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NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: MORE TO BE DONE?

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FOREWORD

Warfare is changing. It is not limited to conventional weapons and battlefield tactics. Rather, nowadays it happens in different and simultaneous levels, layers, and time. It is a mix of conventional warfare, terrorism, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, improvised weapons, and information warfare being used by state and non-state actors. The military scholar Frank G. Hoffman coined the term "Hybrid Warfare" to reflect a situation where the operational fusion of conventional and irregular capabilities results in the blurred or blended nature of combat, and the convergence of a widening number of different challenges into hybrid wars. Strategic Communication is one of its ultimate instruments.

In this paper, the authors start offering a conceptual discussion of Strategic Communication as defense tool, analyzing the different understanding of the term among NATO's member countries. It is followed by a solid analysis about the relationship between behavior and attitude, which goes beyond the perspective of consumer behavior or the simplistic assumptions of attitudinal psychology. The sections on target audience analysis and assessment provide practical and accessible guidance, whilst the section discussing the operationalization of academic support is of utmost importance, since it stresses the synergy between the academic and the policy field. The authors are able to provide useful and practical insights based on their own professional experience, making this paper the ultimate guide for developing Strategic Communication as effective warfare instrument.

Cdr Dr. Steve Tatham and LTC Rita Le Page's policy paper is a masterpiece of sophisticated but knowledgeable thinking on Strategic Communications. It is a fundamental reading for any NATO's policy maker dealing with the challenges of modern warfare and Strategic Communication.

Jānis Bērziņš
CSSR Managing Director

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The term 'Strategic Communication' (henceforth refereed to as 'StratCom') has, over the last 12 years, gained increasing currency in NATO doctrine, structures and operations. However, its usage and understanding does not appear uniform across all NATO members, with some countries proactively utilising it whilst others have almost no concept of its origin or utility, and indeed within individual members nations there is significant variance in usage between difference government departments and/or different military commands.

With the imminent cessation of NATO operations in Afghanistan it is timely to undertake detailed reviews of NATO StratCom architecture, training, education, deployment, assessment and usage and determine what activities might be undertaken if the lessons of Afghanistan are to be inculcated into future alliance operations. This paper, which is based on the long experience of both author's involvement in national and coalition StratCom activity, makes eight key recommendations for work that NATO might consider undertaking. Experience has shown that each is a vibrant and enduing subject of discussion and a coalition consensus is now timely.

The recommended work strands are:

- Codifying, properly, the term StratCom in NATO corporate understanding.

- Consider updating NATO definitions in light of lessons learned from Afghanistan and Libya

- The identification of current deficiencies in NATO member state's StratCom understanding and doctrine to ensure that Troop Contributing Nations (TCN) can provide assets for future coalition operations that meet a common bench mark of training and education, either in their own nations or through NATO training schools.

- Researching and offering NATO definitive guidance on the issue of attitudinal versus behaviourally based communication.

- Researching and offering NATO definitive guidance on the assessment of StratCom activity and providing robust guidance on the correct use of opinion polling and surveys.

- Operationalising academic support; ensuing longevity of accrued knowledge on operations, when military 'churn' takes away experienced practitioners, and providing a NATO wide continuous professional development programme.

- Addressing weak senior knowledge of StratCom at OF5 level and above.

- Provide definitive guidance on the need for Target Audience Analysis.

- Provide conceptual guidance on the relationship between communication and 'power'.

- Audit the NATO School Oberammergau Strategic Communication syllabus for coherence with the findings from the earlier recommended research.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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DISCLAIMER

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF STRATCOM

In 2001, Vince Vitto, chairman of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination, coined the phrase "strategic communication".[1] Despite significant literature on the subject, some of it written by this paper's authors, numerous committee meetings and working groups, some thirteen years later we would suggest that the term is still hugely misunderstood, nor does there exist a single agreed understanding across all NATO Members States of what the term Strategic Communication actually means in real terms. Former US State Department official P.J. Crowley offers perhaps the best suggestion of the term's origin:

> "*The word **strategic** communicates importance, something directly related to a vital interest or a core function. The evolution of the concept of strategic communication within the military a decade or so ago reflected the emergence of a 24/7 global media environment, the interconnected world of the Internet, traditional media, satellite television and now social media and citizen journalists. In this world, governments communicate with each other and with broader society. People communicate vertically and horizontally and have access to more and better quality information than ever before.*"[2]

The NAC approved definition of Strategic Communication is:

> "*The Coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (IO) and Psychological Operations as appropriate in support of alliance policies, operations and activities and in order to advance NATO's aims*",

Whilst there may be a definition, NATO StratCom does not have any associated doctrine nor is it yet integrated into any NATO Capstone doctrine (Allied Joint Publications (AJPs) 1, 3 or 5). In many respects NATO was very forward leaning when it defined StratCom back in 2009. However, in the light of operations in Afghanistan, Libya and Kosovo we would argue that its definition is now looking rather elderly and weak.[3] The UK's Joint Doctrine Note (JDP1/11) on StratCom, first came out in 2010 but was rapidly revised in 2012 as lessons were learnt, principally from Libya, and inculcated into policy; so too the US Army and Marine Corps who have significantly revised StratCom policy and doctrine. NATO policy however has not changed since its 2009 articulation.

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[1] *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination*, Washington, D.C., October 2001. As of July 1, 2011: http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/ADA396312.pdf.

[2] http://publicdiplomacycouncil.org/commentaries/12-18-12/pentagon-abandons-strategic-communication

[3] We would suggest that on operations there have been significant inconsistencies in the manner in which StratCom has been operationalised: **ISAF** – the model has changed many times. It is not a US model, nor a NATO model, nor is it consistent from oneyear to the next.; **OUP** – somewhat co-opted by PA, in particular PDD so too **KFOR** which we assess to be PA-heavy

If there is not unanimity there is at least some understanding that StratCom is important, albeit confused. Senior US Department of Defense official and former journalist Rosa Brooks sums up the problem well:

> "[there is an] *ongoing skirmish between those who believe that strategic communication is merely an unnecessary euphemism for "communications" -- meaning, basically, press statements and talking points -- and thus should be controlled by public affairs offices, and those who believe strategic communication is a confusing term, but one that has nonetheless come to stand for something complex and important, something that has more to do with* **strategy** *than with communication*s.[4]

Brooks' comments were made after US Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs George Little, issued guidance that: '*over the last six years [StratCom] has added a layer of staffing and planning that has blurred roles …. Resulted in confusion and inefficiencies... [in the future we will use the term] communication synchronization'.*[5] Little's memo was not a definitive policy guidance document but it did serve to create confusion amongst already non "intelligent customers."[6]

The NATO definition is broadly understood across all alliance member nations however it is not to say that it is the only definition – far from it; many nations have subtly different variations. The attached table (Annex A) lists those definitions and the variances are of note. Many member nations define Strategic Communication as a military function, whilst others talk about Strategic Communication as being part of the national instrument of power – and therefore a cross-government activity. Several of those nations who have formally adopted StratCom have 'copy and pasted' from the 2009 NATO policy that we believe to be problematic given that not the policy's weaknesses. Some nations have yet to offer a single definition or indeed any definition at all; given NATO's corporate involvement in operations in Afghanistan for now nearly 14 years, with TCN rotating through numerous ISAF HQ and IJC communication related postings it is disappointing that so many nations have yet to formally codify their understanding of a concept that many have suggested was key to the success – or failure – of the entire ISAF mission. Indeed as NATO's Head of StratCom Mark Laity has written:

> "…[the] *COIN* [environment] *is the form where Strategic Communications should have most effect, for 'war amongst the people' is an area where violence is a factor but vio-*

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[4] Rosa Brooks, "*Confessions of a Strategic Communicator. Tales from Inside the Pentagon's Message Machine*". http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/12/06/confessions_of_a_strategic_communicator Accessed Jan 3 2013.

[5] Communication Syncronisation. Memorandum for Commanders of Combatant Commands 28 Nov 2012.

[6] This is not intended as a derogatory term. Instead it is designed to reflect the fact that senior military commanders and NATO officials may well have reached their senior rank by expertise in more routine military capabilities and may never have encountered StratCom before. Given the inherent and institutional distrust that military officers of all nationalities have for the media our collective experience is that StratCom is automatically regarded with distrust. In short, senior people often do not know what they don't know.

lence alone is unlikely to be enough…. I can testify to the huge effort that's gone into StratCom, yet the widespread perception is that NATO and ISAF's StratCom effort has largely failed."

A reluctance to codify may perhaps be attributed to continuing confusion over what the term actually means for nations on operations. In the NATO definition primacy is afforded to the term 'communication' noting that StratCom is a coordinating process. We would contend that this is far from ideal however we would pragmatically note that NATO's doctrine processes are so long and so complicated that it would be a brave person to suggest that the definitions should be re-evaluated. In their 2011 Chatham House report[7] Professor Julian Lyndley-French and Dr Paul Cornish suggested that a better definition might be:

"A systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences and, identifies effective conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour".

They used as their justification a 2009 US Department of Defense Report on Strategic Communication which referred to 'emergent thinking' which is seen to be:

'coalescing around the notion that strategic communication should be viewed as a process, rather than as a set of capabilities, organizations, or discrete activities' In its broadest sense, 'strategic communication' is the process of integrating issues of audience and stakeholder perception into policy-making, planning, and operations at every level. As the Joint Staff's October 2009 Joint Integrating Concept for Strategic Communication (SC JIC) puts it, Strategic communication is the alignment of multiple lines of operation (e.g., policy implementation, public affairs, force movement, information operations, etc.) that together generate effects to support national objectives. Strategic communication essentially means sharing meaning (i.e., communicating) in support of national objectives (i.e., strategically). This involves listening as much as transmitting, and applies not only to information, but also [to] physical communication – action that conveys meaning.

Notwithstanding that the NATO definition is probably immovable its application does however leave some unanswered questions. For example; at what level is the communication taking place – is it, as the name suggests, just at the strategic level? If it is at the strategic level is it just the communication of strategic issues? Is it perhaps about communicating to achieve strategic effect? Is it communication just with senior audiences? Is communication with, for example, a farmer in Helmand, Strategic Communication? In recent years the term 'Strategic Corporal' has gained much currency. The phrase 'Strategic Corporal' is acknowledgement that the actions of a single soldier on the ground can have potentially significant effects upon mission success or failure. If this is the case is the sol-

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[7] Strategic Communications and National Strategy. Paul Cornish, Julian Lindley-French and Claire Yorke A Chatham House Report September 2011

dier on the ground part of the strategic communication effort and if so, how is this articulated to them? Indeed are his 'actions' best described as being communications? Is the whole lexicon of Strategic Communication erroneously tied to Public Affairs and corporate communications when it should actually be tied to operations? In NATO StratCom resides in NATO HQ Public Diplomacy Department (PDD); one might argue that this reinforces the argument, so unhelpfully articulated by the Little memo, that StratCom is principally about communication, not strategy. If it were strategy why would it not reside within the International Military Staff (IMS), or even J3 / J5 organisations with PDD providing input where required. Indeed this is the current model used by the UK where StratCom planning is currently vested in the Military Strategic Effect's Branch of the MoD's Operations Directorate. Indeed MSE now leads in the MoD Operational planning in producing the Strategic Communication Action Effect's Framework (SCAEF) which is designed to articulate across the UK Defence community **and** other government departments, the end effects sought and the communication elements associated with them. An example of a SCAEF is provided at Annex C.

However if StratCom is, as Rosa Brooks questions, a 'euphemism' merely for communication, does this imply that communication is not a lever of power? There are plenty of academic studies to suggest that communication should be regarded as a national instrument of power – Joseph Nye and Manuel Castells are perhaps the best examples and are covered in greater detail later in this paper. However there are also dissenting voices. In US doctrine, for example, I (for information) is placed alongside D (diplomacy), M (military) and E (economics) as metrics of US power. Yet in other nations no such connection is made, the belief instead being that Information underpins economics, diplomacy and military action anyway and therefore needs no explicit articulation.

