the DoD to correct the perceived deficiency in communication effectiveness include formation of a Strategic Communication Secretariat and an overarching Strategic Communication Integration Group (SCIG).⁹ A new organization, the Office of Joint Communication, leads the efforts to build and institute the DoD’s new strategic communication process and culture.

Similarly, each U.S. military service has embarked on its own development of a strategic communication capability through process development or organizational change. All but one service, the Air Force, currently relies on its PA office to lead the strategic communication development effort. The Air Force created a Strategic Communication directorate in 2005 to lead the service’s efforts in the area. Initially, there was a distinct tie to the PA directorate, with the majority of the new directorate’s capability being drawn from the Headquarters Air Force PA staff. In the initial organizational structure, the director of Air Force PA served as the deputy director of strategic communication.¹⁰ However, the Air Force elected to separate the two organizations in April 2007. While the Strategic Communication directorate will continue to coordinate communication functions across the Air Staff, it no longer is organizationally intertwined with Air Force PA. The distinct organization will add a senior civilian as its deputy to replace the dual-hatted Air Force PA director who previously served in that capacity.¹¹

However, PA is not the only public communication capability that is key to strategic communication success. Other information resources are vital—their actions and products are

⁸ Mary Jordan, “Going Mobile: Text Messages Guide Filipino Protestors” *The Washington Post*, 25 August 2006, A1.

⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, “2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap,” Washington, D.C., 25 September 2006.

¹⁰ Telephone interview with Brig. Gen. Erwin Lessel, III, USAF, Director of Communication, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, 26 October 2006.

¹¹ U.S. Air Force Office of Strategic Communication briefing, “Way Ahead,” April 2007.

critical—to organizational success in strategic communication efforts. Among these information resources are photo and visual production, military bands, intelligence, historians, legislative liaison, recruiting, international affairs, and, at the very foundation, each person in the DoD.

An exclusive reliance on PA for development of strategic communication capability presents a very real risk. PA is quite correctly placed at the nucleus of strategic communication because of its pre-existing, well-developed training programs, public credibility, increasing operational integration, and well-established focuses on internal information and community and media relations. However, the capability has sometimes disappointed commanders or leaders who desired a specific effect from the public communication effort. Often these disappointments are linked to a lack of cooperation among the career fields conducting public communication as well as restrictions of access to the operational strategy development, planning, and execution phases.

The lack of cooperation and integration can have undesirable effects that reach beyond disappointed leadership. The perceived credibility of the information provider can be degraded by an insufficiency of pertinent information. Credibility is also severely compromised when actions do not align with statements regarding military operations. Not even the most carefully constructed messages, themes, and words will find success if the messenger lacks credibility with the audience.¹²

Therefore, strategic communication development efforts must take place at the enterprise level: every public information resource must be developed with a consideration of its strategic communication role. Simultaneously, a massive culture shift must occur to remove the tribal instincts of those who manage the varied information resources—instincts that keep them focused on funding and career-field-specific issues instead of on enhanced coordination to achieve the enterprise communication goals. A culture shift also must occur within the leadership hierarchy of each service, the DoD, and the U.S. government to value public communication, provide access to decision-making and planning efforts, support efforts in this area with new training programs, and clearly articulate the enterprise goals and objectives. Without such changes, current efforts to communicate strategically likely will fail.

The DoD's current efforts represent positive steps toward creating a culture that understands strategic communication as a vital focal point for operational success. To achieve the vision, however, the department needs to develop individual public information resources—career fields or mission sets—such as PA, information operations (IO), psychological operations (PSYOP), legislative affairs, intelligence, and military support to public diplomacy, with a focus on their coordinated employment and supporting technologies. The strength of strategic communication

¹² Steven R. Corman, Aaron Hess, and Z.S. Justus, *Credibility in the Global War on Terrorism: Strategic Principles and Research Agenda*, Report #0603 (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona State University Consortium for Strategic Communication, 9 June 2006, [On-line]. URL: <http://www.comops.org/article/117.pdf> Accessed 13 January 2008.

will be its coordination of efforts, with careful consideration of public information in planning and decision making, to help achieve strategic objectives.¹³ Strategic communication is not the silver bullet, but it does present the potential for a more tightly focused informational contribution to the strength of the other instruments of national power to achieve national strategies.¹⁴

2.2 Threats and Opportunities

Modern conflicts include battles far beyond the physical battlespace. The information environment is quickly becoming the battlefield of choice and advantage for adversaries of the United States and its allies, giving these adversaries asymmetric options for attacks. Terrorist organizations are very effectively harnessing Western information technology (IT), such as the Internet, to help them achieve their global ambitions.

As former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers observed, violent extremists “want to create fear. And when we’re afraid, we don’t make rational decisions.”¹⁵ Several characteristics of the Internet make it easier to generate the fear the terrorists seek: ease of access, anonymity of posting, a potentially large audience, and lack of regulation have allowed terrorists to reach millions of people with little risk of being detected and stopped. Through operating their own Web sites and online forums, terrorists have effectively created their own “terrorist news network.”¹⁶ Terrorists use new technologies not only to carry their messages to the global audience, but also to create a command and control system that is hidden from public view by using Web sites and their images, Internet chat rooms, and cell phone networks.¹⁷ Al-Qaeda has been called “the eBay of terrorism” because of its adept use of technology. It also has an organizational structure optimized for the information age—one that allows quick, nimble action.¹⁸

The DoD also can leverage information systems for global collaboration, but must develop the specific tools to allow for shared awareness of elements in the public information domain. The military intelligence community recently launched a tool it calls Intellipedia to help its people share information and build awareness. The tool is based on wiki technology, a Web-based

¹³ Linda Robinson, “The Propaganda War,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 29 May 2006.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lyric W. Winik, “Cycle of Hate,” *Parade Magazine*, 22 October 2006, 1.

¹⁶ Brian Michael Jenkins, “World Becomes the Hostage of Media-Savvy Terrorists: Commentary,” *USA Today*, 22 August 2004, [On-line]. URL: <http://www.rand.org/commentary/082204USAT.html> Accessed 13 January 2008.

¹⁷ Winik, 12.

¹⁸ Max Boot, “War Made New: Technology, Warfare and the Course of History 1500–Today,” “On Point with Tom Ashbrook,” broadcast by NPR’s WBUR 30 October 2006, [On-line]. URL: http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2006/10/20061030_b_main.asp) Accessed 15 November 2006.

application that allows users to contribute and edit content.¹⁹ A similar tool would be useful for the various information resources within the strategic communication community. However, the greatest value would result from a tool that can bridge the individual disciplines and capabilities to allow for shared awareness. As an example, such a tool could allow historians to contribute issue-specific historical perspective while international affairs specialists enhance the cultural insight provided by the intelligence community and even by the DoS's embassy-based country teams.

The focus on information sharing and collaboration is in line with another of the DoD's transformation efforts: development of network-centric warfare capability. Networked information resources would enhance strategic communication efforts to increase interaction between planning and execution functions.²⁰ The increased interaction presents the opportunity for faster, more agile information activities to provide the correct informational frame to inform and appropriately influence key audiences, or to counter an adversary's misinformation or propaganda.

The U.S. Army understands the information war threat intimately, most recently from its time on the ground in battle-torn Iraq. The service's new doctrine on counterinsurgency focuses intently on communication, relationships, and understanding other cultures, even to the point of downplaying traditional military intervention. The new doctrine calls for waging a political battle for "hearts and minds" while exercising military restraint to avoid driving civilians to the terrorists' cause. The document also notes the essential need for the organization to be flexible and adaptive and calls on its leaders to be well informed, culturally astute, and agile.²¹

2.2.1 Strength in the U.S. Population

The United States is popularly known as the world's melting pot of ethnicities and cultures. For the purpose of strategic communication, the nation's population seemingly remains an untapped resource despite the vast resource of cultural knowledge and language skills it offers.

The U.S. Office of War Information successfully leveraged the U.S. immigrant population during World War II to better understand the nation's enemies and more effectively communicate with the populations in Japan and Germany. The United States should now consider similar approaches to build its understanding of other populations and to improve its ability to communicate with them. Unfortunately, this level of interaction currently is limited by

¹⁹ David E. Kaplan, "Wikis and Blogs, Oh My!" *United States News & World Report*. 30 October 2006, [On-line]. URL: <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/061030/30wikis.htm> Accessed 9 April 2007.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, December 2006), [On-line]. URL: <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf> Accessed 13 January 2008/

background checks and other mechanisms put in place after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In some cases, precisely the types of people with whom democratic nations need to build relations are prevented from entering the United States. Furthermore, foreign language skills, particularly in the United States, are not adequately developed.

2.3 Operationalizing Information

One can successfully argue that public communication always has been a key element of military operations and that public information, like other military actions, always has had an effect on operational outcomes. The relationship between information and operational success is becoming stronger in the post-cold war era. Recent operations show a shift for the military's public information resources from outsiders merely providing information about operations to insiders who deliver truthful, timely and accurate information to help achieve desired results.

Clearly, more emphasis is now placed on the information's effects and the strategies to achieve them. This shift to effects-based planning for public information requires the modern military information professional to consider carefully the possible effects of isolated and coordinated communication efforts and their ability to influence achievement of the commander's objectives and the overarching strategic goals. Additionally, while information resources such as PA must recognize the inherent influential nature of information for those who receive their products, they must simultaneously guard a most precious commodity—the credibility earned as providers of truthful and accurate information to the media and public. Improper use of public information resources and capabilities to convey falsehoods may meet short-term needs but, in the long term, would degrade the capability for future operations and, therefore, is counterproductive to achievement of strategic goals. While coordination between public information resources and others, such as military deception, is vital in strategy development and planning, their separation in employment must be distinct.

Although some information resources, such as PA and intelligence, photographers and audiovisual assets, are more closely coordinated with other operational elements, many others—such as legislative liaison, military bands, historians and international affairs—are not. Development of strategic communication at the DoD level—the enterprise level—is focused on bringing together all information resources to coordinate their efforts for communication via many channels to reach the intended audience.²² The enterprise approach to strategic communication, with its collaboration of disparate information resources' efforts, presents a substantial opportunity for the DoD to operate more effectively in the modern information environment.