With our collective experience of NATO operations we would suggest that StratCom should more usefully be regarded as a mechanism of influence, with the 'influence spectrum' ranging from the PDD/ PAO work to "inform", the most "indirect" form of influence, to PsyOps and IO work in persuading and possibly even "coercing". To achieve this very broad remit we would suggest therefore that there are some key components of the StratCom process:

- Understanding, informing and engaging audiences to advance interests & objectives by affecting perceptions, attitudes, beliefs & behaviours;

- aligning actions, images, words to support policy and planning, to meet overarching strategic objectives;

- recognizing that all operations and activities have a critical communication component because everything NATO says and does, or fails to say and do, has intended and unintended consequences, with intended and unintended audiences;

- recognising that StratCom is not an adjunct function but integral to the planning and conduct of all military operations and activities.

Perhaps more contentiously we would advance the idea, strongly, that NATO should no longer be writing Op Orders with a StratCom Annex but instead, be writing StratCom Orders with a supporting Op Annex. Whilst this may appear heretical to traditionalists it has actually been successfully done before. Many commentators have observed that the running point in the British military campaign in Helmand was the deployment of 52 Brigade led by Brigadier Andrew Mackay in September 2007. In his 2010 book, Behavioural Conflict (co-authored with one of the author's of this paper) Brigadier Mackay outlined how the kinetic activity was relegated to a supporting role to the non-kinetic planning and how the securing of the 'consent of the population' was seminal to mission success. Another example is the UK intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000 where the rebel army advance was checked and a political process begun by almost exclusive use of 'soft power' assets - PsyOps, Media Ops, Deception - with 'Hard Power' very much a secondary, supporting pillar.

In short there are significant contradictions in the international community, both military and academic, about what Strategic Communication actually is and NATO needs to recognise that TCN will provide to coalition operations personnel with vary different views, some nationally imposed, others derived from personal experience. It seems timely therefore that it would be to codify both alliance and member nation understanding what StatCom actually is. A fuller, philosophical, examination of communication as power is provided at Annex B and this brief summary of some of the key arguments may be useful in framing that discussion. With this start point defined there are other downstream issues which we believe also now need addressing.

ATTITUDES / BEHAVIOURS

During at least three consecutive NATO PsyOps Working Group meetings there have been agenda items for debates about attitudinal versus behavioural communication. The subject is perpetually raised because NATO's Afghan PsyOps organisation – CJPOTF[8] –regularly briefs their efforts to member nations, briefs which revolve principally around informational and attitudinal products. Yet for many long standing Working Group attendees, with long experience of Afghanistan and perhaps, before that, Iraq, the products that they discuss never seem to resonate or have the desired effect on the target audiences on the ground. Thus each working group meeting became a lively debate about the merits of behavioural focussed communication, and the extent to which attitudinal communication particularly that anchored in advertising and marketing terms was working.

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[8] Commander Joint PsyOps Task Force

That debate has never been successfully resolved. At the autumn 2013 meeting, held in the United Kingdom, the UK delegation proposed that a full audit of CJPOTF's activities and products through the years should be undertaken to provide a spring board of Lessons Learned for future operations and to provide the back bone for future NATO education and training courses. The arguments for and against attitudinal communication cut to the core of many of NATO's core communication and assessment efforts and we assess that this is now an area ripe for detailed research.

Broadly the argument is simple; it is the presumption that materials and communications designed to inform and educate target audiences will lead to a reduction in undesired behaviour. This is the genesis of the ages old cliché – Hearts and Minds. It is the belief that engendering positive attitudes in audiences (in the Afghan case about the presence and role of ISAF for example) will lead to compliant downstream behaviours. The counter argument to this is that the attitudes of target audiences are far less important than their behaviours, or latent behaviours. This argument leverages off many years of social science research in which successive experiences and case studies have indicated that attitudes are poor precursors to behaviours whilst behaviours are much stronger precursors for enduring attitudes. This in turn leads to a fundamental issue of NATO operations: can we apply marketing and advertising techniques to conflict areas? Some very well researched publications such as the Rand Corporation's *'Enlisting Madison Avenue',*[9] suggests that you can. Other publications offer a diametrically opposed view and believe that there is no place for advertising methodologies.

The basis of that latter argument is that in compliant societies, attitudinal communication, which is the basis for commercial advertising and marketing, is largely used to differentiate between competing product brands. One brand of toothpaste, for example, is not significantly different to another, but if you associate with it, through an attitudinal marketing campaign, certain 'desirable' qualities or characteristics (for example, extra whitening capability, pleasant breath qualities etc) you effectively differentiate it from your competitors in the eyes of the consumer who is now more likely to purchase your brand. As a consumer walking into a supermarket you will be confronted by an array of different toothpastes and your decision to purchase may well be swayed by an advert you have seen for a particular brand. The key to this, however, is that you have already made the decision to purchase; your behaviour has been predetermined by your upbringing (always clean your teeth before bed), your education (not cleaning your teeth will cause you painful medical problems) and other social factors (guys with bad breath don't get girls!) for example. However many argue that this complaint consumerist based society is not representative of conflicted environments.

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[9] The Rand Corporation Enlisting Madison Avenue The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theatres of Operation 2007 Available to download at
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG607.html

A further compounding problem is that there is much dispute amongst psychologists over what attitudes are, although what they are not is often easier to understand: they are not values or beliefs, and not really opinions, which are often terms used interchangeably with attitudes. In practical terms this means that attitudes are very difficult, in fact all but impossible, to measure accurately as they are influenced by so many other compounding variables. We collectively blanch when we see surveys that ask if an individual is 'slightly happier, much happier or considerably happier' with a particular issue; how can these possibly be delineated, so that trends across sample groups are measured? However, the single biggest problem with the use of attitudes in PsyOps is that they bear so little resemblance to behaviour and ultimately, as we have already asserted, in conflict-ridden societies it is undesirable behaviour that the military must mitigate. There are numerous studies that show this to be the case. The first major study of its kind, and oft-quoted, is that conducted by Richard LaPiere in 1930s America. In his *Attitudes Versus Actions* study of 1934, which appeared in the journal *Social Forces,* LaPiere spent two years travelling across the USA by car with a couple of Chinese ethnicity. During that time they visited 251 hotels and restaurants and were turned away only once. At the conclusion of their travels LaPiere posted a survey to every one of the businesses they had visited with the question, "*Will you accept members of the Chinese race in your establishment?*" The available responses were "*Yes*", "*No*", and "*Depends upon the circumstances*". Of the 128 that responded 92 per cent answered "*No*". This study was seminal in establishing the gap between attitudes and behaviours.

Because the West is a society where advertising is the norm, it accepts, largely without comment, the deluge of adverts and marketing that we encounter on a daily basis. Indeed, it was because of this that the US expressed such astonishment when Al-Qaeda (AQ) seemed better at communicating its message than Washington: "How can a man in a cave out-communicate the world's leading communications society?" Richard Holbrooke famously enquired.[10] The answer of course is that Afghanistan is not a compliant society where GIRoA / ISAF-friendly behaviour is the norm; indeed far from it. As we see from LaPiere's work the link between attitudes and behaviour is poor. Thus the problem with attitudinal communication is that it (erroneously) presumes that by changing attitudes, behaviours will follow (and clearly the behaviours that ISAF seeks in Afghanistan are in not supporting the Taliban, not laying IEDs, supporting GIRoA etc). The difficulty with this presumption is that firstly, Afghanistan is not a compliant audience waiting to be steered in a particular direction like the metaphorical toothpaste consumer of earlier, nor do NATO PsyOps necessarily reflect what is actually happening on the ground.

LaPiere's work was closely followed by that of Fishbein and Azjen in 1947[11] and has continued to this day as a vibrant area of scientific enquiry. The unequivocal scientific

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[10] 'Get the Message Out', *The Washington Post*, Richard Holbrooke, 28 October 2001.
[11] http://people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html

consensus is that attitudes are very poor predictors of behaviour; indeed, one very influential social psychology text proclaims that: *"The original thesis that attitudes determine actions was countered in the 1960s by the antithesis that attitudes determine virtually nothing."*[12] For the non-social scientists amongst us a simple consideration of many circumstances in our own lives will lead us to the same conclusions. Some examples are illustrative:

- **Car Seatbelts**. For many years governments have sought to persuade drivers of the positive benefits of wearing a seatbelt when in the car. They largely failed and it took enforcement (punishable by a fine) to make the wearing of seatbelts an accepted and unconscious activity. Today, particularly if you are North European, we would guarantee that you put on a seatbelt as an unconscious act as soon as you get into a car and will point out, often disapprovingly, if you see someone not wearing one.

- **Cigarette Smoking**. For years the UK and Canadian governments sought to persuade their respective populations that they should not smoke. They did so with pictures of diseased lungs and warnings that smoking could curtail your life. Yet people continued to smoke and indeed in certain groups, notably young teenage women, smoking became more, not less, acceptable. However, one of the largest ever drops in smoking came about when both governments legislated, and smoking in public places was banned. In the UK, apocalyptic tales of pubs and clubs going out of business were legion and landlords quickly put covered smoking areas outside their premises. Yet today people's attitudes appear to have softened and popping out for a quick cigarette in the cold or pouring rain is not quite such an attractive proposition as lighting up in warmth and comfort of a pub or bar.

Both these examples point towards a second potentially important issue for StratCom which is that whilst attitude is a poor precursor to behaviour, behaviour is actually a very strong precursor to attitude. Or in other words, **if you change behaviour, even in non-complaint audiences, there is a good chance that with time attitudes will follow suit.** Because the West is so attuned and accepting of attitudinal communication it takes a real leap of faith to convince military commanders that adverts and marketing will not achieve the operational effect they seek. But we would venture that there is now enough evidence to dismiss advertising and marketing as a concept from the battlefield. This will of course be met with howls of protest form the civilian advertising community who have milked this particular cash cow since 9/11. Indeed in '*Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation,*' the author's declare that *"[b]usiness marketing practices provide a useful framework for improving US military efforts to shape attitudes and behaviours of local populations."* In particular, the paper declared, attention should be paid to "*branding, customer satisfaction and segmentation of audiences.*"

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[12] Myers, D. (2010). *Social Psychology*

We would venture that you do so at your peril. Take, for example, the segmentation of audiences. This is a standard marketing technique that looks to subdivide a specific sector of consumers – perhaps based on demographics or income or address – in the hope that the characteristics of this new group will be more susceptible to a marketing campaign. But this is very much a 'push' activity and the 'group' is an artificial construct that exists only on the marketer's spreadsheet. Of course in military operations we are dealing with 'actual' groups, who are bonded by a myriad of factors outside of our control. It would be wonderful if, for example, our job could be done by targeting only the affluent, or the middle-aged, or women in a specific area. But in theatre, on operations, we do not have the luxury of choosing our own groups; we have to deal with the audience as it is in reality. Consequently, the process of Target Audience Analysis (TAA) is used to understand the actual group and to decode under what circumstances that group may be motivated to exhibit a specific behaviour. We are simply not interested in picking out a few 'potential customers' in the group, we need the whole group to conform (or at least a very, very, large part of it); otherwise we have failed in our mission. Commercial marketing and advertising methods are designed to increase the hit rate of customers in a target group. A conversion rate of 10% (i.e. 1:10 buying a different brand of car or toothpaste) would be considered outstanding and highly profitable. But in military operations achieving a 10% change in the behaviour of an insurgent group or a hostile community would be operationally insignificant. But perhaps most importantly, in the West, advertising is a well understood concept where there is an unwritten 'contract' between marketer and 'potential customer'. For example, we watch TV advertisements about Guinness or Ford – in the full knowledge that Guinness and Ford are trying to persuade us to buy more of their products. But this simply does not translate to the battlefield. In *Positioning: The Battle for your Mind*[13], one of the most successful marketing books of all time, the authors, Ries and Trout, clearly make the point that marketing cannot change the way people think. It is behaviour we must study; behaviour we must understand; good behaviour we must encourage and bad behaviour we must mitigate. The solution is not branding and it is not customer satisfaction. And by implication the solution is not marketing and PR companies.

In marketing, the desired behaviour is fairly uniform, and quite identifiable: buy more of a product. The whole campaign, from planning to research to execution, wraps linearly around that single trajectory. Unlike the sorts of behaviours we seek to influence in Afghanistan, when selling products it is sufficient if just a small percentage of the target group actually buy your product. For instance, there are countless brands of toothpaste on the shelves, but if you get 10 per cent of the market, you can stay in business and make a healthy return to your investors. That is just not the case in many operational environments where it is vital that the majority of a group is influenced by PsyOps campaigns. Marketing is therefore not the kind of discipline that is equipped to deal with behavioural

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[13] Ries & Trout, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*. McGraw-Hill, 2000

outcomes or scenarios that are more complex or require more nuanced definitions. We believe that marketing principles just cannot be effective enough to drive our military capabilities and development; the end of that road can only be dramatic failure. In our view, only a scientific approach will do, and it must be based on the sciences pertaining to human behaviour, in all its myriad manifestations, and with all its bewildering complexities, and not the limited perspective of consumer behaviour, or the misguided assumptions of attitudinal psychology.

TARGET AUDIENCE ANALYSIS (TAA)

During our long service careers we have noticed that significant communication is undertaking without ever attempting to understand the audiences. What little analysis is undertaken is often segmentation; young Serbs; senior Pashtu leaders; TCN domestic audiences. Yet this is a process, if undertaken at all, in which NATO defines the audiences it wishes to speak to. How does NATO know who those audiences are, or if they have found the right audiences? We believe that NATO should be much more interested in how audiences define themselves – after all it is that self-definition that ultimately causes specific behaviours, fight against ISAF troops or do not fight against ISAF troops, for example. The process of understanding how audiences define themselves is called Target Audience Analysis (TAA) and we define it as *"The systematic study of people to enhance understanding and identify accessibility, vulnerability, and susceptibility to behavioural and attitudinal influence activity"*. It seeks to analyse the cognitive domain of the communications landscape. In the UK three categories of TAA have been defined:

> Tier 1 TAA: is a multi-source, scientifically verified, diagnostic methodology undertaken in-country and in host language used to identify specific latent *behaviour*. The output of Tier 1 TAA is deduced information.

> Tier 2 TAA: is any primary research involving contact with audiences which does not follow a scientifically verified deductive methodology. It may be conducted in country or remotely and is largely *attitudinally* based. The output of Tier 2 TAA is recorded information

> Tier 3 TAA: is secondary research. The output of Tier 3 is assumed information.

If any TAA is undertaken by NATO it is our view that the majority is Tier 3 with some specialist assets, principally NATO PsyOps units, able to operate at Tier 2 level. However we believe that Tier 1 capabilities are currently beyond NATO's organic reach and note that the UK's Head of Defence Intelligence has stated that no Tier 1 TAA capability exists with the UK defence architecture. To this end the UK has just undertaken a significant trial of Tier 1 TAA for use by strategy makers and it is recommended that NATO be formally briefed on the findings of that trial with a view to incorporation into NATO's standing operating procedures.

ASSESSMENT

Another perennial issue of debate in the NATO StratCom community is that of assessment. How can NATO assess if its communication efforts are successful or not? If there are two enduring themes in the NATO communities dialogue they are, firstly, that assessment is not easy to conduct and that because of that, secondly, it is acceptable to use 'lesser' metrics. We think here in particular of the use of measures of performance (for example, 2000 PsyOps leaflets were dropped; 10 hours of radio was broadcast; 6 press releases were issues; 400 re-tweets of a NATO tweet were made *etc*) rather than attempting to measure the actual direct effect on the target audience of the communication that has been undertaken. There is also an inherent impatience in military commands; whilst kinetic activities can provide fairly instant assessment through Battle Damage Assessment there is a far longer time delay between communication and effect, quite aside from a wider debate on causality / correlation.

A regular tool used by the NATO (and wider Allied) Strategic Communication community is the opinion poll. At one point in late 2009 it was assessed that Afghanistan had become the single most polled country on earth with hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on various polls. Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan and latterly trustee of the Asia Foundation, Karl Eikenberry, wrote in *The Financial Times*[14] in late 2012 that "*there is yet hope for Afghanistan* and that a recent Asia Foundation Poll proved it. He wrote: "*52 per cent of the people believe it is moving in the right direction; 93 per cent have great or fair confidence in their armed forces; 89 per cent give the government good marks for the provision of education; 72 per cent say their national legislature is addressing the problems of ordinary citizens; and 50 per cent assert their financial wellbeing has improved over the past 12 months? Not the US, Singapore or Brazil. Answer: Afghanistan*". Such pronouncements rely on polling. Consider a typical polling question:

Q.   Do you think the security situation around your home is:

A.   A lot worse than last year.

B.   Worse than last year?

C.   The same as last year?

D.   Better than last year?

E.   A lot better than last year?

What is the precise difference between answer A and B? Or D and E? By what authoritative comparators can a respondent judge if the security situation today is the same as a year ago? What counts as '*a lot*' to one respondent may not even register with another re-

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[14] Karl Eikenberry, "*There is hope yet for Afghanistan*", The Financial Times, November 20 2012.

spondent, even if they come from the same family. Each person's perception of events is different and will be based upon individual experiences and influences. This type of polling question lacks any kind of scientific precision and is also highly subjective (to each respondent) and each respondent's views are highly temporal. In 2010 the Asia Foundation published a poll result that claimed 84% of respondents agreed that the Afghan National Police (ANP) was 'honest and fair'. This seems a rather high figure for a nation state in transition from civil war.

One way of, perhaps, benchmarking it is to compare it with other nations, for example the US and the UK. In 2011 the UK's customer satisfaction with local police services was rated as 71%[15] – a lower figure than that for the ANP. Does 71% seem a fair representation of British support for the police? The truth is that it is almost impossible to tell: actual behaviour is perhaps the only useful indicator. For example, to someone living in a small(ish) village with a very low crime rate and just a couple of very friendly community police officers, that satisfaction rating might seem unduly low. Yet for a poorly educated and low income young black man in a depressed inner city area that figure might seem far too high. Indeed a recent report posited that hatred of the British police was a primary cause of the London riots of August 2011.[16] How then can a national survey, with so many different polarized views, give a fair indication of the genuine levels of support, or otherwise, for the police in the UK or, for that matter, the Afghan Security Forces? The US Department of Justice has apparently recognized this problem and in its own report into US citizens' satisfaction with their police departments highlighted:

> *Different individuals respond differently to quality-of-life surveys even though they are exposed to similar neighbourhood conditions. Moreover, persons from the same neighbourhood report different levels of satisfaction with Police – these inconsistencies limit the relevance of … [these surveys].*[17]

All of this raises the question of why, if these types of survey are not appropriate for US police forces, and so plainly at odds with the reality of UK policing, are they considered suitable for guiding major policy decisions about Afghanistan? What is particularly interesting is that whilst the Asia Foundation was busy polling in 2010 another, more detailed qualitative data gathering operation was being conducted in Maiwand Province by a British company, Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL) is almost unique in the international contractor community in that it has a dedicated, and funded, behavioural research arm located in the prestigious home of British science and research, The Royal Institute,

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[15] http://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/167-7669/UK-Customer-Satisfaction-Index-Results-July-2011.html accessed 6 January 2013.
[16] Alan Travis, "*Police in Britain deemed untrustworthy compared with Europe, says study*", The Guardian Newspaper, December 12, 2011
[17] US Department of Justice, "*Satisfaction with Police – what matters?*" www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/194077.pdf accessed 13 January 2013.

London. The results of their survey were quite different and indicated widespread disillusionment with low confidence in, and fear of the ANP.

What is the acid test for polling? This author would suggest that poll results must chime with anecdotal experiences and reports derived from being out on the ground in Afghanistan talking to people. Since the Asia Foundation poll does not chime with personal experience on the ground, nor does it stand up to a simple benchmarking exercise it perhaps should be treated with scepticism. Polls, however well they are produced, cannot be more than a comforting hand rail for policy makers and cannot be substitutes for more empirically based qualitative research.

In a 2012 RAND report on US Information Operations (IO)[18] the absence of robust and empirical MOE was one of its key findings. Without MOE it is almost impossible to draw any sensible conclusions on the success, or otherwise, of IO campaigns. Indeed this is the problem that the DoD now faces as it is being examined by various Congressional Oversight Committees who are asking exactly what was achieved for the huge amounts of tax payers money invested in IO programmes The fact that the US Congress was unable to be persuaded that its past expenditure on US IO had been worthwhile is indicative itself that the programs provided by contractors lacked empirically derived TAA which in turn means they lacked academic rigour. It should also be obvious that MOE can only be applied to behaviours. Either a behaviour exists, or it does not. It may reduce or increase, but it is measurable. If the campaign is to grow less poppy, you can visibly see if that campaign has been successful from the air. If the campaign is to encourage greater use of, for example, Highway 611 (the major north-south route that goes from Lashkar Gah to Sangin in Helmand, Afghanistan) by private cars (thus fostering a feeling of security) you can easily measure road usage with a few strategically placed motion sensors. You could even measure accurately the numbers of calls to a hotline that led to successful arrests or locating IEDs.

Only through Target Audience Analysis (TAA) baselining can MOE be derived. The absence of a TAA derived baseline is an immediate indicator to 'intelligent customers' that the proposed program is unlikely to work. If any thought is given to MOE then it is regularly in the context of measures of performance (MOP) or measures of activity (MOA). For example, the measure of activity associated with an airborne leaflet drop is that the necessary aircraft and equipment were serviceable and available to make a certain number of predetermined sorties. The measure of performance is that a specific number of leaflets or other products were dropped. The MOE, however, is the specific action(s) that the leaflets engendered in the audiences that they targeted.

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[18] U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan Effectiveness of Psychological Operations 2001-2010. Available to download at : http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1060.html

Conversely, attitudinal campaigns are not measurable in any meaningful manner. This is why surveys and polling have blossomed so fully during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan[19] – and, we would contend, with such disastrous results. The focus has been on attitudes, and surveys and polling are a logical if imperfect way to measure whether attitudes have changed.

The key to successful MOE is twofold. First, activity has to be properly baselined. It is no good attempting to measure behaviours, or for that matter attitude, after the StratCom intervention if there is no record of what the behaviour or attitude was prior to it. There are several issues involved here:

a. **Establishing Behavioural indicators**. From the outset it is necessary to identify appropriate behavioural indicators by which to measure change. This requires an in-depth understanding of the target group and their behavioural patterns, and a sufficiently rich awareness of which behaviours are most indicative of change. It is hard to do this in the beginning and actually must be based on high quality TAA of the prospective audience(s) to narrow down the possibilities. Often, several iterations may be needed to get this right.

b. **Causality versus causation**. The real devil in all this is how to unravel the competing effects of factors that *cause* the behaviour change and those that are merely *correlated* with change. A well-worn but classic example is that ice-cream sales increase in line with the numbers of drownings. This does not imply though that one caused the other. It is more likely that a third factor, hot weather, underlies both increases. How can we distinguish whether retention in the ANA has improved due to our behavioural campaign, or because more insurgents have infiltrated the ranks and wish to build up numbers for attacks from within? It is difficult to perform analyses of this kind, but if approached scientifically it is possible. Prominent US social psychologist Timothy Wilson has criticized the Drug, Abuse, Resistance & Education (D.A.R.E) anti-drug program which is used by 70% of American schools, and yet, until recently, had never been tested. He explained on '*The Edge*' social science website:

> *If there's one thing social psychologists do know how to do, it's how to do experiments and how to test whether an intervention is working, and with good control groups and statistical analyses, seeing whether something*

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[19] A huge number of polls and surveys are undertaken in Afghanistan and their results can be found all over the internet: from large polling organizations employed by ISAF through to indivisible national initiatives to measure their individual performance. But just how reliable is the science of surveys? A significant determinant of the validity of polling is the manner in which the question is phrased and presented. But assuming this is done consistently across all polled groups, the reality of surveys is that they will only ever tell you what the polled thought about something at a particular point in time. Surveys and polling are highly temporal and closely related attitudinal.

works or not. Yet, a lot of the current programs in a wide variety of areas have never been vetted in that way, and are just based on common sense.[20]

The testing Wilson referred to revealed a shocking result: the program didn't work. In fact Wilson believed the program could even have increased drug abuse amongst the target population. MOE needs to be based on rigorous scientific testing, not on weak *post hoc* or supplementary measures.

c. **Changes in audience.** Part of fulfilling the criteria above can be achieved by recognizing that there are multiple stages of change (one influential behaviour model by Prochaska and DeClemete[21] is called the 'stages of change' model), and that these can and should be measured. By doing this we can get a more accurate description of how change is occurring and to what extent it relates to military actions. Between basic behavioural indicators and the kinds of large scale behaviour changes that campaigns seek to measure, many changes occur at the audience level that are more subtle, yet highly predictive of behavioural outcomes. These will include attitudes, intentions, motivational dispositions, and perceptions, and they need to be measured too. Not as an end in themselves, but as ways of gauging intermediate changes in target groups.