²² Personal interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

Current efforts to link the DoD’s information sources and initiatives to support strategic goals also create an opportunity to create a more complete operational picture and battlespace awareness for commanders and leaders in an effects-based operations environment. As shared awareness increases among the DoD’s information resources, greater collaboration can occur, in turn benefiting future communication and other operational capabilities. For instance, international affairs and intelligence resources may provide enhanced cultural insight, allowing a public communication effort to reach an intended audience more effectively. Greater collaboration and interaction are possible today via existing DoD classified and unclassified information systems. One key, however, is to collapse the barriers between planners and executors to ensure shared awareness in near-real time to enable strategic actions.²³

Coordinating and harmonizing the DoD’s public communication efforts to deliver truthful, timely, accurate, and credible information in the public information environment also decreases the information noise caused by the department’s own efforts.²⁴ Too many “tribal” voices, often presenting opposing messages aimed at achieving individual organizational goals or strategies, further clutter an already saturated information environment. A coherent approach—not cue cards, but coordinated efforts by people informed of the enterprise strategy—is a more effective means to communicate.

Currently, each military service, as well as the Office of the Secretary of Defense, has its own Web site with its own focus, conducts its own public communication strategies, and directs its own spokespersons. In addition, the DoD agencies, military contractors, and the U.S. government as a whole communicate in a wide variety of venues every day. Oftentimes, an overload of competing information leaves audiences to sort and determine what the organization believes is most important. The point is clear: too much information, especially when it does not support or decisively communicate enterprise strategy, can easily drown out the important public communication efforts that do support national and DoD enterprise strategies. This should not, however, be interpreted as justification for reducing the flow of information between the government and the populace. In fact, the opposite is true: public discourse and government transparency are vital to the success of democracies. However, to be effective, information from the various governmental sources must be consistent, authentic, persistent, and aligned with kinetic and non-kinetic actions.

One possible reason for the cacophony of discordant messages—in addition to the sheer volume of information—is the lack of clear, articulate strategy from the national leadership. Without this, the leaders of each department, agency, and office are left to decide what is

²³ Personal interview with David Alberts, chief information officer, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 8 December 2006.

²⁴ Telephone interview with Brig. Gen. Erwin Lessel, III, USAF, Director of Communication, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, 27 October 2006.

important. In most cases the answer is to use the organization's communication efforts to advance its own interests.²⁵

²⁵ Personal interview with Col. Alan Bynum, Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategic Command Liaison Office, the Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

Chapter Three

DoD Strategic Communication Capabilities

Information is the currency of democracy.

—Thomas Jefferson

The DoD must make sweeping cultural changes, develop key career fields, and take a long-term approach to results if it is to realize the potential of strategic communication. Strong examples exist of the DoD's information resources current capabilities. However, they must be fully understood, further developed, and leveraged for operational engagement.

Strategic communication efforts may have many implications for domestic and international relations. For instance, the PA career field aspires to deliver five crucial, synergistic capabilities to commanders across the full spectrum of military operations: trusted counsel, public trust and support, morale and readiness of the force, global influence and deterrence, and strategic communication planning.¹

The trusted counsel capability reflects the ability of PA operations to provide commanders and other leaders candid, timely, and accurate counsel and guidance concerning the effects of the public information environment on the ability to meet mission objectives. This capability includes providing predictive awareness of the global public information environment through observation, analysis, and interpretation of domestic and international media reporting, public opinion trends, and lessons learned from the past, and preparing leaders to engage the public information environment. This counsel helps commanders to make well-informed decisions regarding the public information environment's effect on missions and to forecast possible results.²

The public trust and support capability addresses the role of PA operations in preparing the nation for conflict and war. It does so by building and sustaining public trust and understanding of military contributions to national security through open, honest dialogue.³ Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz considered public support so important that he included it in his famous trinity of warfare: the people, the army, and the government.⁴ History provides many examples of the effect

¹ U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-61, *Joint Doctrine for Public Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 May 2005), [On-line]. URL: http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp3_61.pdf Accessed 13 January 2008.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,

of public opinion on military operations. Shifting public opinion shaped by overwhelmingly negative news reporting during the Vietnam War was a major factor in the erosion of public support for U.S. involvement in that conflict. The decline of public support directly affected U.S. political and military decisions and diplomatic efforts.

Similarly, Operation Desert Storm and OIF, which featured operational footage and live updates from theater of operations, show that public information is a vital component of modern warfare—vital in articulating the nation’s objectives, highlighting its overwhelming military capability, and telling the operational story. Effective public communication that educates and influences the public debate regarding military operations is requisite to sustaining the will of the people to remain engaged in specific offensive operations. The effectiveness of the public communication mission is improved when the information is gained at the operational source and synchronized with other information operations.

The internal communication component of strategic communication also is vital to success. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines are more effective when they know their roles in the mission and understand the policies, programs, and operations that affect them and their families. These communication efforts also help to counter misinformation and propaganda directed at U.S. and coalition forces and populations.⁵ Effective internal information also raises awareness among individuals that their actions will help to determine if the operation is a success or failure. A vivid example of this point is the tremendous damage done to America’s prestige, its global image, and OIF efforts by the handful of soldiers who perpetrated abuses against Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib.⁶

Comprehensive planning is the cornerstone of all PA capabilities and tasks. Planning enables all other PA capabilities and is essential to achieve strategic communication effects. Within this planning cycle PA operators examine all aspects of the information environment to develop effects-based strategies aimed at achieving a predetermined strategic effect.

Any reception of information affects the receiver’s view on a specific topic. Participants in a public tour of a military base leave with a distinct impression of that service, the installation visited, and its people. Information consumed in war combines to affect consumers’ opinion about the conflict and the U.S. role in it.

Modern information transfer, characterized by split-second delivery of data and images, demands that the DoD’s public information resources be cognizant of their potential to

1989).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Pew Research Institute. “2006 Global Attitudes Poll,” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Institute, 13 June 2006), 4, [On-line]. URL: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252> Accessed 14 November 2006.

influence—intentionally or not. Processes and products must be considered for their possible effect on the audiences that will consume them. Thorough research and planning are necessary to increase the possibility of accurately predicting effects in the information environment. It is reckless and irresponsible to ignore information’s possible influential nature and the effects it may create in the modern information environment. At the same time, public information operators must realize that operational actions will always have a larger effect than words. This is well understood by the DoD’s Joint Communication Office staff, which sees strategic communication as 80 percent actions and 20 percent messages or communication.⁷

3.1 The DoD Approach

Successful employment of each of these informational capabilities requires resources beyond a single career field. While the DoD’s concept of strategic communication includes the public information resources of PA, public diplomacy, and military IO as its core capabilities, it currently does not extend to other specialties such as intelligence, international affairs, or legislative affairs.⁸

3.1.1 Current Strategic Communication Structure

The DoD uses an organizational hierarchy, as shown in **Figure 3-1**, to establish strategic communication priorities and determine which resources and capabilities should be used to achieve the desired effects. The following paragraphs describe each element in the order shown on the chart.

⁷ Telephone interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 27 March 2007.

⁸ U.S. Department of Defense. “DoD Strategic Communication Integration Group Charter,” Washington, D.C., 20 September 2006.

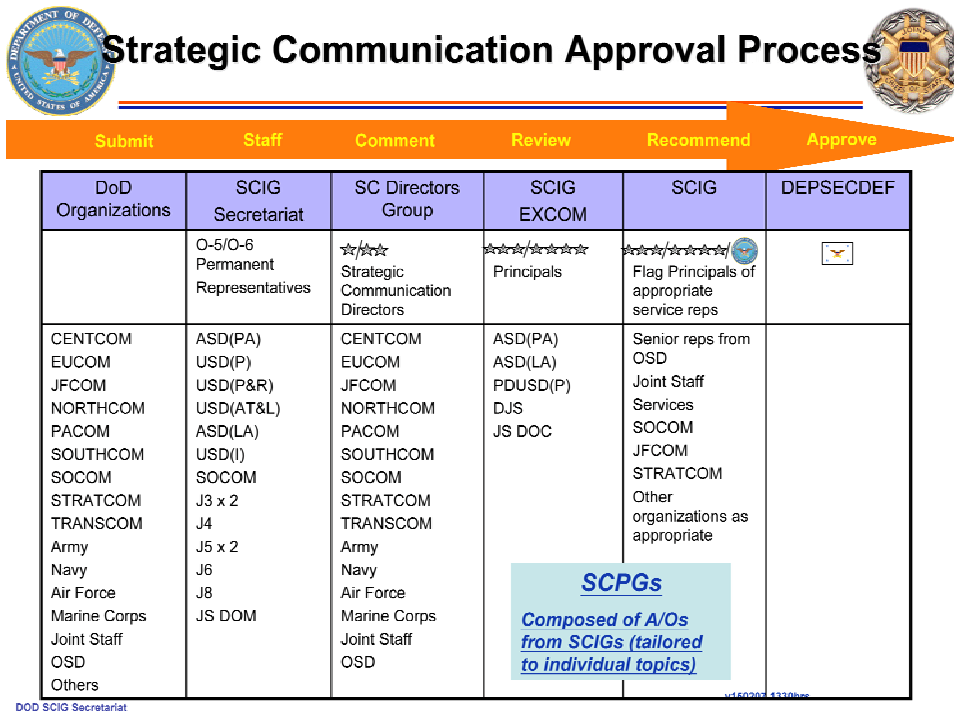


Figure 3-1
DoD’s Strategic Communication Hierarchy⁹

The Joint Staff Strategic Communication Secretariat is a multidisciplinary staff of thirteen people, with an additional twenty-one people associated as liaison officers to lend subject-matter expertise for specific projects. The secretariat is the day-to-day champion of the strategic communication process and public information’s use and consideration within the department.

The DoD Strategic Communication Directors Group comprises general officers who direct strategic communication in various DoD organizations. This group’s members represent each combatant command, military service, the Joint Staff, deputy assistant secretary of defense for support to public diplomacy, and the deputy assistant secretary of defense for joint communication. The directors group meets weekly to review SCIG activities and make recommendations to the SCIG Executive Committee (EXCOM). The directors represent their organization’s senior leadership and are able to accept and act on tasks and to recommend issues, topics, or priorities for SCIG action.

The EXCOM reviews SCIG recommendations and provides oversight and guidance to the director of the Strategic Communication Secretariat. In addition to the director of strategic

⁹ U.S. Department of Defense. Strategic Communication Concept of Operations Briefing. 15 March 2007.

communication for the Joint Staff, the EXCOM members are the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, the assistant secretary of defense for legislative affairs, the principal deputy under secretary of defense for policy, and the director of the Joint Staff.¹⁰

The DoD SCIG is the top-level committee, comprising senior representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, each of the military departments, U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Joint Forces Command, and U.S. Strategic Command. The SCIG is the last to review and approve the strategic communication proposals and products for decision by the deputy secretary of defense. The SCIG also may develop its own priorities and ideas to be developed by the SCIG Secretariat.