MOE is not just vital to behaviourally based projects (and almost impossible in attitudinally based products) but it is vital for one higher strategic reason. Without robust and proven MOE savvy politicians with many deserving and competing demands upon scarcer fiscal resources rightly find it hard to see or demonstrate return on investment. And in the US' IO program, thus far they have not seen this at all. As the US Committee on Appropriations reported in 2010:

> *The Committee believes that the Department of Defense, and the Combatant Commands which drive the demand for information operations, need to re-evaluate IO requirements in the context of the roles and missions of the United States Military along with consideration for the inherent capabilities of the military and the funding available to meet these requirements. In support of this evaluation, the Committee has determined that many of the ongoing IO activities for which fiscal year 2010 funding is requested should be terminated immediately.*[22]

OPERATIONALISING ACADEMIC SUPPORT

In 2008 Professor Steve Corman of the Arizona State University Center for Strategic Communication published '*Strategic Communication on a rugged landscape*'. Although

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[20] www.edge.org/conversation.php?cid=social_psychology_narrative
[21] James Prochaska, Carlo DiClemente and Norcross, "*In Search of How People Change. Applications to addictive behaviors*", American Psychologist, Vol.47, No.9. pp.1102-1114, 1992.
[22] Department of Defense Appropriations Bill; Report of the Committee on Appropriations, 2010. p. 67.

Corman subsequently briefed his paper at the NATO StratCom working group meeting few people today have heard of it and yet its relevance to NATO's StratCom activities is exceptional. In essence it places a new interpretation on some very old ideas concerning communication theory. These can be condensed as follows:

Across national and international definitions there exists an inherent belief that the process of Strategic Communication will be successful. Yet, academics and practitioners argue that the complexity of the task means that success should actually be considered the exception and not the rule. In part this is due to an immature understanding of the manner in which communication is undertaken. For strategic communication to have any chance of success, practitioners **must** understand the basic principle of communication. The simplest model of communication is the 'message influence model'[23] which for communication between two parties can be represented as:
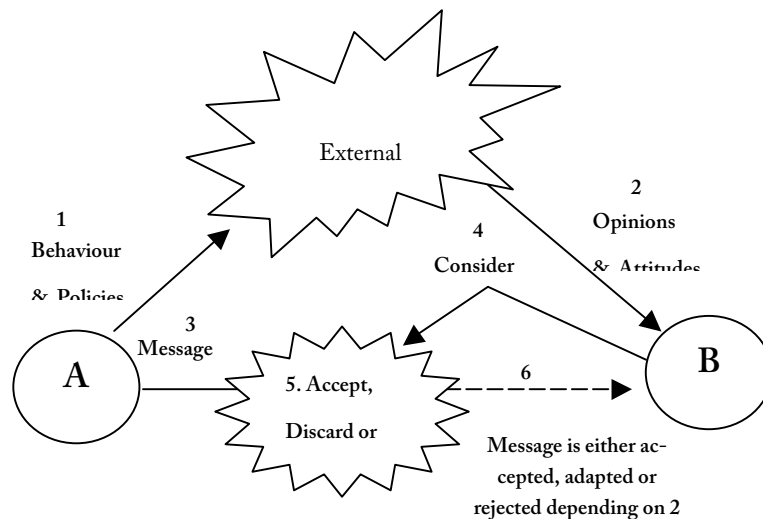
MESSAGE

A → B

SOURCE CHANNEL AUDIENCE
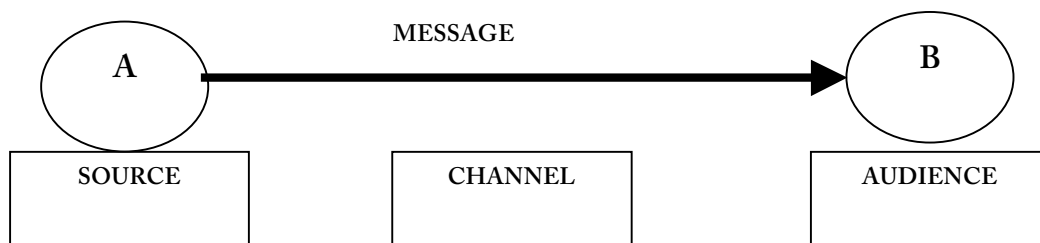
This model suggests that a source (A) with ideas, intentions and information translates them into a message, which is transmitted via a channel to a receiver, or audience (B). The purpose of the process is to influence the receiver (B) to understand the message **in the same way** as the source (A) and to subsequently act in a specific manner. This is a highly simplistic model which assumes no outside interference or conditioning of audience (B). A key underlying assumption of this model is that the process of communicating the message to the audience will be successful *unless* there is some interference in the transmission; the message is presumed to be right; it is only the communication's method that might interfere with its effectiveness. However a more nuanced understanding of the communication process is provided by the 'Pragmatic complexity model[24]' which posits that communication is not a simple transmission of messages between two groups but rather is a much complex system arrangement between the sender and the receiver. The

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[23] This is based upon Shannon & Weaver's *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* 1949. It is used in this paper for illustrative purposes only; Shannon and Weaver's model was not developed with Strategic Communication in mind but to examine interference in telephony. It has subsequently, and perhaps erroneously, become used as a useful illustrative model for Strategic Communication. The criticisms leveled at the model in the Strategic Communication environment do not detract from its original purpose, which remains extant.

[24] A deliberately simplified derivative of Corman, Trethewey, Goodall's model. *A New Communication Model for the 21st Century.* An understanding of the full model, beyond the scope of this paper, will be essential to the under-standing of this process.

model presumes that in any communication the success of A's message depends not only on the message alone but upon what B thinks and does. And what B thinks and does is influenced by A's behaviour and B's expectations, interpretations and attributions with respect to A. The model assumes that messages are always interpreted within a larger and ongoing communication's system and that A and B are therefore locked into a relationship of simultaneous and mutual interdependence. This can be represented by the following diagram:

Here the success of A's messages are dependent upon the wider external environment and, in particular, B's perception of A's role in that environment. It is against that role that A's messages are processed; they may be dismissed out of hand or they may be accepted but in a contextualised manner. Rarely are they accepted *tabula rasa*. This model, which presents a much more realistic interpretation of society, suggests that there is no independent audience (B) waiting to be impacted by A, but instead both parties are locked into a relationship of interdependence.

This example clearly illustrates that A's message (which was 'the coalition are rebuilding Iraq') was contextualised by the recipient (and intended conduit) against the backdrop of the wider invasion and subsequently discarded. Unfortunately this model raises two further complex issues. The first is that the model presumes B is passive however in reality B may itself be engaged in attempting to influence A. Thus A's messages may themselves be contextualised by its perceptions of B's actions. This leads to an extremely complex relationship. The second consideration is that if A can understand B's opinions and attitudes (2 in diagram above) in advance, A can prepare its messaging accordingly and thus attempt to mollify the effect of step 5, thus creating a stronger message.

Despite these concepts being well understood in the commercial communication environment it is disappointing that these always seem to be new or revolutionary 'new' concepts when briefing NATO strategic communicators. This is in many instances be-

cause many of NATO's communicators are not themselves professional communicators, instead they are drawn from more conventional arms of their respective militaries; because officers in often key positions turn over every two or so years and the continuity of understanding and experience is broken; and because there is often no continuing professional development programme, either national or NATO, which allows communicators to grow their skill sets and develop greater academic understanding to complement their practitioner experience. Finally we would venture that all the time that StratCom is regarded as the communications adjunct to "actions (fires)" there is no hope that StratCom will gather further, useful, traction. Commanders must take ownership – they must 'own' communications in the same way they 'own' the actions of manoeuvre units in the field. Until they "own" comms, understanding its power to influence everything on the field, StratCom is in our estimation, lost. In an army context, in the field a Commander should be as or more involved in StratCom and necessarily, its importance to his/her selection of kinetic or other options to accomplish the mission. While StratCom is left to communicators – and while communicators seem not to welcome operators into the comms sandbox – there is a critical disconnect. A quote from Admiral Mullen when US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: "We've come to believe that messages are something we can launch downrange like a rocket, something we can fire for effect… We need to worry a lot less about how to communicate our actions and much more about what our actions communicate."[25]

This has in particular been recognised the by the UK MoD which has recently partnered with the UK's Chartered Institute of Public Relations to introduce a Defence Communicators professional development programme. NATO may wish to consider the merits of adopting partnerships with academic institutions – and there are others alongside Arizona State that are worthy of examination, for example the London based Behavioural Dynamics Institute, which has been at the forefront of behavioural communication for some years, particularly in conflict environments – and if those partnerships can be used to provide some form of continuing professional development programme for NATO communicators and in particular pre-joining training for senior officials.

WEAK SENIOR CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE

Always an unpopular and sometimes career limiting issue the educational deficit of senior military commanders has in our combined experience been a significant issue of concern. We do not mean this unkindly; what we mean is that front line commanders have been trained and exercised for years in kinetic effects. They are completely familiar with the type of kinetic effects that can be achieved, their risks, operating windows and likely benefits. Their mastery and application of that knowledge is why they are senior com-

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[25] Mullen, Michael G., "From the Chairman – Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics", Washington , D.C., Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2009

manders entrusted with great military responsibility. Unfortunately the operating environment has now changed from that which defined their formative years. Indeed in many member nation armies senior officer's career are deliberately broadened as much as possible – the intent to create 'generalist generals'.

Our collective experience of many senior military officers is that they fall broadly into two distinct camps: those who get 'it' ('it' being the power and complexity of Strategic Communication) and those whose actions positively demonstrate that they do not, regardless of their rhetoric. However, both groups are unfortunately characterized by professional ignorance of what is achievable and what is not <u>in this</u> very specialist area. This points to a significant educational deficit; whilst Western militaries are exceptionally well trained, education is always the poor relation and we think much more attention needs to be paid to the more unconventional aspects of current and future warfare. Much time and investment has been made in the creation of a NATO Strategic Communication course at NATO School Oberammergau and the course, which has now run for two iterations, appears successful; in part this is due to the significant amount of personal time and capital invested in it by SHAPE's Head of Strategic Communication, Mark Laity. It is of note that the course embraces fully ideas of behaviour, not just attitudinal communication. NATO may however wish to undertake a full Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to determine if the course meets all the emerging requirements. With our combined experience we would venture that a clear and obvious deficiency is that General and Flag officers, two-star and above, are not attending the course. Clearly for busy diaries a week may be too long however some form of education is clearly required and NATO may wish to determine what that is and who is best placed to deliver it.

CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions might be drawn from this analysis? First and foremost we would suggest that, as the paper's title asks, there is indeed much more for NATO to do in the Strategic Communication arena. As experienced practitioners of multiple NATO operations we unequivocally see the need for StratCom in the contemporary operating environment. It is such a *non sequitur* that to not do so is in our view equivalent to regarding the earth as still being flat! However, that need is not properly being met and there continues to be widespread ignorance of what StratCom is, and of what tremendous value it can be to operations, despite the very best endeavours of key personalities such as Mark Laity and organisations such as NATO School Oberammergau, and the Multi-National Information Operations Experiment (MNIOE) which has completed significant developmental work in the area of StratCom capability on behalf of NATO. The endeavours of NATO COE-DAT in Ankara are also noteworthy; they have run at least two major conferences on StratCom, and probably more, and its application in the CT environment, producing ex-

cellent edited books on their findings which have sadly passed almost unnoticed in the wider NATO community.

A key barrier noted through all these endeavours however, is that StratCom continues to reside within the information disciplines with information specialists taking the lead on development, experimentation and implementation. It is our view that StratCom is still not embedded at the core of operational thinking, nor for that matter NATO's organisation, and it is still, frustratingly, seen as an additional 'nice to have' if indeed it is thought of at all. Often this is dependent on individual Commanders and their previous exposure to, or experience with, StratCom. As well, positioning StratCom with Public Affairs is the clearest indication that an organisation does not 'get it' and quite possibly why military commanders in a majority of NATO nations are simply not aware of it nor its power to effect the operational environment. As has been demonstrated in Afghanistan all the firepower in the world cannot guarantee 'victory'; in today's complex world victory is probably illusionary. There are no longer conflicts where the outcome would look like 'win-lose' but instead conflicts that look like 'win-win' where every party to a conflict would see in the resolution, something in it for them. But if the solution is only ever conceptualised in hard power solutions, supported by Public Affairs, the task is made ever harder. We agree, strongly, with the almost heretical view that future Op Orders should be StratCom directives with operational annexes, not operational objectives with StratCom support.

StratCom is a mechanism of influence. Its continued residency in the NATO PDD is unequivocally a problem; it is seen by many as some new and fancy name for pubic affairs and NATO, in their view, has always 'done' public affairs. To that assertion we offer an unequivocal response: it's wrong. The focus of attention should be paid not to the second part of the term but to the first – strategy – followed immediately by questioning what NATO's activities on the ground 'communicate' to the host nation population. This is where StratCom plays.

Key elements of the StratCom architecture are, in our view, missing. In particular Target Audience Analysis which can be undertaken at both strategic and operational levels. As the UK has just demonstrated in a recent TAA trial, its proper application can significantly and unexpectedly change strategic direction. With TAA comes the ability to measure effect. This is currently poorly understood by NATO yet it is vital not just to operations but also to the credibility of the mission in the eyes of policy makers and TCNs. We would urge NATO to engage with respected TAA providers such as SCL Ltd, who have an outstanding track record of providing TAA services to member nations, to more clearly understand its benefits and potential future application.

The absence of StratCom doctrine and the now stale and dated NATO definition do not help StratCom's cause. Writing and securing agreement for doctrine across the alliance is always tricky and we understand the reticence to embark upon such lengthy staff work however it is our view that since its definition was agreed some five years previous,

NATO has embarked upon numerous operations, from Ocean Shield to Unified Protector, and ISAF, in which many lessons have been learnt. Individual nations have found the need to re-examine their doctrine and we think NATO should follow suit, however painful that may be. We would also urge nations that have not yet considered how StratCom fits into their own national lexicon to do so with some urgency; the greater the number of adherents and the wider the commonality the better for future operations.

Ultimately for StratCom to gain greater purchase it has to have a senior sponsor. In 2012 at SHAPE's Annual StratCom conference General John Allen said, "StratCom is my most important manoeuvre element." Having learned of the conference, he felt StratCom so critical to operational success that he requested an invitation to speak. During his command of NATO's mission in Afghanistan he put StratCom at the heart of operations understanding its power in armed conflict to not only inform campaigning planning but to also be the litmus test against which all operational decisions on the ground should be compared. This is where StratCom belongs and where evidence suggests it has its greatest influence. For StratCom to be the force it can be to guide actions in armed conflict, General Allen's ownership suggests forcibly that Commanders of the future must not only understand what StratCom is, but also how to use it as an important manoeuvre element in armed conflict.

Within NATO StratCom currently resides in the PDD where it is oft interpreted as strategic public affairs, and where it is never informed by the research and analysis required to develop messaging to not only inform operations, but influence their outcomes. This is why we strongly advocate for the re-assignment of StratCom to the International Military Staff. Having said this we concede that PDD should offer the organisation's overarching strategic messaging for an operation however, it must then be led by the planners (J5) before being handed to the operators (J3) for implementation.

Many NATO nations lag behind our closest and strongest allies in the development of a capability which, in conflicts such as Afghanistan, seeks to bring influence to the forefront of campaign planning and execution. While nations such as the UK, US, Germany, and Australia have invested considerable resources into the development and implementation of Influence and StratCom, other NATO and partner nations have not. There has been little done among the majority of these nations to study, adapt and adopt the concept. But every one of them should get interested, and quickly. It is an important, if not the most important element of modern conflict.

The extant practice of influence activities in particular and StratCom more generally being a second thought, an add-on, to kinetic operations is surely getting the whole thing wrong. The more credible approach is for StratCom to be, always, the centre of gravity.

ANNEXES

SUMMARY OF CURRENT NATO AND ALLIED STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION UNDERSTANDING

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
NATO HQ	Policy (PO (2009)0141)	The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (InfoOps) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate – in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims.	PDD	Spokesperson	Civ A6	

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
ACO/SHAPE	Directive 95-2 (AD 095-002)	In cooperation with NATO HQ, the coordinated and appropriate use of Military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS which, in concert with other military actions and following NATO political guidance, advances NATO's aims and operations.	All levels below SHAPE including JFCBS, JFCNP, and missions	Special Staff	Chief StratCom (Former Ch PA)	Civ A6	

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
Australia	Joint Doctrine Note	StratCom is, at its essence, the orchestration of actions, words, and images to create cognitive information effects In a Defence and ADF context, StratCom occurs at two integrated levels: **-National strategic level.** Focused whole-of-government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favourable to the advancement of government interest, policies and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages and products synchronised with the activities that meet the actions of all instruments of national power.	At the **military strategic level**, StratCom planning focuses on ensuring interagency and partner nation coordination. The military strategic level seeks to align the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) narrative within a multinational or whole-of-government context and to set and monitor shaping and influencing objectives. The **operational level** takes the StratCom narrative and themes and provides tasking to ensure the themes are supported by tactical actions. Tactical force elements conduct the activities that meet the requirements of the commander's opera-				StratCom is a simple, catch-all, concept designed to ensure all internal and external Defence and Australian Defence Force (ADF) communication is coordinated through a campaign approach. It is a process that enhances all ADF activities in peace and war through alignment to developed campaigns. StratCom is the coordination, synchronisation and integration of all ADF and Defence activities with a view to ensuring that our deeds and words align. StratCom is not an organisation empow-

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
		-**Military strategic level.** Strategic Communication is the coordinated, synchronised and appropriate use of communication activities and information capabilities in support of Defence's policies, operations and activities in order to achieve the Department's aims. This includes Military Support to Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs and Information Activities where appropriate. *Proposed ADF definition for inclusion in ADG.*	tional plan. It is at this level that words, images and actions are most obvious through the mediums of information activities, fires, manoeuvre, military networking and key leader engagement.				ered to communicate on behalf of the ADF and Defence; instead, it is the ADF and Defence communicating by, with and through its very activities. StratCom is, at its essence, the orchestration of actions, words, and images to create cognitive information effects. In military operations, these effects inherently support the achievement of military objectives. In departmental business, StratCom supports the achievement of policy goals or organisational plans. StratCom should be at the heart of the development and implementation of policy.

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
							The powerful yet often overlooked implication of this fact is that communication is not merely a matter of what is said; it is also, perhaps *primarily*, a matter of what is done.
Austria	No response						
Belgium	No response						
Canada	Developing Now included as a	**Draft:** The Canadian Armed Forces deliberate	Strategic, Operational	Strategic Joint Staff - J3 and	Any Initially de-	TBD - likely LCol	StratCom first looked at in 2012 however

NATION	Policy/Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
		military implication in the Future Security Environment 2013-2040, and being incorporated into Capability-Based Planning. A Canadian Forces StratCom Concept Framework was developed which will inform the statement of Capability Deficiency for consideration by Chief Force Development. efforts to understand and engage audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favourable for the advancement of the nation's interests by affecting perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. This requires the alignment of actions, images and words, and the synchronization of military power with all elements of national power to achieve strategic objectives, and is integral to the planning and conduct of military operations and activities.	J5	terminated by pers with experience but it is accepted that lead could be any military classification	working for 1-star	was initially taken by PA to develop where it languished due to higher priorities. In October 2013 it was accepted that PA was inappropriate as the lead. It would be placed with the Strategic Joint Staff working with J3 & J5, but initially developing a Capability Deficiency document for consideration by the Chief of Force Development. This is where it remains at time of writing.
Denmark	No Working on getting StratCom and the use of Strategic Nar-	Draft	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	No standing StratCom organization at the moment. StratCom is a cross-

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
	ratives accepted more widely in Government and across Government Departments. Most notable progress is with "theatre strategies" where both Narrative and StratCom have been accepted in the main body of the government strategy.						government activity involving several ministries, not just Defence. Defence contributes to overall government strategic communication (which is both internal and external). Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the lead (internally in DNK and externally through PD) in International Operations / engagements.
Estonia	Chief of Defence Order No. 262 Defence Strategic Communication Concept Dated: 9 Oct 2013	Defence StratCom role is to coordinate and utilize all communication activities and capabilities, including public relations, civil-military cooperation, military outreach, information op-	National Defence HQ	StratCom Division	InfoOps	Colonel	Largely based on NATO policy and directives.

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
		erations and psychological operations in support of national defence activities and operations in order to achieve the set goals.					
		StratCom deals with the analysis and assessment, consulting, management, supervision, and coordination to ensure that the narratives, communication themes, messages, and continuity of operations, and reliability.					
European Union	No response						
Finland	No response						

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
France	Currently drafting the final SD of national doctrine on "influence".	Although everything is still not fixed, principles are: - manage the effects and actions/messages in the information environment process (identified as the output of the StratCom process, see MC 085 §4-1 §4-5). In other words SMI is the general framework and objectives & guidance; and	**Stratégie militaire d'influence (SMI)** – the equivalent of the in-**formation strategy** (one UNIQUE process rather than several which confuse/challenge) The **Info Ops process** as the **implementation tool** of the SMI, from the strategic level to the tactical.		InfoOps Influence	Colonel for develop phase	**Note:** details on how we intend to manage this business will be available in a couple of weeks when the document is granted first-level approval.
Germany	There is no official position on StratCom but it is in development and should soon be finalized.	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	MoD is running a study guided by the Military University in Munich. All available national and international papers were studied for the best

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
							solution for a national approach.
Hungary	No response						
Ireland	No response						
Italy	No response						
Latvia	NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence in Latvia						
Lithuania	Yes LAF StratCom Guidance - approved by the Lithuanian Armed Lithuanian Armed	In cooperation with MOD structures, the coordinated and appro-priate use of **Military PA and Info Ops** which, in concert with other mili- **Key actors:** Chief of Defence spokesman	Lithuanian army staff and the Lithuanian Armed Forces.	LAF Office of Army Strat-Com Depart-ment Direct report		LCol Acting Director of LAF StratCom	Largely based on NATO policy and directives.

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
Netherlands	Forces Commander	tary actions and following MOD political guidance, **advances** the Lithuanian Armed Forces' aims and operations.	Joint Staff Reps (PA, Info Ops, PsyOps, and others assigned depending on situation.	to Chief of Defence (CHOD)		Dept	It is unclear yet if the StratCom concept will lead to organizational adaptations or even to dedicated personnel. In the mean time, with the intention to adopt NATO-doctrine, we are following developments within NATO, among other things by actively contributing to the development process of a/the *NATO Strat-Com Commander's Handbook*.
	Working on a cross-government document on "the integrated approach" to conflicts. Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the lead and the Ministry of Defence contributes. (Strategic) Communication is part of the document. More detail when the document will be out of its initial draft stage.		Tactical level – The Netherlands established a new unit, 1 NLD Civil and Military Interaction Command, (1CMI Cmd) which formulates its task as "behavioural influence through integrated communication".				