Two other entities round out the DoD's strategic communication infrastructure and play supporting roles. First is the Strategic Communication Planning Group (SCPG), made up of action officers who represent SCIGs created for specific issues or topics and the priorities approved by the deputy secretary of defense. Second, the Strategic Communication Working Group (SCWG) serves as a working-level means for information sharing between various entities. In addition, interagency consideration—if not coordination—is built into the construct, with the SCIG possessing the authority to invite other departments or agencies to its meetings when useful.¹¹

The hierarchical structure of the DoD's strategic communication organization—the Strategic Communication Secretariat as the foundation and executing mechanism, with input from and collaboration with the Directors Group and the EXCOM, and ultimately, the SCIG—is designed to more fully deliver the strength of the department's informational capability through tighter synchronization of DoD information resources and their efforts.¹² The vision is for the structure and its processes to ultimately deliver more diverse options, and strategic-level communication proposals and priorities to the deputy secretary of defense by presenting a more diverse capability set to create desired effects.¹³ **Figure 3-2** shows the planning template used by the DoD's strategic communication process to provide the deputy secretary of defense with the pertinent information regarding a proposed strategic communication priority. As of April 2007, three priorities had been approved through this process.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum, "Department of Defense Strategic Communication Integration Group," Washington, D.C., 31 January 2007.

¹² Personal interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 6 December 2006.

¹³ DoD Strategic Communication Integration Group Charter.

¹⁴ Telephone interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 27 March 2007.



 <h2 style="margin: 0;">SC Plan Template Definitions</h2> 	
<p>The Strategic Communication Plan Template (SCPT) provides a means to submit a staffed proposal for the DoD SCIG Executive Committee (EXCOM) to review and forward, as appropriate, to DEPSECDEF for approval. Once approved, it serves as a guide for development of a fully integrated SC Plan, including identification of roles and responsibilities for all relevant Department components. DoD organizations can submit SCPTs through their SC Directors to the SCIG Secretariat for consideration by the SCIG EXCOM.</p>	
<p>Narrative Description/Strategic Context <i>Frames the issue in the broadest terms by describing the background and situation applicable to the issue and desired goal(s).</i></p>	
<p>Goal(s) <i>What the strategic plan is attempting to achieve</i></p>	<p>Lines of Operations (Leads) <i>Logical lines that connect actions related in time and function. In order to be actionable for SC purposes, these lines should correlate to an area of expertise and a lead. May be further broken down as appropriate.</i></p>
<p>Obstacles and Constraints <i>Obstacle – Something you can improve on Constraint – Something you cannot change</i></p>	<p>Key Assumptions <i>Factors that are thought to be true and form the basis for the plan</i></p>
<p>Primary Audiences <i>Target groups/organizations that are the focus of actions and words designed to achieve the goal</i></p>	<p>Assessment Methodology <i>Key measures of progress toward identified goal</i></p>
<p>Way Ahead <i>Specific steps to be taken to complete and implement SC plan</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Proceed as written <input type="checkbox"/> Proceed IAW guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Adjust</p>	
<p>DO D SCIG Secretariat</p>	

Figure 3-2
DoD Strategic Communication Planning Template¹⁵

Figure 3-3 depicts the DoD’s strategic communication process flow with delivery of an approved priority to be supported by combatant commands, services, or other DoD entities.

¹⁵ Strategic Communication Concept of Operations Briefing.

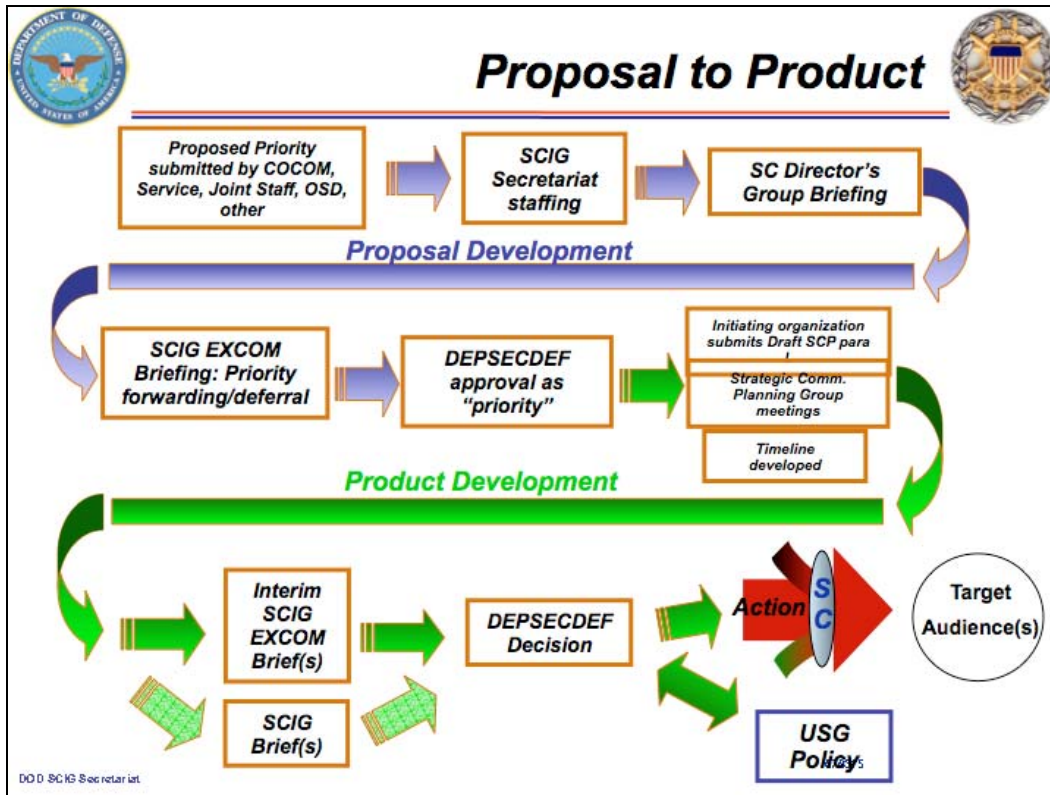


Figure 3-3
DoD Strategic Communication Process Flow¹⁶

3.1.2 Service-Level Processes

Below the DoD's organization for strategic communication there is debate among the military services regarding how best to provide the necessary teaming of information resources for strategic communication. The Army, Navy, and Marine Corps are pursuing strategic communication as a process versus an organization and have charged their PA staffs with planning and executing strategic communication. The focus on process over organization requires senior leader emphasis to ensure the existing PA capability has the resources for its expanded role and is recognized by the other staff agencies as the authoritative public information expert to coordinate actions to achieve the organization's strategic aims. Without senior leader support and emphasis, public information operations have little potential for breaking new ground in communication strategies.

Alternatively, like the DoD, the Air Force focused its efforts on the organizational approach to ensure that a strategic communication process is firmly implanted in the service. The Air Force

¹⁶ Ibid.

Office of Strategic Communication was created in 2005 under the secretary of the Air Force, and provided authorization for a two-star general to lead it. In fact, the DoD structure is largely based on the Air Force model, which predates it by nearly a year.¹⁷ The office is charged with helping to ensure collaboration between the various information resources and other capabilities, and with championing the public information domain in senior leader meetings.

Regardless of leadership’s approach to develop strategic communication processes and culture—organizational or process—the services have largely adopted the DoD’s hierarchical organizational system for vetting strategic communication priorities. Each military service has established a SCIG to identify issues, operations, policy, and plans that may have implications for strategic communication and to recommend courses of action to the service’s chief.

Although the DoD’s current organizational structure for strategic communication permits identification and development of ideas and vetting of strategies, it lacks the means to adjust the communication effort quickly once it is assigned for execution by a functional area, military service, or combatant command. The strategic communication structure remains the same regardless of peacetime or war operations. The only differentiation occurs in the case of a major crisis that would require the strategic communication community to reorient from long-term objectives to more near-term efforts.¹⁸

3.1 Possible Limiting Factors

The absence of an enterprise approach is a significant limiting factor for the DoD’s success in strategic communication. At face value, the services’ interdependence of roles and missions makes it easy for them to support the DoD’s strategic mission goals: victory is a shared claim. However, at a deeper level, the services are in constant competition with each other for limited budgetary authority, recruits, and development of roles, missions, and their associated weapons systems. To this end, the services must out-communicate one another—successfully telling their stories to Congress, the American people, and their own forces.

This contest for support is not detrimental to effective DoD enterprise communication until a service puts its own sustainment interests before those of another service or even the DoD’s goals. It is not uncommon for the DoD to be at odds with a service regarding its “organize, train, and equip” priorities. The possibility of enterprise success at the expense of one or more of the services presents itself during each biannual Program Objective Memorandum (POM) budgeting process. However, the POM approach is far from a collaborative approach between entities for

¹⁷ Personal interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

¹⁸ Ibid.

enterprise gain, since competition between the services is the rule until the DoD budgeters make the final call on funding decisions.

Another limiting factor for DoD strategic communication may be the differing approaches the services have taken regarding the mission area: organizational versus processes vested in their PA offices, as discussed earlier. While the differences in the services' approaches may not be significant for day-to-day, service-specific operations and communication efforts, they may become meaningful in a joint-service deployment environment. When deployed in joint operations, each service contributes information resources to the joint forces commander. Operations centers currently include IO capability and have PA support, but no doctrine or precise operational direction exists for strategic communication in the deployed joint environment.¹⁹

Insufficient institutional guidance, specifically DoD directives for strategic communication and military support to public diplomacy, is significant, because without it the DoD has no foundation on which to precisely replicate its strategic communication process outside of the Pentagon. The lack of these foundational documents leaves joint forces commanders to determine if and how to consider and employ their public information resources for strategic communication. Joint doctrine that establishes best practices guidance for strategic communication will help to ensure commanders and their staffs are not faced with reinventing the processes and organizational concepts for strategic communication in the fast-paced and information-saturated operational environment. If commanders are left to determine organizational structures and processes for themselves, chances are high that they will devote their time to other, seemingly more pressing, issues, and the strategic communication contribution will go unrealized.

3.2.1 Access

Access to all aspects of the strategy development, planning, and execution phases is imperative for information experts who are expected to deliver effects through strategic communication. To this end, the DoD needs to direct the services to ensure the career fields in the strategic communication community take the appropriate steps to obtain appropriate security clearances for their people. Without the appropriate security clearances, information experts will be excluded from discussions and unable to deliver their expertise fully during the strategy development, planning, and execution phases of operations.