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
New Zealand	No response						
Norway	No national policy but "accept NATO documents as good guidelines for the national approach"	TBD There has been both a proposal for a national definition and a strong recommendation to use NATO's definition.	MOD & Joint Staff communications unit that is formally responsible for StratCom. In reality, they are only able to handle current PA, with very little strategic planning or even understanding	Part of the MOD, reporting to the Director General and supporting all Departments.	Civilian Director	Brigadier Deputy Director (doubles as CHOD comms director	A mature PA, INFO OPS, PSYOPS but the joint relations are not there yet.
Poland	Polish Armed Forces StratCom Concept in development by the Doctrine and Education Centre. Expected completion beginning of 2014	TBC	TBC Establishing permanent StratCom structure	Polish General Staff		CHOD StratCom Advisor established in Feb 13	StratCom advisor created under a strong Alliance obligation to establish the Strat-

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
Portugal	No response						Com POC for international community.
Spain	Early 2013 the MOD released the first ¨STRATCOM Ministerial Guidance¨ Following the NATO model to guide StratCom development.	Strategic communication is the coordinated and appropriate use of all communication capabilities of Defence in support of its policies, operations and activities, in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of national defence.	The formal decision has been made to adopt StratCom at all levels. At the strategic level it is within the CHOD with direct access to the CHOD. At the Operational Level (Joint Operations Command) they are following something similar to the GER-NLD Corps approach, with all Communication & Influence under J9.	CHOD At CHOD direction following Created a StratCom Coordination WG involving subordinate Commands.			In 2012 CHOD first developed his Communication Plan. At this very moment we are running a review to make it more StratCom rather than PA focused. Undergoing a MOD-level communication policy and relations review.

NATION	Policy Doctrine	Definition	LEVELS	Under what Authority	StratCom Lead MOC	Rank Lead	COMMENTS
Sweden	Following NATO and nations' development. though have not yet implemented StratCom doctrine, organization, structure or process.	TBD	TBD	Development by the Swedish National Defence College, Operational Art Section			StratCom discussed but due to reorganization of the Armed Forces HQ & Joint Staff at the moment, this issue is on hold.
Switzerland	No response						
Turkey	No response						

COMMUNICATION AND POWER

In 1990 the US Journal *Foreign Policy* published Dr Joseph Nye's paper '*Soft Power*'. The paper, and Nye's subsequent book '*Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*', argued that the United States of America should rely more upon the ability to alter the behaviour of others (which at that time meant national actors) through the power of attraction (achieved through cultural, educational and behavioural endeavours) than through coercion and the application of military 'Hard Power'. The word 'power' rolls easily off the tongue, defining it less so. Indeed it appears to cover such a wide range of possibilities, from the projection of hard military force through to the exertion of influence and authority, that a specific definition would appear all but impossible. However, it is useful to briefly examine some of the concepts and ideas that have shaped contemporary thinking.

The principle of power is central to the international system – the complicated relationship between international actors – and as a consequence a great number of theories of power have and continue to be advanced by International Relations scholars. A detailed analysis of each is beyond the scope or requirement of this work; however, as we will see later, one defining characteristic is relevant: most theorists' work falls into one of two broad camps. Either they regard power as a capability (one that might be measured, for example, in terms of military or economic might, natural resources, technology, geographical position and population) or it is regarded as influence (demonstrated by the capability to coerce or persuade other actors into specific courses of action). What is interesting about this latter understanding is that the powerful (invariably defined by capability) do not always get their own way. As will be shown in the next chapter, in the last 200 years the less militarily powerful actor has proved increasingly successful in conflict with the conventionally more powerful actor. Indeed one has only to examine the first few conflicts of the 21ˢᵗ century to see how this may be the case. In Iraq, for example, a loose federation of militia's, and criminal and terrorist groups kept the world's sole superpower unhappily and unexpectedly occupied; so too in Afghanistan. Further West, in Israel, the Winograd Report[26] noted that the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) had been out manoeuvred by Hezbollah in 2006, and in the 2009 invasion of Gaza the IDF appeared to generate significantly more sympathy for the Palestinian position than for the more powerful military force and the often rocketed Israeli civilian population in whose name the invasion was launched. Ideas of what constitutes power and what it might mean for the international system are thus deeply pertinent to contemporary society.

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[26] A Commission of Inquiry established by the Israeli government to examine the Israeli engagement in Lebanon in 2006, chaired by retired judge Eliyahu Winograd.

Amongst those to have shaped thinking on the idea of power are Morgenthau, Carr and Kennan, all of who essentially choose to regard the nation state as the principal actor in international relations and theorise that national actors pursue power as a principal goal of their foreign policy; Morgenthau called this 'power-politics'[27] and he attributed it to a base assumption, *animus dominandi* – the human lust for power. This inherent desire for power is generally the view of most members of the realist school of International Relations theorists, who see the purpose, the means and the uses of power as essentially political in nature. The arena in which this is played out is by definition conflictual (although *not* necessarily combative), with each nation state defending its own national interests. In support of such ideas the former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger famously wrote that: '*the only time in the history of the world that we have had any extended periods of peace is when there has been a balance of power. It is when one nation becomes infinitely more powerful in relations to its potential competitor that the danger of war arises*'.[28]

More recently thinkers such as Schelling and Waltz have developed these ideas further into what is collectively referred to as strategic realism – an idea that focuses principally on the process of governmental decision making in international relations. Essentially Schelling is interested in the intellectual application of power in order to encourage an adversary to take a specific course of action – or perhaps inaction – and more importantly to avoid doing what the adversary fears. His ideas suggest a degree of bargaining in the application of power and, of direct relevance to this Thesis, the idea of attempting to influence in some way the adversary into a particularly course of action. However, Schelling sees one of the primary instruments of foreign policy as the potential application of armed force. The word potential is offered carefully, for Schelling himself notes that: "*the power to hurt is most successful when held in reserve*."[29] Waltz, in considering the issue of power, was much intrigued by the structures in which power is vested rather than with particular individuals. He believed that actors would react in pre-defined ways because of the structures in which they were bound; thus leaders and their assessments of international relations were not unimportant, but their freedom of manoeuvre to exercise power was guided not by that assessment but by the national and multi-national structures in which they had to function. In sentiments not dissimilar to those of Kissinger he posits that substantive international change can only occur when great powers rise or fall, thus freeing individuals from the 'shackles' of process and organisation. Steven Lukes, in his book '*Power: A Radical View*'[30] is also interested in the power environment, believing that the effectiveness of the application of power can be pre-determined by certain criteria such as the behaviour and processes that impact decision making and, in particular, the inherent contradictions that he believes

[27] Morgenthau H, 1985, *Politics Among Nations: The struggle for power and peace*, Knopf.
[28] Kissinger H, 1994, *Diplomacy,* Simon & Schauster.
[29] Schelling T, 1996, *The Diplomacy of Violence*. An article taken from *International Politics*, Harper Collins.
[30] Lukes S, 2005, *Power: A Radical View,* Palgrave McMillan

exist between those exercising power and the interests of those who are excluded from power.

Discussion over the nature of power is not restricted to the academic or political community. United States Army General Martin Dempsey used a 2009 speech[31] to articulate his belief that *Military* power would in the future be determined by the *"Ability to Adapt"* – the implication being that the more powerful actor will be the one most able to adapt quickly to emerging situations. Dempsey makes his prediction on the basis of four observations: the certainty of uncertainty, the pace of change, competitiveness and the decentralisation of adversaries As Commander of the United States Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), the organisation responsible for training and developing the United States' Army, his words carry great weight and are perhaps therefore a good indication of the US military's direction of travel.

In the context of StratCom there are perhaps three key works that do merit deeper investigation. Nye's 'Soft Power' has already been mentioned and is perhaps one of the most studied works. Less well known is the 1930s Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci and, post-dating Nye's work, Professor Manuel Castells of University College Los Angeles.

SOFT POWER

Joseph Nye's work first gained wide public attention towards the end of the Cold War and indeed the timing was significant. The US would shortly, and perhaps unexpectedly, prevail over its Cold War enemy, the Soviet Union. Within months of the Berlin Wall falling the West would begin searching for a peace dividend, perhaps best exemplified by the 1989 US Base Force Review, undertaken by the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staffs, General Colin Powell, which was predicated on the recognition that with the demise of the Soviet threat the rationale for a large standing US military would be fatally undercut. US academic Francis Fukuyama had just released his globally successful treatise '*The End of History and the Last Man*' – an expansion of an idea he had first publicly articulated in 1989 in which he had argued that the progression of history as a struggle between ideologies had ended: *"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such... That is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government".*[32]

[31] AUSA 2009 Chapter Presidents' Dinner, 4 Oct 09, Renaissance Hotel, Washington DC. Available to download at : http://www.ausa.org/publications/ausanews/archives/2009/august/Pages/AnnualMeetingandExpositionsalut esNCOs.aspx

[32] Fukuyama F, 1993, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Penguin.

Perhaps more importantly, an idea that would come to dominate US political thinking in the late 1990's had not yet taken hold; Samuel Huntingdon's '*Clash of Civilisations*', a theory that posited that the fault lines between civilisations, and specifically those of the three Abrahamic religions, would form the battle lines of the future, was still some three years away.[33] Thus, Nye's thinking was as driven by contemporary real world events as it was by innovation and academia. From the outset Nye sought to dispel the belief that power was still a function of military might and preparedness for war. Indeed he almost critically observed that: "*many political leaders still focus almost entirely on military assets and classic military solutions*".[34] For him, power was more simply defined as: "*the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants*".[35] Holistically this may be as good a definition as any, for it wraps up the full panoply of likely scenarios – military, economic, legal, environmental, *et al*, and it helpfully avoids the post-realist question of power being a capability or a relationship.

In the post 9/11 environment, military power has perhaps taken pre-eminence and Nye's ideas may seem too nebulous an idea. Yet Nye argued that military power could be simultaneously complemented and imperilled by 'softer', often intangible, issues. The intangibles of 'Soft Power' and the more accepted certainties of Hard Power should, in his view, not be regarded as stand alone entities; rather they should be seen as falling at either ends of a power spectrum, with significant blurring and synergy between the two in the centre ground:

Spectrum of Power

	Hard Power		Soft Power	
Spectrum of Behavior	Coercion Inducement Command ←------------------------------		Agenda Setting Attraction ------------------------------→ Co-opt	
Most Likely Resources	Force Sanctions	Payments Bribes	Institutions	Values Culture Polices

Source: Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*

JOSEPH NYE'S SPECTRUM OF POWER

At the extreme left hand end of Nye's spectrum is the hard edge of US hegemony; commanding an environment or situation through superior military might. The US led

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[33] Huntingdon S, 2011, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the New World Order*, Simon & Schuster

[34] Nye J, 2005, *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*. Public Affairs, p4.

[35] *Ibid* p4.

invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 is an example of note. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks the US demanded the cessation of terrorist training and the handing over of key figures, notably Osama Bin Laden. The ruling Taliban government refused, or at least prevaricated, and the resultant application of hard US military power saw the dismantling of the Al-Qaeda infrastructure and, for a while at least, its Taliban host.

At the far right of the spectrum exists the power of attraction. This is a longer, more nuanced and subtle approach to the business of opinion forming and attempts to use more indefinable resources, which Nye defined as a country's culture and its values, to increase its desirability. For example, the US government has long funded various educational scholarship schemes, hoping that recipients would be co-opted through osmosis into at least understanding if not actually subscribing to wider US values. Both of these come together in a middle ground, where Hard and Soft Power are woven in a complex multidimensional model. Here we see the idea of inducement – in more colloquial terms the 'carrot'. Foreign Aid programmes are just such an example of how this works. Aspirant recipient countries and groups must demonstrate eligibility before receiving aid from the donor. The 'stick' – the possible enforcement of left of arc Hard Power – reinforces the need for sustained compliance. In a similar manner the distribution of emergency aid, particularly in the aftermath of great tragedy such as the 2005 Tsunami in the Far East or the 2010 Haiti earthquake, are often benignly undertaken by the normally sharp edge elements of Hard Power, the military: "*This is a political opportunity to reach out to the Muslim world and let them know that our humanitarian assistance is across the board, that we treat the Muslim world as an essential part of the world community*", briefed Carl Levin of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee as US military airlifted and distributed aid in the Far East following the 2005 Boxing Day tragedy.[36]

Nye's model does not however present any kind of panacea, for there are occasions when neither Hard nor Soft Power will prevail. For example, the decision of the Turkish government not to allow the US' 4th Infantry Division to mount its 2003 attack on Iraq from Turkish soil – a key and sustained presumption of CENTCOM's 1003V invasion plan[37] – is an example. A long standing ally of the US, and recipient of aid both civil and military, Turkey had long regarded itself as a friend of America. Yet when it came to Iraq the US' Soft Power was insufficient to sustain its objectives in the face of sustained Turkish public opinion against the war. And the application of Hard Power to achieve its ends, against a fellow NATO member, was of course inconceivable. Like hard military force, there can be no guarantees of Soft Power success in any given scenario.