3.2.2 Training

An additional possible limiting factor for strategic communication success may be found in the training investment made in the DoD's information resources career fields. The training system is a critical step in the DoD's and the services' efforts to create a strategic communication

¹⁹ Julian, telephone interview, 27 March 2007.

focus. For example, each service's PA operators are trained at the joint Defense Information School (DINFOS). Although plans exist to add courses and specific training to the curriculum, to date, strategic communication is only a discussion point. No focused training is yet included to prepare the new PA operators to think and plan strategically about the information they provide and its possible effects.²⁰

3.2.3 Cultural Awareness

The DoD also must develop its information resources with enhanced foreign culture awareness and language proficiency. Greater collaboration and information sharing between DoD resources such as international affairs, intelligence, and PA may pay significant dividends in overcoming the existing knowledge and skill shortfalls in some career fields. Similarly, at the interagency level, collaborative efforts with the DoS should be developed to leverage that department's broad base of cultural insight for greater shared awareness across the U.S. government.

3.2.4 Existing Legislation

Existing U.S. legislation may also be a limiting factor for strategic communication efforts in the modern global information environment. The Smith–Mundt Act of 1948, codified as the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (Public Law 402), funded U.S. global propaganda outreach using modern communication technologies, namely radio and television, while also prohibiting distribution of the information to the U.S. domestic audience. The Smith–Mundt Act remains in effect today, but information containment is much more difficult now than it was in 1948. Audiences could be more precisely targeted, even via broadcast technologies, in the early cold war era. Now, however, the information environment is truly global in nature. Information disseminated in one part of the world can be available within seconds for consumption by audiences on another continent.

The DoD and the services consider strategic communication's public information resources to be centered more on stronger informational efforts and better consideration of information's effects than on delivery of propaganda to foreign audiences. However, the Smith–Mundt Act remains in effect and must be considered when information is introduced into the public information environment.

3.2.5 Budget Authority

Funding is another potential major limiting factor for strategic communication development. The DoD's strategic communication effort in fiscal year (FY) 2007 was granted \$3

²⁰ Julian, personal interview, 6 December 2006.

million by special appropriation. Current programmed funding is sustained at \$3 million per year for FY2008–2013. The funds will be used primarily for contracted services to create a process management team to help implement the culture change deemed necessary to put the strategic communication process permanently in place throughout the DoD.²¹

The Air Force enjoys a slightly larger funding stream for its FY2007 and 2008 strategic communication efforts. The service allocated \$5 million to its new strategic communication directorate. However, funding for future years is uncertain without demonstrated successes.²²

The department's colleagues in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Army have not yet dedicated funds specifically to strategic communication development. Instead, the services elected to have their PA operations lead the process development and bear any associated expenses.

A lack of funding—or of enterprise dedication to sustained funding—may indicate that leaders hold a short-term view of strategic communication—one in which near-term successes are expected. However, to deliver success, the DoD information resources expected to deliver strategic communication must have adequate resources to equip themselves for research, planning, execution, and assessment functions.

3.2.6 The Fog of National Strategies

Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, DoD strategic communication may be limited in its success by insufficient clarity in the U.S. government's strategic goals. It is difficult to effectively support the strategic goals of the overall enterprise—the U.S. government—if they are not clearly articulated by the executive branch. With the absence of an interagency coordination tool for communication at the National Security Council (NSC) level, confusion can occur between governmental departments as they attempt to determine what the goals are and how to best support them. In this situation, public statements may conflict with the public communication from other government departments that interpreted the goal or strategic aim differently when they viewed it through their own departmental lenses.²³

The effect of this confusion regarding national strategy can be manifested in contradictory messages from U.S. government entities, resulting in confused audiences. The contradiction in messages greatly reduces communication effectiveness and adds to the blizzard of information the audiences face.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Telephone interview with Brig. Gen. Erwin Lessel, III, USAF, Director of Communication, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, 26 October 2006.

²³ Personal interview with Col. Alan Bynum, Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategic Command Liaison Office, the Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

Strategic clarity may be further obscured by the guaranteed change of U.S. presidential administrations every four or eight years. Each president makes adjustments to the nation’s strategic aims and adjusts its priorities—changes that may make it difficult to sustain strategic communication targeted for effects beyond the short-term horizon.

3.3 A Private Sector Approach

Excellent examples of strategic communication success can be found in the private sector. For one, the diversified insurance and financial company USAA (originally the United Services Automobile Association), which serves members of the armed forces, provides an enterprise approach for its information efforts. The USAA leadership believes effective communication is a key part of enterprise success and has built a culture that expects information engagement by its senior leaders.

The company’s cultural shift began with a mandate from its senior leadership—a mandate that included direction for active communication with its employees, current and prospective members, the financial community, and civic groups. USAA carefully evaluated its internal and external communication tools as it shifted to an enterprise approach. The evaluation revealed that USAA employees, members, and prospective clients received a blizzard of information. The company also found that its various entities promoted their own interests above the USAA enterprise strategic goals leaving the information consumer to determine what was relevant and important.

One result of USAA’s evaluation was a drastic reduction in the number of informational products and a complementary approach among those selected to continue. Now, USAA employees and customers receive information that highlights products while also emphasizing the company’s cultural priorities to support its strategic goals. Currently, every informational effort is evaluated to ensure it supports at least one of the company’s strategic goals. If none can be related to the effort, the project is not likely to receive funding or other support for execution. Similarly, all efforts by the company’s entities must communicate in support of the USAA enterprise success, not their individual bottom lines. In fact, department leaders are compensated based on enterprise success, not solely on the success of the area they lead. Enterprise success may at times come at the expense of one or more of the company’s individual components.²⁴

From the communication staff’s perspective, the effort is to deliver clear, concise information to the right audience via the right channel at the right time.²⁵ For instance, the company’s intranet not only provides personal and job-related information but also includes links to information that reinforces the values of the desired USAA culture.

²⁴ Michael Kelly, USAA Corporate Communication presentation, San Antonio, Tex., 25 January 2007.

²⁵ Ibid.

The streamlining actions helped the communication staff to improve corporate communication and improve the work environment for the company's employees. The efforts do not deliver deadpan, stale information to employees. The products are fresh and dynamic and, in the case of the intranet, allow tailoring so that information pertinent to a particular USAA entity or region can be included.²⁶

In another example of diverse message channeling, the company's chief executive officer (CEO) holds town hall meetings several times each year to communicate the company's focus and priorities clearly and directly. Employees who are geographically separated from the presentation, or cannot attend the live presentation, can watch it in employee lounges on the company's cable system. Future plans include streaming video of CEO and similar presentations to the employees' desktops. To help build understanding of the company's largely military membership base, the corporate headquarters features pictures, displays, and graphics that help create and maintain a connection between the employees and the members, who are primarily served over the telephone or the company's Web site.²⁷

The company's communication plans link efforts to strategic goals and include reasonable measures for success, such as counting the number of accesses to information and stories on the company's intranet and Internet sites. Metrics for events are also simple. For instance, the communication staff may rely only on a desired number of attendees to attend a scheduled special event or hear a presentation.²⁸

Not all of these successes can be duplicated in the DoD, however, without an enterprise effort to overcome existing challenges. USAA enjoys technical reach to its locations and employees, allowing its intranet to be customized and focused while retaining the enterprise foundation of information. By contrast, DoD installations have their own intranet systems and IT architectures, making a single, enterprise-wide theme more difficult to achieve. Also, the possibility of providing an enterprise-wide interface for DoD users is further reduced by the current placement of key topical functions such as pay and finances, personnel or human resources issues, and medical care on separate IT architectures. Under the current architecture, when a user clicks a link to a key function, such as a site for pay issues, he or she is taken to

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

another Web server, leaving the first site and the focused information placed there. The transition between servers severs the tie to coherent, consistent presentation of enterprise information to the employee.

Chapter Four

Command and Control of Information Resources

In traditional international conflicts, the side with the stronger military force tended to win. In today's information age, it is often the party with the stronger story that wins.

—Joseph S. Nye, Jr.¹

Many could successfully argue that a command and control system for strategic communication is a misnomer—that strategic communication is not a capability to be commanded or controlled. The argument would follow that strategic communication is a cultural, enterprise-wide mindset with accompanying processes that integrate consideration of information and its effects into the decision-making, planning and execution processes for better, more effective communication of national priorities to varied audiences.

While this argument has validity, it does not acknowledge the necessity for the people conducting the communication activities to be integrated with the operational command and control system like other capabilities in fourth generation warfare, where information can be as much a weapon as bombs and bullets. Without a strong connection to the operational command and control structure—especially in the deployed environment—information efforts will remain on the operational periphery. Integration of information considerations and awareness in the operational command and control structure will allow information experts to be present in the important operational cycles—from strategy development and planning to execution and assessment—and enable continuity in direction of strategic communication efforts.

The overarching need for a command and control structure for strategic communication is grounded in the coordination of the DoD's information resources efforts. The desired communication effects and successes will be nearly impossible to achieve, or to measure for effectiveness, without a mechanism to integrate, deconflict, and coordinate the department's current and future information efforts. The DoD and each service already have created a command and control system in the form of their SCIGs and upper-level executive boards or senior leadership oversight. There is a fine balance to be maintained, however: a top-heavy, cumbersome bureaucratic process makes for good flow charts but is not well suited to the fast-paced modern information environment. While the strategic goals and priorities delivered through the strategic communication process may serve as guideposts for the desired outcome, information tactics and communication strategies at the tactical and operational levels must be agile and creative.

¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "In Mideast, the Goal is 'Smart Power,'" *The Boston Globe*, 19 August 2006.

In the deployed environment, the need for command and control integration is even more pronounced. A possible solution is creation of an information proponent within the joint operations centers to provide the means to coordinate informational efforts and provide expertise in the planning and assessment cycles. It is imperative that the DoD provide guidance to combatant commands on how to integrate strategic communication in their command and control systems to ensure standardization among the commands. A lack of standardization could result in inconsistent execution in support of communication priorities and varying measures of effectiveness for the efforts.

From the interagency perspective, a coordinating body at the NSC level is advisable. Currently, the under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs acts as the president's conduit for national communication efforts. Despite chairing the Policy Coordinating Committee for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication, created on 8 April 8 2006,² this official lacks tasking authority over other government departments or agencies, making it nearly impossible to set course authoritatively for a national strategic communication effort.³ Further, the office's priority is the DoS's public diplomacy mission, leaving little time available for coordination of other agencies' communication efforts.

Since strategic communication is about consistent application of U.S. government policy to what its departments and agencies say and do, coordination of the efforts is imperative. Without this linkage between communication, actions, and policy, a "say-do gap" may be created, U.S. efforts may be weakened, the desired effect may not be achieved, and, as an ultimate result, the credibility of the DoD force and the nation may be degraded.⁴

² U.S. Department of State, Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee, "National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication," Washington, D.C.,:U.S. Department of State, 2006), [On-line]. URL: http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/stratcommo_plan_070531.pdf Accessed 13 January 2008.

³ Personal interview with Farah Pandith, Director for Middle East Regional Initiatives, National Security Council, 8 December 2006.

⁴ Personal interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

Tight integration of information resources' actions in the operational command and control structure would deliver the added benefit of shared awareness and better collaboration between public communicators and other operators. This enhanced level of information, in turn, would help to build better battlespace awareness and a clearer picture of the operational environment for the commander.

Chapter Five

External Influences

Americans today live in a media renaissance: Consumers have a breathtaking array of news and entertainment choices; individuals can turn themselves into news outlets on the Internet; cable and satellite television, along with satellite radio, supplement traditional broadcasting networks; and newspapers from around the world are available online.

—The Washington Post¹

Strategic communication processes and organizations may be influenced by several factors beyond the control of the DoD. These influences range from new media and their effects on the delivery of information in the public information environment, to relations between the United States and its allies or strategic partners. Additional factors are clearly beyond the direct control of the U.S. government, such as the free press and private-sector relationships with, and image projection to, foreign audiences.

5.1 New Media

The growth of computer-generated information and content is largely responsible for a modern media category labeled as new media. The term describes digital information or content that only can be viewed or used with a computer of some kind. New media offer vast new means to reach various audiences. Oftentimes, new media also bring the opportunity for a degree of interaction between the media and its consumer. Such media include Web sites that offer images, video, text in the form of stories or the online journals known as blogs (an abbreviation of “Web logs”), audio, and collaborative tools such as wikis that allow the consumer to comment about the information or even help advance the story.

New media also present a challenge in reaching a broad cross-section of society. The personalized delivery nature of new media allows people increasingly to self-select their news sources while avoiding media outlets that may counter their opinions or ideologies.² When considered through the lens of strategic communication, the segmentation of societies by media delivery channels means that some target audiences may be extremely difficult to reach. In many ways, success in reaching these target audiences will depend on the access granted to DoD messengers by the varied media outlets and then on how the outlet frames the information.

¹ *The Washington Post*, editorial, “Who Can Own Media?” 31 May 2003.

² Matthew Baum, *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).

New media offerings such as YouTube, a Web site where users can post self-produced videos, are gaining popularity among U.S. political candidates because they offer direct access to audiences.³ Sites such as YouTube allow the candidate to bypass the mass media's editorial process to convey a message directly to a mass audience.

While each of the military services has robust Web presences with multimedia features, the U.S. Army has done the best job of embracing new media on its site (<http://www.army.com>) focused on external audiences. The service uses "America's Army"—a free, interactive game available for downloading to a personal computer—as a tool for recruiting and building public trust and support. The Web site also encourages interaction by visitors by including comment links with most of the information presented. The comments form an online discussion group with the content appended to the original information the Army provided.

Indeed, one of the aspects of many new media offerings is consumer collaboration. This technological phenomenon greatly expands the voice of a population, allowing users with basic computer equipment, or even simply a cellular telephone, potentially to reach a global audience with their views and opinions. The power of individuals to convey their messages to multitudes in near-real time also brings tremendous capability to spread misinformation and falsely refute facts.

There is risk, however, in becoming overly enamored of the opportunities new media bring to communicators. For one, communicators must consider not only "How does it play in Peoria?" but also "Can they receive it in Peoria?" While the answer to these questions may be positive for audiences in Peoria, Illinois, some audiences may not have the necessary computer equipment or bandwidth access to take advantage of the new media offerings. Also, the nature of the GIE forces the follow-on questions of "How will the message be perceived, not only by the target audience, but also by audiences around the world?"

A second risk in new media engagement is the cost required to build and maintain the technological infrastructure and expertise to support the organization as it expands its communication capability. Additionally, organizations must plan for frequent reinvestment to maintain or improve their systems and technical expertise as new media technologies develop.

In the face of 30 percent reductions in its enlisted PA force, the Air Force elected in 2006 to end its no-cost contracts with commercial printing companies to produce its bases' weekly newspapers in favor of a Web-based approach. The service decided that news and information presented on the Web will be more timely and dynamic, while less manpower will be required to lay out and design each week's edition. While employment of new media in this instance will reduce the Air Force's human resource cost for delivery of information, the move to online newspapers eliminates opportunities to reach multiple people through pass along between readers.

³ Jose A. Vargas, "Newt Gingrich Tries to Translate His Remarks on YouTube," *The Washington Post*, 6 April 2007.

Readers now must have the intent to read: Airmen and their families must seek out computers to access the online content, since a copy of the newspaper will not be delivered to their homes or be available to be picked up in public places.

However, the problem in reaching this key internal audience is likely deeper since Air Force surveys in 2004 showed base newspaper readership at 38 percent, with only 7 percent of junior enlisted Airmen reading their base's newspaper.⁴ Although the move to electronic publication will put the service's news and information on the Web where younger Airmen may wish to find it, the Air Force likely will need to explore other new media channels, such as text messaging, video sites, and presence in social networking and virtual living domains, such as Second Life, to overcome the current readership deficit.

5.2 International Relations: Alliances, Coalitions, and Key Partners

Alliances, coalition operations, military-to-military contact programs, humanitarian missions, academic exchanges, and other relationship-building activities with key partner states are fundamentals of modern international relations. Their implications for DoD strategic communication efforts are important to consider.

First, partner nations in alliances, coalitions, and strategic relationships can greatly aid the DoD's efforts in strategic communication. Strategic goals for all partner nation-states may be more easily achieved through improved information sharing and more tightly coordinated communication efforts. Statements by national leaders, as well as policies and actions that support U.S. positions (or at least do not directly counter them) can be helpful reinforcements for the DoD's efforts to reach international audiences.

Transnational relationships can also potentially create significant negative effects on the DoD's strategic communication efforts. Although it is unreasonable to expect that sovereign nations would ever agree on all issues of policy or strategic goals, it is less unreasonable to believe they can cooperate on communication efforts for shared success.

An example of this cooperation occurred during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) combat operation against Serbia in 1999 to stop the bloodshed in Kosovo. Serbian President Slobodan Milošević's government was adept at spreading misinformation that gained momentum as media outlets reported it. The number of media queries for each of Milošević's claims quickly overwhelmed the small public information staff at NATO's military headquarters. This resulted in Milošević's dominating the news cycle with his information, because the NATO

⁴ Col. Michelle Johnston, USAF, U.S. Air Force electronic message to wing commanders. Subject: "Base Newspapers," 29 November 2006.

staff had little remaining capacity to go on the informational offensive.⁵ The problem was exacerbated by leaders of NATO nations drowning each other out with statements—sometimes contradicting one another on alliance policy and the strategic aim of the operation—during interviews and press conferences in their own countries.

The NATO public information staff took a strategic approach to the problem by creating a daily public information schedule, or grid, to coordinate and deconflict press conferences, statements, and interviews scheduled in the member nations. The result was a consistent NATO message provided on different media and in different countries throughout the news day. The public information grid effort did not stop Milošević’s misinformation operations, but it did give the alliance a better means to communicate its messages while its public information staff continued to disprove the misinformation.⁶

International coordination and complementary informational efforts in the Global War on Terror could contribute to achieving success. Hard-hitting, consistent statements against terrorism, particularly by national leaders or opinion leaders in Muslim nations, could do much to reach the nonradicalized elements of Islamic populations. The statements would not need to be explicit in their support of the United States and its partners in the war against terror, but rather could condemn terrorist action as counter to the beliefs of Muslims.⁷

Efforts should be made to create a transnational communication strategy group composed of willing nations. As a beginning, at the most basic level, the group could share information and coordinate communication efforts on issues of common concern.

5.3 The Private Sector

The private sector also exerts several influences on the DoD’s efforts in strategic communication. The U.S. private sector presence abroad may constitute the most visible image of the United States for many foreign audiences. The images conveyed abroad by U.S. businesses, and by music, films, and other entertainment, can be valuable commodities as soft power⁸ or, depending on the impression made, can potentially degrade the DoD’s strategic communication efforts. Strong initial impressions are likely to become lasting beliefs, positive or negative.⁹

U.S. business presence in other countries also offers the potential for cooperation between the businesses, the DoD, and other U.S. government departments or agencies. Cooperation could

⁵ Author participation in the public information operation at NATO, 1999.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Pandith interview, 8 December 2006.

⁸ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁹ Rasmus G. Bertlesen, “The Statesman and the International System.” Ph.D. diss., Churchill College, 2006, 7.

take the form of information sharing about cultural awareness, insights, and effective communication methods to reach various audiences. The Defense Science Board's 2004 report on strategic communication notes that the commercial sector has tremendous capability and expertise in opinion and media surveys, IT, and measurement of influence in communication.¹⁰ Although concerns about competitive advantage may lead businesses to protect their communication strategies in foreign markets, the private sector and the DoD need to explore cooperation in these areas.

The academic community, with its immense resources for research, education, cultural expertise, and language skills, also represents a valuable conduit that could contribute to strengthening strategic communication efforts.¹¹ The U.S. government also should not overlook the opportunities that would result from building and maintaining relationships with foreign students studying in the United States. Relationships begun in the United States and continued after the student returns to his or her home country would create a useful, global network of people who have personal understanding of U.S. culture and might share that insight with their home populations. Additionally, many of the international students may rise to important positions in their home countries, making them influential opinion leaders in their populations. Research shows that people look to family members, personal friends, or community leaders more than to the mass media to form their opinions; thus, such advocates could prove invaluable.¹²

5.4 The Free Press

The free press is one of democracy's most important strengths. It helps to provide a flow of information between government and its population while also creating a degree of transparency for government actions.

The mass communication media are the most common means to convey a message to a diverse audience. However, because of the editorial process traditional media outlets employ to vet and refine the information gathered by their reporters before printing, posting, or broadcasting the products, it is uncertain in what form the audience will receive the message. The military has no control over the media or the editorial process inherent in commercial news production, nor should it. The editorial threshing machine, however, constitutes a serious external concern for the

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, September 2004), [On-line]. URL: http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2004-09-Strategic_Communication.pdf Accessed 12 January 2008.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Stephen W. Littlejohn, *Theories of Human Communication* (5th ed.) (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996).