Yet too simplistic a dismissal of Nye's work is unhelpful. For example, Nye considers how Hollywood has developed into a global US Soft Power resource, to both good and

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[36] '*US sees aid to Muslim victims as chance to improve image*', Rowland Watson, The Times, 3 January 2005.
[37] This was the original US designator for the Iraqi invasion as defined by US Central Command (CENTCOM). It only later became known as Operation Iraqi Freedom (US) and Operation Telic (UK).

bad effect. Of the top 250 top grossing movies around the world Nye notes that only four did not emanate from within Hollywood; academic studies have considered the effects of such movies on audiences around the world. Whilst many have portrayed the US as an aspirational destination, others may simply have served to reinforce negative stereotypes, particularly of Arabs and Muslims. Jack Shaheen's 2001 study '*Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people*'[38] posited that the word 'Arab' had become Hollywood shorthand for 'bad guy', a theory distilled from over 900 movies that portrayed Arabs as evil or malevolent. Yet Hollywood has also reinforced stereotypes of the US. The derogatory use of the term 'Cowboy'[39] has become popular across the world's media when considering issues such as 'friendly fire' – the rather unkind euphemism that is applied to incidents when units from the same side mistakenly engage each other. Saddam Hussein is even alleged to have made his commanders watch the US movie '*Black Hawk Down*' before going into battle with the US.[40]

The Hollywood effect – if such a thing can be said to exist – is not new. During the First World War one of the US' greatest cultural Ambassadors was Charlie Chaplin. During World War 2 it was Mickey Mouse. Both portrayed the US in an inspirational and positive manner. No surprise, perhaps, that red China's leader Mao Tse Tung once warned that American culture was a '*candy coated bullet*'.[41] Some countries are now bolstering their own cultural heritage to guard against what is regarded as the pervasive influence of the US. In 1981 French Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, very memorably hijacked a UNESCO conference, lashing out at the: '*noxious cultural influence of American TV shows*' that, he believed, were examples of the US: *"no longer appropriating only territories but people's trains of thought, ways of life"*.[42] In the UK the Queen's English Society campaigns against the Americanisation of the English language, declaring that '*good English matters – we must keep it safe from declining standards*'.[43]

Yet others seem to have positively embraced the idea of culture being a power projector. China seems particularly adept at its nuances and subtlety, a finesse perhaps at odds with its historic unwieldiness. Two examples are worthy of analysis: The National Defence University of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was established in Beijing in 1984 and for the early part of its life was largely a closed and secretive environment. Yet today it accommodates students from over 100 nations, providing teaching in five major languages (English, Spanish, French, Russian and Mandarin). This step change in policy is a con-

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[38] Shaheen J, 2001, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people*, Interlink Publishing Group.
[39] '*Britain asks for flags to ward off US friendly fire*', AFP, The Times, 5 April 2003 and '*The Yank Opened Up*', Patrick Barkham, The Times 31 March 2003.
[40] *Iraqi Perspectives Report. A view on Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's senior leadership*. Published by US Joint Forces Command.
[41] Fraser M, 2003, *Weapons of Mass Distraction*, St Martins Press. p10.
[42] *Ibid.* p20.
[43] '*It's time to rise up and throw Prime Mary Lee out of Britain*', Matthew Engel, *The Mail On Sunday* (Review), 13 June 2010.

scious decision to replicate the US Military training programmes that have for so many years allowed the US to maintain strong links with the world's militaries. To the PLA this is a clear investment in the future for it is but a step from defence education to arms sales, joint exercises and, ultimately perhaps, to military operations.

Another example is Iran, whose nuclear Hard Power ambitions are of particular concern to the international community. Yet its use of Soft Power to garner regional traction, influence and hegemony attracts far less attention. Whilst the nuclear issue has grabbed the limelight, its attempts to spread its influence wider than its borders may be overshadowed in the US Administration's eyes by its nuclear aspirations but they have not been lost on academic observers. Chatham House's 2006 report '*Iran, its neighbours and the Regional Crisis'* comments that:

> *"The reasons for the growth in Iran's regional influence are clear. Iran is the linchpin between the Middle East and Asia whose military weakness should not disguise the very real cultural, political and economic influence it wields. The US may have the upper hand in Hard Power projection, but for all its ability to win military battles, the Bush administration has shown a lack of ability in planning for and mastering the subsequent peace. Iran has traditionally been a master of Soft Power – the ability to use politics and culture to pursue its strategic interests. Its knowledge of the region, fluency in the languages and culture, strong historical ties and administrative skills has given Iran an advantage over the West. While the latter, both historically and currently, has sought to change and reform the Middle East, Iran tends to work with what it finds".[44]*

And in the UK, where Hard Power has bedevilled the government in Iraq and Afghanistan, Soft Power seems to be becoming increasingly topical. Both Prime Minister David Cameron, and previous incumbent Gordon Brown, have extolled its virtues. Both addressed the desirability of diplomacy, engagement and finesse. Cameron told supporters that: *"bombs and missiles are bad ambassadors. They win no hearts and minds; they can build no democracies. There are more tools of statecraft than military power. Intelligence, economic development, educational training, support for pro-democracy groups, international law, foreign aid, sporting and cultural initiatives can all play their part."[45]* No surprise therefore that he was critical of the July 2008 Labour government's decisions to cancel the UK Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan that brought large numbers of international students to the UK. Three former Prime Ministers and three Secretaries of the Commonwealth Secretariat put their names to a letter in *The Times* bemoaning its demise.[46] The June 2009 announcement of a future UK Defence Review also noted the possible utility of Soft Power.

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[44] Lowe R & Spencer C, 2006, *Iran, Its Neighbors And The Regional Crises*, Chatham House Middle East Programme Report.

[45] *Europe can fill role as power broker*, Andreas Whittam-Smith, The Seattle Post Intelligencer 20 September 2006.

[46] '*Renew the Funding to Commonwealth Scholars'*. Taken from the letters page, The Times, 14 July 2008.

The outline structure for The Green Paper noted, in section three, that the paper would link to the existing UK National Security Strategy through consideration of "*Soft / Smart Power*[47]" – and indeed the subsequent Green Paper[48] had an entire section devoted to the subject of 'Strategic Communication' – an issue that will be discussed in length later in this study.

Yet Nye's articulation is not without its critics. Historian Niall Fergusson dismissed Soft Power in the same journal from which it had been born when he declared that it was "*well….soft*"[49] and more recently former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, when asked about the utility of Soft Power, replied that: "*I don't know what it means*". Fergusson's 2003 essay is especially dismissive of Nye's Soft Power theory. He notes that the British Empire pioneered the idea of Soft Power, with its global web of missionaries and sports, and yet: "*…it was precisely from the most Anglicized parts of the indigenous populations of the British Empire that the nationalist movements sprang. The archetype was the Bengali babu—better able to quote Shakespeare than the average expatriate Brit—who worked for the British by day but plotted their overthrow by night. Stone-throwing Palestinians in Nike trainers are today's version of the same Janus-faced phenomenon*".[50]

A more contemporary illustration is perhaps globalisation. International brands such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds and MTV are the epitome of the US and yet as Josef Joffe observes in the New York Times Magazine: *"hundreds of millions of people around the world wear, listen, eat, drink, watch and dance American, but they do not identify these accoutrements of their daily lives with America. A Yankees cap is the epitome of things American but it hardly signifies knowledge of, let alone affection for the team from New York or America as such".*[51] Indeed there may even be an argument to suggest that such visible US Soft Power actually provokes disagreement and anger.[52] Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez deliberately targeted the Coca-Cola soft drinks company in March 2009, forcing them from their headquarters and daubing their walls with socialist slogans, precisely because they were symbols of the United States of America.[53]

We must also be mindful of longevity. As we saw in the early 1990s, once the Berlin Wall had been breached and the Soviet Union began its decline into eventual disintegration, so Soviet Soft Power attributes of culture and learning in the former eastern bloc satellite states evaporated into thin air, replaced by either resurgence of nationalistic and organic output or by a leaning towards the West. Indeed globalisation has to many ap-

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[47] An unclassified piece extracted from an official MoD document, Reference: D/DG Strategy/ 067/09, dated 16 June, entitled '*Brief by DG Strategy to Secretary of State for Defence*' and classified RESTRICTED.

[48] See Chapter 2 of '*Adaptability & Partnership. Issues for the Strategic Defence Review*', 2010, UK MoD.

[49] Fergusson N, *2003, What Is Power?* taken from The Hoover Digest, Issue No 2.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *The Perils of Soft Power*, J Joffee, New York Times Magazine, 14 May 06.

[52] Mander B, 2009, *Chavez Targets Coca-Cola in crackdown*. See http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/43fd7674-0d00-11de-a555-0000779fd2ac.html

[53] Carroll R, '*Now Coca-Cola feels force of Chavez's colourful revolution*', The Observer, 15 March 2009.

peared as monopolisation, and as civil disorder has broken out across the globe, so these symbols of the US, for all their popularity, have become a substitute and very reachable target in place of the heavily guarded US embassies. The 1998 bombing of Cape Town's Planet Hollywood restaurant by a Muslim group saw 2 killed and 25 injured.[54] The group called the attack a 'reprisal' for the previous week's US cruise missile attack upon Sudan and Afghanistan. As tragic as the deaths were, the choice of target was much more relevant. The group had chosen to mount their attack, an extension of their Hard Power, upon a Soft Power symbol of the US in both name and status. Indeed in more recent years even Nye appears to be taking a harder view: "*Soft Power got nowhere in attracting the Taliban government away from its support for Al Qaeda in the 1990's. It took hard military power to sever that tie. Similarly, North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il likes to watch Hollywood movies, but that is unlikely to affect his decision about whether to give up his nuclear weapons program. Such a choice will be determined by Hard Power, particularly if China agrees to economic sanctions. Nor will Soft Power be sufficient to stop Iran's nuclear program, though the legitimacy of the Bush administration's current multilateral approach may help to recruit other countries to a coalition that isolates Iran.*"

So what utility Soft Power? Nye's articulation, for all its imperfections, is useful because it offers for the early 90's an almost heretical thesis - that military power might no longer be the defining factor in future conflict and, in the context of post 9/11, of security. Colin Powell's US Base Force Review cut back the US military not because they believed military force lacked any utility but because they believed that the war was essentially won, and won for good; it would take a second attack upon New York's World Trade Centre to finally disabuse US politicians of that notion. Nye's work is therefore of great visionary value for it sets us upon the path of considering alternative strategies for combat in the asymmetric environment.

MANUEL CASTELLS'S COMMUNICATION POWER

Professor Manuel Castells' 2008 work, '*Communication Power*[55] may yet prove just as significant as Nye's work. Castells' formative years at the University of Barcelona were, by his own admission, spent resisting the censorship of General Franco's regime; that experience clearly influencing his later thinking. Castells' book considers the nature of the 21ˢᵗ Century mass media, including that which resides on the web, and argues that whilst power is not held in the hands of the media *per se* it has become the space in which those who understand and can exercise some control of the media can play out business and political power strategies. Castells defines power as "*the relational capacity that enables a social*

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[54] Milford P, 1998, *S. Africa Planet Hollywood pipe bombing rocks industry*. See http://business.highbeam.com/409700/article-1G1-50325349/s-african-planet-hollywood-pipe-bombing-rocks-industry

[55] Castells M, 2009, *Communication Power*, Oxford University Press.

actor to influence, asymmetrically, the decisions of other social actors in a way that favours the empowered actors interests and values."[56] Power, in Castells' reasoning, is not an attribute but a relationship and he defines four forms of power in 21st Century networks: Networking Power (this is the power to decide who is included – or perhaps of more interest, excluded within the network), Network Power (the physical protocols and rules that keep the network in place), Networked Power (the dominance of specific nodes within the network and their ability to exercise control over its other parts) and Network making Power (the capacity to set up and control a network by organisations).