DoD's strategic communication efforts, since it creates a very real potential that intended messages may become distorted or unrecognizable when a reporter's story is eventually distributed to the public.¹³

There is little to be done to mitigate the possibility of messages losing their intended focus during the editing process except to be most aware of the possibility, invest time in building reporters' knowledge and understanding of the issues, and maintain focus on the strategic goal of the communication.

Use of varied communication channels to convey messages consistently in support of the strategic goal is critical and underscores the value of strategies that coordinate actions and communication.

¹³ Baum.

Chapter Six

Operational Factors

In war it is difficult for normal efforts to achieve even moderate results.

—Carl von Clausewitz¹

Several operational factors must be considered as the DoD builds its strategic communication processes and cultural focus. Among these important issues are the concept of operations for strategic communication, the level of interoperability between strategic communicators of different services or nations, and the measures of effectiveness used during the assessment phase.

The people on the building crew for DoD strategic communication clearly are aware of the need to build processes that fit well in the military culture and its operations centers. Fortunately, a broadly accepted four-step process for public information and relations lends itself well to the operational world. In fact, the DoD-adopted “research, plan, execute, assess” communication model is nothing new to public relations: it is widely attributed to the Public Relations Society of America and is used throughout the public communication industry. The model fits closely with the military’s observe, orient, decide, act (OODA) loop model² and especially well with the Air Force’s find, fix, track, target, engage, assess (F2T2EA) model³ for combat operations.

Although the research, plan, execute, assess model works for the strategic communication process, its origin in public relations is noteworthy. The DoD needs to be careful not to focus too narrowly on its PA (some would say public relations) operations to the exclusion of other key information resources vital to effective strategic communication. The model may need to be adjusted in the future to ensure its applicability and usefulness to the wide variety of capabilities contributing to the DoD’s strategic communication efforts.

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

² Grant T. Hammond, *The Mind of War: John Boyd and American Security* (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

³ John A. Tirpak, “Find, Fix, Track, Target, Engage, Assess,” *Air Force Magazine* 83 (7), July 2000, [On-line]. URL: <http://www.afa.org/magazine/July2000/0700find.asp> Accessed 8 March 2007.

6.1 Concept of Operations

The concept for the strategic communication process rests on the research, plan, execute, assess model.⁴ **Figure 6-1** depicts the DoD's concept of operations for its strategic communication process.

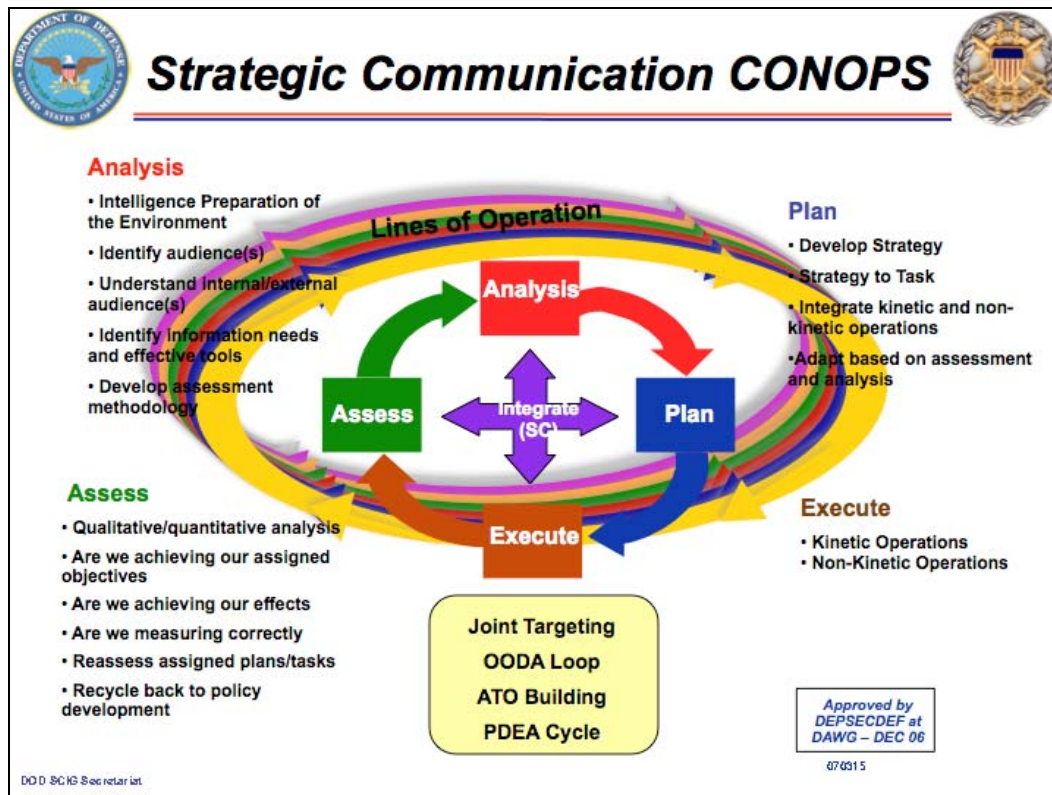


Figure 6-1
DoD Strategic Communication Concept of Operations⁵

6.1.1 Research

The research phase focuses on the commander's intent and desired effects: the elements that must always shape the four phases of the strategic communication process. During this initial phase, the DoD attempts to determine the action necessary to achieve the desired effects, regardless of whether the action is kinetic or nonkinetic. In short, this phase helps to define the challenge through situation analysis and examination of the issue background—its cause and any precedents that may serve as useful guides or warnings.

⁴ Personal interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense. Strategic Communication Concept of Operations Briefing. 15 March 2007

The research phase in strategic communication is analogous to intelligence gathering. Although useful information can be collected and stored long before it is needed for current operations, research efforts become more concentrated when a situation or issue arises. The research phase also builds the DoD's understanding of the audiences: their environment, how they think, what they believe, and how they receive information they trust and act upon.

Collaboration—enhanced sharing of information and resources—is vital to success during the research phase, since not all necessary resources will likely be available at any one location. Comprehensive research requires cultural insight, historical context, the information environment, media analysis, audience demographics, and more; these may only be available through dispersed resources within the DoD. Other support may need to be drawn from the interagency matrix, strategic partners, or allies.

6.1.2 Planning

Insight regarding the target audience and operational construct meet in the planning phase of the DoD's strategic communication process. Here, the department's communication efforts link with the effects desired for the operation as planners develop kinetic and nonkinetic courses of action to meet the commander's intent.

Strategic communication planning includes careful consideration of probable and possible outcomes and effects as the operation matures. In this phase, communication planners must determine the risks, benefits, and consequences of each tactic; decide on the right course of action; and create a schedule of activity that includes the channels, media, and methods that will achieve the desired effects. Success in this effort is uncertain given the complexity of the task; again, collaboration is imperative. Strategic communication planning also considers branches and sequels to capitalize on new opportunities while permitting the adjustments in execution revealed as necessary during the assessment phase.

The DoD's concept of operations for strategic communication envisions the planning phase as flexible, allowing planning to take place within the individual lines of operation (identified as operations, PA, IO, international affairs, political, and diplomatic) and collaboratively between those lines of operation. Regardless of the method, the DoD's planning for strategic communication focuses most sharply on integration and cooperation between the various lines of operation. The concept of operations places this work in the various SCIGs that, by design, should include all specialties for the particular operation or issue. The DoD expects that this collaboration will deliver more robust and comprehensive plans that address the gamut of possibilities for strategic communication and provide options for achieving the desired effects.

Communicators' effectiveness as providers of predictive battlespace awareness to commanders largely depends on accurate assessment of the effects of their products. To predict accurately, one must know what happened in the past—knowledge that may become available

through the assessment phase. Through close teaming among PA, intelligence functions, and foreign area experts it may be possible to create the ability necessary to analyze audiences and cultures more thoroughly. The resulting insight and understanding would likely greatly strengthen the capability to predict effects in the public information environment.

6.1.3 Execute

The execution phase puts the plan into effect through kinetic and nonkinetic operations conducted across lines of operation. Execution, like the planning phase, is designed to occur in an integrated way to achieve the desired effects.

Execution will not typically involve all lines of operation, or capabilities, in every effort. The lines of operation employed depend upon the desired effects. For instance, one part of the plan may call for kinetic operations, while another calls for movement of forces in concert with mass media interaction, demarche, or PSYOP.

From a public communication standpoint, the execution phase is where outreach occurs through carefully timed statements and messages to present the case and establish context. Relationships with opinion leaders and other important members of key audiences may prove vital to delivery of the messages to the target audience.

The DoD initially planned to use its traditional method of subject-specific annexes to integrate strategic communication into its plans. However, the DoD now intends instead to develop a strategic communication tasking memo to allow for a more flexible approach. The tasking memo will direct the services, DoD agencies, and combatant commands to take specific actions to help achieve the desired strategic communication effect.⁶

The Air Force successfully used the tasking order method in Europe during OIF, and has a communication tasking order in development for the service's strategic communication efforts.⁷ The other services plan to take a similar approach to direct execution in support of strategic communication.

6.1.4 Assess

Although assessment stands as its own phase in the strategic communication process, it cuts across all phases in that critical evaluation during each phase is essential to generating the best products. However, assessment, or evaluation, begins in earnest when the execution phase begins.

⁶ Telephone interview with Lt. Col. Gregory Julian, USA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Pentagon, 27 March 2007.

⁷ Personal interview with Maj. Ronald Watrous, Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs, The Pentagon, 7 December 2006.

Assessment-phase findings allow strategic communication planners to consider adjustments in the research, planning, and execution of the process to help ensure the efforts create the intended effects.

The DoD plans to employ audience polling, battle damage assessments, media content analysis, and various forms of intelligence to analyze its communication efforts.⁸ The effectiveness of information products is extremely difficult to measure without audience surveys or polls. Short timelines, and the inability to reach a specific audience or person (especially within the adversary population), frequently limit the use of surveys during operations. Evaluating the effectiveness of an operation's communication component is nearly impossible without access to the decision maker. For instance, who can determine what caused Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to pull back his forces from the Kuwait border in 1994? Did the U.S. effort to highlight publicly its aircraft deployments to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Vigilant Warrior influence him, or was there another factor unknown to anyone but Hussein himself?

Product effectiveness measures present one problem. Another resides in the means to deliver information to the public information environment. For example, military PA operations rely largely on the commercial news media for distribution of their products. The distribution system is robust, modern, and usually rapid, but the military has no control over it or over the editorial process inherent in commercial news production. This lack of control, combined with the lack of knowledge regarding how an audience will interpret the information, makes public information an imprecise, albeit vital, tool in an operational environment that increasingly demands precision. Expectation management is important to ensure that commanders and leaders understand both the capabilities and limitations of information and prediction of its effects.

Assessment also offers a useful means to create a collection of best practices for future, similar operations or situations. The DoD needs information sharing and collaboration tools to use this collection of best practices most effectively in the future. A network-centric approach to gathering and sharing the information would allow forces dispersed globally to contribute their best practices of strategic communication efforts.

While each phase of the strategic communication process is unique, the phases are interdependent. For instance, the value of the planning phase depends on the quality of research that planners can draw upon. Likewise, the execution phase will be most effective if it results from a well-constructed, comprehensive, adaptable plan. The future success of each phase depends on effective assessment of current actions and their outcomes.

Efficiency and success in the strategic communication process may depend largely on the absence of barriers between the four phases. If the executors of the plan have the ability to

⁸ Ibid.

collaborate with the planners, the plan will probably be better targeted and more effective. Similarly, planners should be able to draw easily upon the results of past assessments. Again, the DoD needs to consider adopting a network-centric approach to linking people and information throughout the different phases of the strategic communication process to ensure a better, more rapid, and more complete effort.⁹

Figure 6-2 depicts actions by several DoD capabilities in support of an approved strategic communication priority. The figure shows the actions of different capabilities, or lines of operation, and the resulting branches and sequels identified during the crosscutting assessment phase.

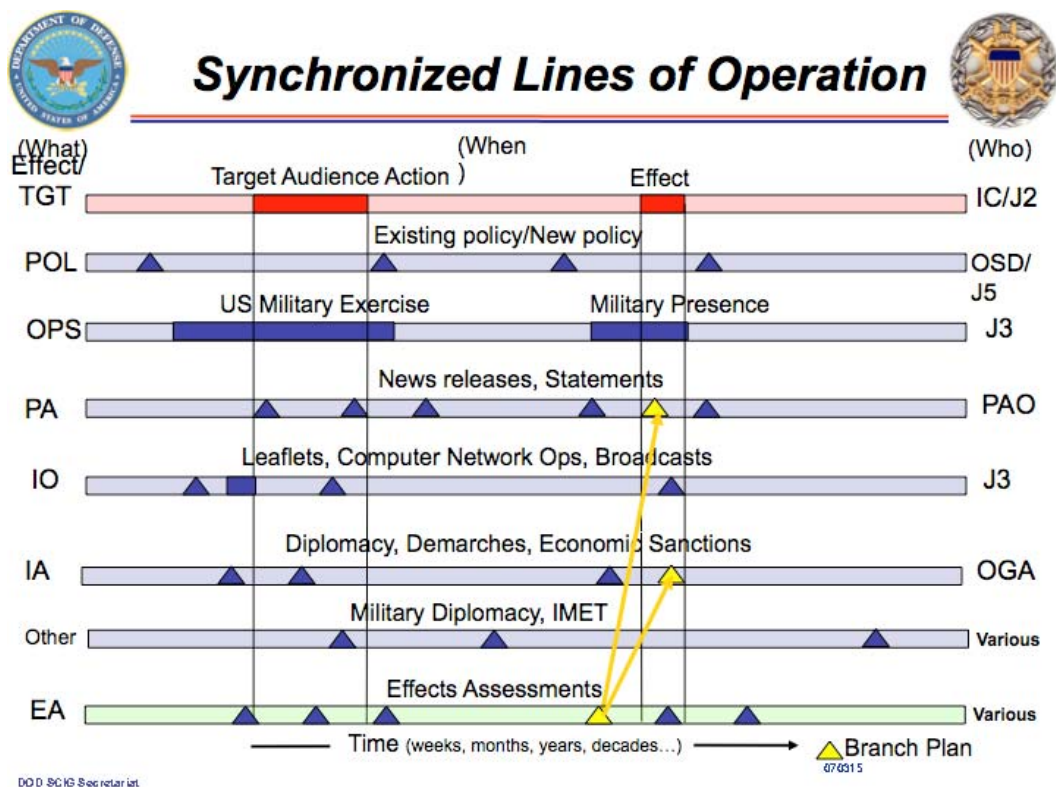


Figure 6-2
DoD Strategic Communication Lines of Operations¹⁰

⁹ Personal interview with David S. Alberts, Director of Research, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (OASD) for Networks and Information Integration, 8 December 2006.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense. Strategic Communication Concept of Operations Briefing. 15 March 2007

6.2 Interoperability

Success of the DoD's strategic communication process largely depends on how well the DoD's information resources can interoperate, especially when deployed in joint operations. Although each service is pursuing development of its own strategic communication capability, differences in approach may undermine the DoD's ability to apply its process consistently in joint service operations.

As discussed in **Chapter Three**, the services differ in their approaches to strategic communication: some treat it as an institutional process, while others implement it through an organizational structure. Regardless of how each service approaches the question of how to deliver strategic communication capability, the DoD needs to ensure that the services can easily interoperate and contribute to success in a jointly led strategic communication effort.

Each service has specific objectives for its information resources. Although PA operators may initially be trained in a joint school, such as the DINFOS, the services' roles, missions, and priorities affect employment of the various information capabilities. If the differences in approach are recognized and planned for, they can have a beneficial effect on the communications process accompanying joint operations. For instance, in the PA career field, the Army's experience with indigenous populations could build a useful communication skill set, while the Air Force's operational and planning focuses give its PA operators another skill set. Creating planned interdependence and building deployed staffs accordingly will benefit operational efforts.

6.2.1 Standardization and Evaluation

Planners and commanders must be able to rely on consistent information capabilities if they are to join traditional military weapons and tactics for use in operations. Standardized practices and means of evaluation within the career fields or specialties counted as information resources represent one way to ensure this consistency. Clearly articulated DoD guidance regarding the capability or skill sets it expects from each service's information resources in joint operations would allow the services to ensure they can consistently and reliably deliver the capability to the joint community while also targeting resources toward service-specific roles and missions when not deployed.

6.2.2 Joint Training and Exercises

Exercises and other training opportunities are important ingredients to ensure successful interoperability of information resources in joint operations. They would allow the DoD to help ensure interoperability and assess its processes for strategic communication before operational success could be at risk.

The DoD currently values exercises and training opportunities for its operational capabilities and plans to integrate strategic communication into future training. Much of the current delay results from the need to include strategic communication in the exercises' operations and concept plans. The DoD's efforts in strategic communication have not yet caught up with the exercise cycle. One of the shepherds of the DoD's strategic communication roadmap has said, "We have a long way to go to get to this point."¹¹

However, the DoD does plan to offer training opportunities for PA operators in the near term to help tighten the strategic communication focus and build necessary skills for working on planning teams and providing counsel to commanders. The DINFOS taught its first Senior PA Officer course in late April 2007. The school also plans to develop intermediate and expeditionary PA courses.¹² The other information resources that contribute to the DoD's strategic communication processes should make similar adjustments to their training plans to increase their effectiveness in strategic communication efforts.

6.2.3 Operating with Coalitions, Allies, and Strategic Partners

Unilateral U.S. military action is unlikely in the current environment of coalitions, alliances, and strategic partnerships. Although the DoD's strategic communication process and associated culture change are in their infancy, the DoD needs to begin working now with other nations to build the capacity needed to achieve communication effects in future operations. However, it may prove difficult to execute communication tactics for strategic communication in a combined operation, since a nation may quietly provide military support for an operation—for instance, by giving overflight permission for aircraft—while politically distancing itself from the same operation in public. Additionally, participating nations may provide military support to a coalition while unilaterally pursuing contrary economic or diplomatic efforts.

However, even though allies and partners may not participate fully, raising their awareness of U.S. strategic communication processes may reduce the risk of inadvertent information fratricide in combined operations. Other countries' increased awareness of the process may also spur contributions of information and cultural awareness valuable to the research and planning phases.

One possible way to achieve this increased awareness is to build strategic communication processes into future multinational exercises and training events. Broader acceptance and future contribution to strategic communication may result from allowing military planners and operators from other nations to participate in the research, planning, execution, and assessment processes.

¹¹ Julian, personal interview, 7 December 2006.

¹² Ibid.

Chapter Seven

Key Considerations for the Future

The instruments of battle are valuable only if one knows how to use them.

—Charles Ardant du Picq¹, 1821–1870

The prospect of successful implementation of the DoD’s strategic communication process, and its associated culture change, depends largely on careful consideration of several key factors. Although this report has highlighted some of the external, operational, and possible limiting factors, this chapter identifies areas that merit further consideration—consideration beyond the scope and time constraints of this project.

7.1 Unity of Effort and Purpose

It is critically important for the DoD to establish means for the services to support the enterprise through their communication efforts. Each service clearly needs its own strategic communication capacity, or communication strategies, to strengthen its culture and to articulate its roles and missions to various audiences. However, the services’ communication efforts should not come at the expense of the DoD’s success in supporting national strategies.

Such coordination may be beyond the reach of the strategic communication effort, since it is deeply nested in the DoD’s programmatic funding system, which pits the services against each other. Perhaps a change in approach can occur, however, through the cultural and process changes that the DoD’s strategic communication’s guides hope to deliver in the department.

Maximum effect in public communication operations will occur only when the service components coordinate these operations. Joint planning efforts for delivery of information can quickly devolve into a service competition for the largest budget allocation or the most and best media coverage in an operation. This approach may increase congressional and public awareness of the service’s missions and assist the service in staking claim to future budget allocations, but it is shortsighted in the context of operational success at the DoD enterprise level.

Likewise, it is critically important that the DoD and other U.S. government departments and agencies reach agreement on the definition of strategic communication and how each organization can complement the others to enhance the strategic effects of communication efforts.

¹ Charles Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies*, trans. John N. Greely and Robert C. Cotton (Charleston, S.C.: BiblioBazaar LLC, 2006).