Castells argues that the battle for the human mind is largely fought in the processes of communication, where power relations are played out. Yet, in our increasingly networked society, the pervasiveness of communications networks means that communication power is no longer the preserve of the few, but is now the domain in which the masses operate, and can affect. This communication network is at the same time global and local, generic and customised in a constantly evolving fashion. The new form of socialised communication – which replaces the old form of one-to-many – is mass self-communication, where many communicate with many. It is self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception.

He recognises the role of force in imposing will and dominance – be it through the threat or actual application of hard power – but argues that few institutional systems can survive long simply on that basis – "*torturing bodies is less effective than shaping minds.*"[57] His view is that shaping minds is the fundamental foundation of power, because what people think will very often determine how they behave, which in turn influences the values, norms and shape of societies. The construction of discourse is therefore central to shaping minds – a process of information transfer achieved through communication. This is particularly the case in 21st Century networked societies where all domains – even those at the very periphery of the social network – are empowered by emerging technology. The growth of the mobile phone network in Afghanistan is perhaps the clearest example of Castells' reasoning, where largely impoverished groups, until only recently almost completely immunised from 21st Century technology, have embraced it at a phenomenal rate, and it has become a tool of both the insurgent and the counter-insurgent in the battle for control of the country[58]. The CIA World Fact Book estimates that in 2008 Afghanistan had more than eight million mobile phone users, placing it 69th of 222 nations. Other examples abound. The tiny Gulf State of Qatar – for years an insignificant rump on the Arabian

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[56] *Ibid.* p. 10

[57] *Communication Power in the Network Society.* Lecture by Professor Manuel Castells to Oxford University Internet Institute 23 October 2008. Available to download at:
http://webcast.oii.ox.ac.uk/download/oii/20081023_266/20081023_266.mp3

[58] See *Fighting The Taliban One Text Message at a Time.* Available to download at :
http://afghanistan.blogs.cnn.com/2010/03/26/fighting-the-taliban-one-text-message-at-a-time/ See also:
http://mountainrunner.us/2010/03/informationwasteland.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed
&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Mountainrunner+%28MountainRunner%29&utm_content=Google+UK

peninsular – almost over night rebranded itself as a global entity through the establishment of the Al-Jazeera TV network; Russia, France, the US, Turkey and the UK all now have their own Arab TV networks seeking to exercise command of the communication space for their own particular narrative. So too in the US, where Fox TV has become the heartland of conservative, right wing ideology – arguably a home for the Republican party's discourse whilst CNN seems more favourably inclined to the Democrats. Regardless both are used to influence and empower specific societal groups.

HEGEMONIC CULTURAL POWER

The Italian Marxist and political philosopher Antonio Gramsci was a founding member of the Italian Communist Party. In 1926 he was imprisoned by the Fascist government for his political beliefs. During his 5 year sentence he devoted a great deal of time and thought to why socialist revolutions – long predicted by orthodox Marxism – had not occurred in so many seemingly suitable countries in Europe. In his *Prison Notebooks*[59] Gramsci questioned why capitalism remained so entrenched; his conclusion was that Marxist revolution was inhibited by the prevailing hegemony of bourgeois culture, backed and reinforced by the church. In his view, the Working Class needed to develop a peaceful but highly coercive culture all of their own that would empower them and facilitate, at the right moment, the workers' revolution, drawing in the intelligentsia and the wider oppressed. Conscious of the attraction of the Church, Gramsci was very particular that this cultural Marxist hegemony had to meet people's spiritual needs – not just their material ones.[60]

Superficially it may appear that there exists a correlation between Gramsci's writings and the later work of Nye, although Nye himself rejects the idea that any kind of global hegemony in political discourse exists, particularly a US led one.[61] However the idea of utilising culture to achieve wider [geo] political objectives is clearly shared by both. For this Thesis Gramsci's work is helpful, for it provides a theoretical backdrop for how power (and not Hard Power) may be nurtured and deployed at a specific moment in time for best effect.

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[59] Gramsci A, Hoare Q (Editor), Nowell-Smith G (Editor), 1998, *Prison Notebooks: Selections*, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.
[60] Finocchiaro M, 1984, "*Gramsci: An Alternative Communism?*" Taken from *Studies in Soviet Thought* pp123-146.
[61] See Joseph Nye's *Parliamentary lecture with The British Council* on 21 January 2010. Available to download at
http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/PageFiles/11706/2010%2001%2022%20Joe%20Nye%20Soft%20Power.pdf

Reference

Date

See Distribution

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK – [OPERATION NAME] – [LOCATION] – [TYPE OF OPERATIONS]

References:

A.   JDN 1/12, Strategic Communication: The Defence Contribution

B.   CDS Directive XXXX.

1.   **The StratCom Actions and Effects Framework (SCAEF)** provides strategic direction and guidance for all planning, operations and activity, set within a coordinated cross-Whitehall approach. It provides the 'golden thread' from the strategic to the tactical, linking all subsequent activity, be that verbal or physical, to create coherence in our messaging. Everything we 'say and do' sends a message; the SCAEF prompts commanders to understand *how* activities will be perceived by key audiences, ensuring alignment with HMG's overarching strategic objectives.

2.   **Strategic Narrative.**

(A statement of identity, cause and intent around which government, people and armed forces can unite.)

3.   **Communication Themes**

(To be promoted in support of achieving military strategic objectives (MSOs) – these are not messages per se, rather 'consistent themes' that all subsequent messages and activities should reflect. Themes are tailored to specifically reflect the MOD contribution as well as wider UK Government.)
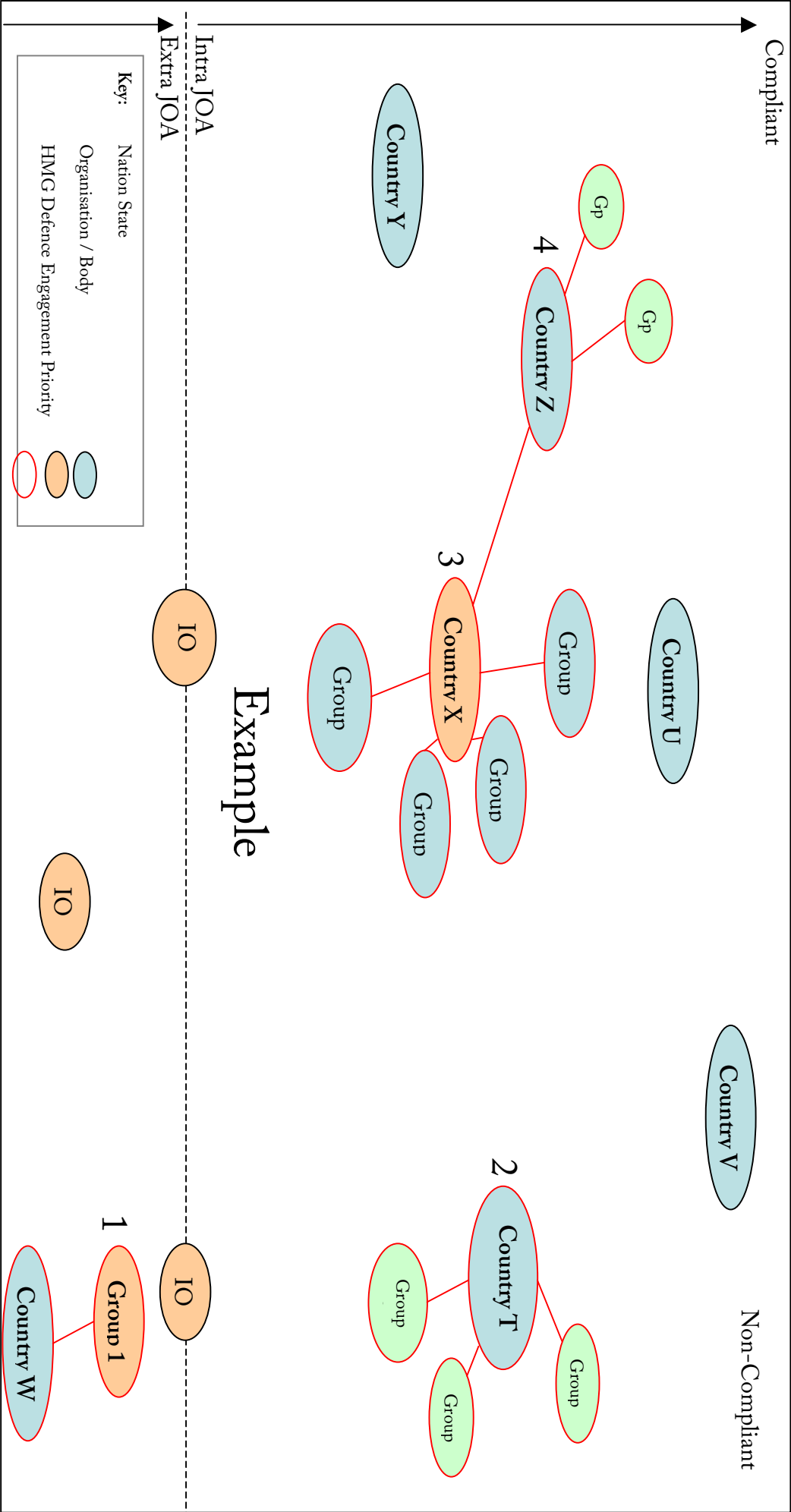
4.   **Communication Outcomes**

(Desired outcomes derived from Military Strategic Objectives.)

5.   **Strategic Communication Centre of Gravity (COG):** ….

1. Target Audience Segmentation / Effects Overlay

Compliant

Non-Compliant

Intra JOA

Extra JOA

Example

Country Y

Gp

4

Country Z

Gp

3

Country X

Group

Group

Group

Group

IO

Country U

Country V

IO

2

Country T

Group

Group

Group

IO

1

Group 1

Country W

Key: Nation State

Organisation / Body

HMG Defence Engagement Priority

2. Target Audience Analysis (TAA) - Tier XX Analysis[62]

Ser	Target Audience	Key Findings
1		
2		
3		

[62] **Target Audience Analysis** is defined as: *"The systematic study of people to enhance understanding and identify accessibility, vulnerability, and susceptibility to behavioural and attitudinal influence activity".* It seeks to analyse the cognitive domain of the communications landscape. There are three categories of TAA:
Tier 1 TAA: is a multi-source, scientifically verified, diagnostic methodology undertaken in-country and in host language used to identify specific latent *behaviour*. The output of Tier 1 TAA is **deduced information.**
Tier 2 TAA: is any primary research involving contact with audiences which does not follow a scientifically verified deductive methodology. It may be conducted in country or remotely and is largely *attitudinally* based. The output of Tier 2 TAA is **recorded information**
Tier 3 TAA: is secondary research. The output of Tier 3 is **assumed information.**

3. Communications Context[63]

Communications Context	Strengths	Weaknesses
		•
	Opportunities	Threats
	•	

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[63] **Communications Context** refers to the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to communications activity identified through an assessment of the physical (where information originates – TV stations, masts, coffee shops etc) and virtual (how information flows – social media, email, voice, graffiti etc) domains of the information environment.

4. Narrative Landscape

Ser	Audience / Grouping	Desire/Motivation	Individual Satisfactory Outcome	Myths, Legends, Characters, Symbols, Stories	Reality and/or other factors	Propagation Considerations	Pri H /M/L
		•	•	•	•	•	
Overall Acceptable Outcome?		•					

SECTION 2 – STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLANNING GUIDANCE

The planning guidance contained below articulates the communications activities and effects necessary to achieve the stated Military Strategic Objectives (MSOs).

MSO 1 – XXXX

Ser	Audience	Effects	Themes	Actions (& Lead Department)	Indicators of Success	Outcome
1				•	•	
			•	•		
					•	

MSO 2 – 'XXXX'

Ser	Audience	Effects	Themes	Actions (& Lead Department)	Indicators of Success	Outcome
1			•		•	1

Ser	Audience	Effect		Themes	Actions (& Lead Department)	Indicators of Success	Outcome
1				•	•	•	

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