7.2 Public Communication and Information Operations

PA operations are continuously engaged across the entire spectrum of military operations, enhancing a commander's ability to meet mission or campaign plan objectives and desired effects. The basic principles, capabilities, and tasks of PA operations remain the same whether units are at their home station or deployed; only the specific focus of PA operations changes. With this versatile capability comes a significant responsibility to use public information appropriately. Strategic communication recognizes that credibility hinges on two factors: actions and words. Success depends on eliminating the gap between them, or the "say-do gap."²

A doctrinal disconnect currently exists between the central role the DoD's PA career field plays in the strategic communication mission to influence audiences and joint doctrine for IO. Despite the operational employment of PA, the Joint Staff remains reluctant to recognize the public communication capability as an IO core capability. However, the DoD simultaneously regards PA as a tool of influence in strategic communication.^{3,4}

The joint doctrine for IO defines the mission area's role as coordinating and synchronizing "the employment of the five core capabilities in support of the combatant commander's objectives or to prevent the adversary from achieving his desired objectives. The core capabilities are Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Military Deception (MILDEC), Operations Security (OPSEC), Electronic Warfare (EW) and Computer Network Operations (CNO)."⁵ This definition makes IO synonymous with the goal of the DoD strategic communication process: to coordinate and synchronize information and actions to influence audiences appropriately. However, joint doctrine for PA and IO names PA operations as a capability related to IO, even though the DoD's placed PA in a central role in strategic communication's focus on influencing target audiences. The rationale behind the Joint staff's reluctance to closely associate PA and IO apparently stems from the fear that PA's association with core capabilities such as PSYOP and MILDEC would taint its image as the credible provider of truth.⁶ Although this doctrinal disconnect will probably not undermine DoD operations, the DoD needs to revisit this doctrine as the department's operational use of information evolves.

² DoD Strategic Communication Concept of Operations presentation

³ U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 13 February 2006), I-2, [On-line]. URL: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_13.pdf Accessed 13 January 2008.

⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-61, *Joint Doctrine for Public Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 May 2005), [On-line]. URL: http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp3_61.pdf Accessed 13 January 2008.

⁵ Joint Publication 3-13, II-1.

⁶ Ibid., III-20

An artificial distinction also exists between PA, defense support to public diplomacy (DSPD), and PSYOP regarding the audiences their products reach. The DoD looks to PA to communicate with the U.S. domestic audience while it depends on DSPD and PSYOP for international audiences.⁷ As this paper has already shown, such containers simply do not exist in the modern information environment. Every information product has the potential for global consumption.

PA capabilities can be delivered to the warfighter while simultaneously protecting their credibility. This protection results from presenting the relationship honestly and highlighting the value of PA's association with, and knowledge of, other IO capabilities and activities. When PA operators are part of the IO function, they can vouch for the veracity of the information they release since they took part in the collection and preparation process instead of merely receiving the results for use.

The harmonization of public communication and other operational efforts would bring tremendous capability to the warfighting commander. The DoD's efforts to create a strategic communication process serve as endorsement of this. PA's reputation as a credible, truthful interface between the public and the military strengthens public communication efforts. Involving PA in operations to mislead intentionally would have lasting, devastating effects on the military's relationship with the media and with various publics.⁸

Influence that results from exposure to truthful information, however, unarguably lies at the heart of PA operations. The imperative to present a positive image or impression of the DoD, its people, and its operations drives PA activities. From civic group tours to media engagements, PA seeks to promote better understanding and knowledge by the public of military people, priorities and activities. Done well, this communication with intent effectively inclines the participants toward support for the DoD's people, programs, and operations.

The balance is fine, however. The temptation can be nearly overwhelming to use PA capability in a MILDEC campaign designed to mislead the adversary. Commanders are increasingly aware of the capability PA delivers: the capability to foster public trust and support while sending clear insight to adversaries about the overwhelming force they would face by choosing combat against the United States.

⁷ U.S. Department of Defense. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 12 April 2001), (as amended through 1 March 2007), [On-line] http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf Accessed 13 January 2008.

⁸ Joint Publication 3-61, I-4.

7.3 External Coordination

Coordination of efforts within the DoD is vital to effective strategic communication. Coordination and cooperation are equally important for success at the national and international levels. The lack of coordination can result in conflicting messages and efforts that serve to reduce the effectiveness of the communication and may cause unintended effects.

7.3.1 The Interagency

The U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication states that the U.S. government leadership, departments, and agencies must make coordination of communication efforts a top priority.⁹ The strategy charts a three-tiered organizational structure to help achieve the desired coordination. First is a “communications command central,” housed in the State Department’s new Rapid Response Center, that will develop and deliver a coordinated U.S. government message and seize opportunities to communicate it, especially in crises or in relation to issues of high media interest.¹⁰ The strategy also calls on the NSC to organize an interagency conference call “immediately upon major breaking news” and gives the NSC the task of assigning responsibilities to departments and agencies for a coordinated communication response.¹¹ Lastly, the national strategy calls for “top priority message distribution,” a label for the process of distributing official messages from the Communications Command Central to U.S. government senior leaders, such as ambassadors, cabinet members, and the military chain of command, for use in public communication efforts.¹²

However, despite this focus and stated intent in the national strategy, the U.S. government still lacks a consistent and meaningful process for interagency cooperation and coordination of communication efforts. Much of the blame for this deficiency rests on inadequate staffing and funding provided to the DoS and the lack of authority given the DoS to task across the interagency.¹³

Although the Communications Command Central approach may prove too cumbersome for the rapid communication tactics necessary in the modern public information environment, the plan for greater interagency coordination deserves more attention and effort if the United States is

⁹ Strategic Communication and Public Policy Coordinating Committee, “National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication.” Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2006), [On-line]. URL: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/87427.pdf> Accessed 12 January 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Personal interview with Farah Pandith, Director for Middle East Regional Initiatives, National Security Council, 8 December 2006.

to realize its aim of communicating strategically. The United States needs to leverage its power smartly. As Joseph Nye recognized, “The ability to combine hard and soft power into a winning strategy is smart power. . . . The United States has a good narrative, but its failure to combine hard and soft power into a smart strategy means that, too often, it steps on its own story, and that can be fatal.”¹⁴ The United States likely can build this strategy through greater cooperation and unity of purpose at the interagency level, but much effort remains to make this cooperative approach a reality.

7.3.2 The International Level

The DoD and its counterparts in allied and partner nations have a strategically important need to communicate with one voice. An effort to communicate in a coordinated fashion can greatly strengthen national policies and military strategies shared among allies and partners. As the DoD builds its strategic communication processes, it must consider the international aspect of communication and should work with U.S. allies and partners with the aim of encouraging those countries to take a similar approach to communication. At best, partner nations will enhance the effectiveness of actions and policies through coordinated and more effective communication. At worst, the work may still help to reduce the risk of conflicting messages between the involved nation states. The DoD needs to accord top priority to efforts in this area of its Strategic Communication Roadmap.

7.4 Strategic Communication in Network-Centric Warfare

Information systems architectures and networks to support a networked force are valuable byproducts of the DoD’s enthusiastic transformation efforts during the past decade. The DoD sees the networked force as essential to successful effects-based operations in the Information Age, because it allows a higher degree of shared awareness for planning, executing, and assessing operations.¹⁵

Shared awareness that results from information sharing and collaboration is one of the tenets of network-centric warfare. The DoD information resources counted as capabilities for strategic communication can benefit from a networked approach during the research, plan, execute, and assess phases of strategic communication, while also providing information that benefits other capabilities and disciplines or operational areas.

¹⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “In Mideast, the Goal is ‘Smart Power,’” *The Boston Globe*, 19 August 2006.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Transformation, *The Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 5 January 2005), 4, [On-line]. URL: http://www.oft.osd.mil/library/library_files/document_387_NCW_Book_LowRes.pdf Accessed 12 January 2008.

Strategic communication clearly has a place in three of the four domains of conflict: cognitive, information, and social.¹⁶ The DoD needs to take steps now to ensure that strategic communication processes link to already-established and developing network-centric warfare capabilities. Likewise, developers of the DoD's networked force would be wise to consider how to integrate the information and insight gained from the strategic communication process, and the effects that process may generate, to build greater shared awareness in joint operations centers.

¹⁶ Ibid., 20.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful.

—Edward R. Murrow

The current efforts to build strategic communication processes and a supporting culture within the DoD represent admirable attempts to give the United States an enhanced ability to deliver effects in the information domain. Expectations regarding the end result must be carefully managed, however.

Modern technology continues to improve to meet society's increasing demand for up-to-date information. The sharpening focus on information provides an expanding opportunity for the DoD to communicate successfully with intent through a strategic communication process. However, top-heavy organizational structures built to control and perfect information are not compatible with the modern information environment, characterized in part by its rapid flow of information. Although centralized control and decentralized execution have great merit in most military operations, the DoD needs to be careful to avoid killing its strategic communication process with the very bureaucracy it is building to create it.

Additionally, as commanders execute plans that include strategic use of information, they need to be very careful to ensure they use public information capabilities, such as those employed by PA, in ways that protect their earned audience credibility. The potentially broad, rapid reach of public information resources provides unique capabilities to commanders but must not be misused to communicate misinformation. To do so would negate these capabilities' greatest asset to the military—their credibility—and would have lasting, limiting effects on the commanders' ability to employ public communication operations successfully in the future.

The DoD also needs to place long-term funding, renewed training programs, equipment, and systems that enable information resources to deliver their full capabilities to the strategic communication effort at the forefront of the department's priorities. Individual actions taken under the rubric of strategic communication may not produce immediate effects. This must not dissuade commanders, DoD and national leaders from continued engagement in the information environment. To back away from communication with intent is to cede the opportunity to current and future adversaries.

Lastly, the DoD's strategic communication effort must be accompanied by a cultural shift that places value on effects in the information domain and engagement in the public dialogue, and places enterprise—DoD—success above the triumphs of its parts—the individual services. This

cultural shift must occur not only within the DoD but also at the interagency level. As part of the U.S. government, the DoD does not operate in a closed system as it develops a strategic communication process. The department's process will improve its ability to create desired effects in the information domain, but the United States needs the strength of the interagency and thrust of presidential emphasis to leverage the full weight of coordinated instruments of national power.

Acronyms

CEO	chief executive officer
DINFOS	Defense Information School
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DSPD	defense support to public diplomacy
EXCOM	Strategic Communication Executive Committee
FY	fiscal year
GIE	Global Information Environment
IO	information operations
IT	information technology
MILDEC	military deception
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PA	public affairs
PIE	Public Information Environment
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PSYOP	psychological operations
SC	strategic communication
SCIG	Strategic Communication Integration Group
SCPG	Strategic Communication Project Group
SCWG	Strategic Communication Working Group
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (NATO)

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